

10-member group going to Haiti

# Markham minister off to aid poor

In Haiti, almost directly across from the luxurious presidential palace in Port Au Prince, stands about 500 acres of tar-paper shacks inhabited by people living in "absolute squalor" says St. Andrew's United Church minister Fred Styles.

Mr. Styles, a member of the Habitat for Humanity organization; says the poor in Haiti must contend with bad food, dirty floors, and rampant disease without sanitation facilities.

"It's frightening how they live in sub-human conditions," he said.

On Feb. 15, Mr. Styles will lead nine members of his congregation

to the Haitian town of Dumay as part of Habitat for Humanity's program to provide housing for the impoverished.

Paying their own expenses, the group, during their one-week stay, will help build a three-bedroom home to house six or seven people. The concrete house will be very basic, according to Mr. Styles, and will have no plumbing or electricity. "But they don't have that anyway," he said.

The families receiving the house have to pay the face-value of it only and can have as much time as they need to pay it off.

"We really feel that this is part of the gospel," says Mr. Styles who adds it is important for those in affluent places like Markham to care about how others live.

After his congregation heard a speaker from Habitat for Humanity talk about the problems in poor nations, Mr. Styles issued a challenge, asking for five volunteers to join him on the trip. "I felt we needed a broader output in the congregation," he said.

He says five members volunteered the first day, 10 in the first week and 20 by the second week. He has planned a second trip to Haiti for March, 8.

"We have found that when people see the need and the opportunity, they'll respond," he said. "This (trip) offers them the chance to put their faith into action."

Open to any denomination, Habitat for Humanity is an international organization that deals specifically in providing housing for the poor.

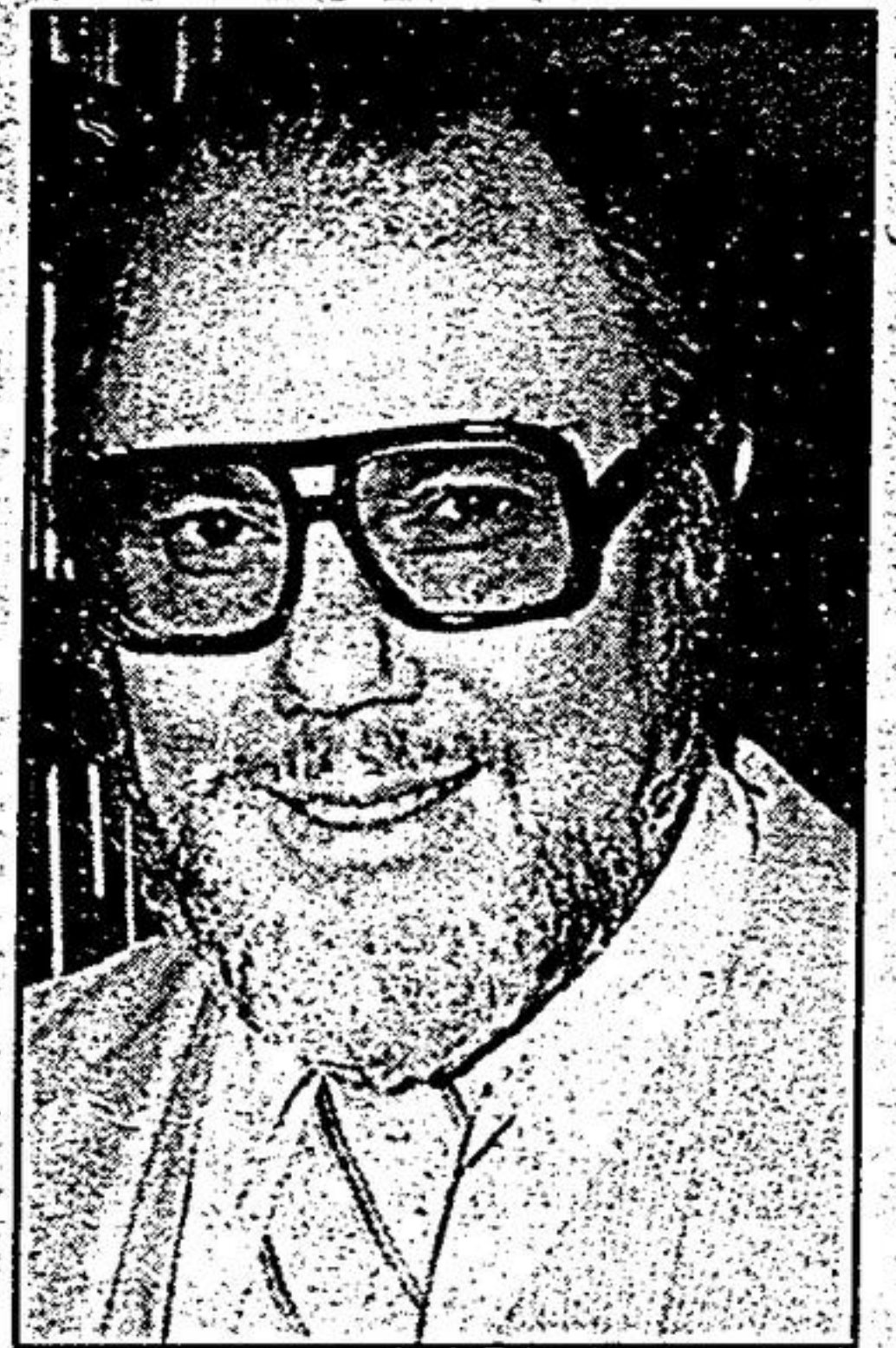
The group's priorities centre on helping third world nations with high death rates.

In Haiti, "one in three kids lives past the age of five," Mr. Styles said.

While in Haiti, the group will be living in "primitive conditions" and eating local food in order to experience first-hand the type of environment natives live in, Mr. Styles said.

He says Habitat for Humanity hopes to eventually build 50 houses in Haiti and says the organization is an effective tool in helping poverty-stricken people.

"It is really well thought-out," he said. "We're making concrete improvements in their lives."



FRED STYLES  
Off to Haiti

## St. Robert's holds parents meeting

Parents of Grade 8 students planning to attend St. Robert Catholic High School are invited to attend an information evening Tuesday, Feb. 11.

The meeting will also be of interest to parents whose children already attend the high school as next year's transition to the

## Former MDHS student play at church

Two young musicians who attended Markham District High School will perform a recital at a local church.

David Greve will play the flute and Jackie Pipher (nee Short) is the soprano at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Feb. 23.

The musicians are students of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. Admission is free of charge and the recital will run from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

semester system will also be explained. It begins at 7:30 p.m. at the school.

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