

# Our 15-year-lesson: Faith requires action

A FRIEND of mine tells me that we should do Bible study and prayer in the midst of action. We should not be sitting in a building but standing in the streets. These religious duties should be done in a place of crisis and pain. My friend tells me that faith is a verb not a noun.

This week is the 15th anniversary of this column. My friend says that the value of our column may be judged not by what we have said but by what we and others have done as a result.

Fifteen years ago, we clergy who wrote this column were often out in the streets. We were acting upon our beliefs regarding racism, war, ecology and other moral issues. We have grown older, and the temptation is to sit upon a soft chair and reflect upon the problems of the world.

We need to remind ourselves that religion without moral and ethical action is dead.

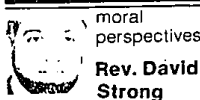
THIS COLUMN was born out of the conviction that religion is more than potluck, worship services and dinner speakers.

Faith is inseparable from deed and act. A caring church or synagogue must gauge its commitments by how many dollars and people it sends out to aid in healing life.

Years ago a book came out with the title "The Comfortable Pew." At times the phrase haunts me. It is too easy to slip into the comfortable pew.

"What does God require of us?" asks the prophet Micah. His answer is that we are to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

What comes to our mind when we



hear these words?

**ONE SITUATION** which comes to my mind is how the death penalty is carried out in the South. When prospective jurors are questioned in a murder case they are asked, "Do you oppose the death penalty?" If the person does, he or she is disqualified for the jury.

The fact is that almost all black people in the Deep South oppose the death penalty. The practical effect of this process is to immediately remove virtually all blacks from the jury.

The almost-all-white juries, who do not object to the death penalty, then are more apt to impose the death penalty. A lawyer in Georgia states that "fairness and justice are being trampled upon in a horrendous fashion." Think about it!

IN THE FIRST column of this series, the Rev. Richard Cassidy asked whether religion does motivate people to overcome social injustice.

In earlier history, he gave evidence that religion did not challenge injustice. The silence of the churches in Hitler's Germany was the most striking example. Although there has been some evidence that religion does lead people to seek justice and

mercy the most recent revivals of conservative religion have turned the clock back.

We need to turn our attention all the way back to the religion of Moses, Isaiah, Micah and Jesus. Some denominations have focused upon the word "disciplines" as a key guide word. Living justice and righteousness is part of this same orientation.

We shall see if ethical, moral and just action is to be a part of religious conviction. Otherwise there is always the option of sitting deep into the comfortable pew.

The Rev. David Strong is the pastor of St. Matthew United Methodist Church in Livonia. He, Rabbi Irwin Groner and the Rev. Lloyd Buss were among the Moral Perspectives writers when the column made its debut Nov. 5, 1972. The other current columnist is the Rev. Robert Schaden.

## Probate Court will train volunteers

Probate Court volunteers will hold training and orientation sessions the next two Thursdays, Nov. 12 and 19, in the Probate Court conference room, second floor, east wing of the Oakland County Courthouse in Pontiac. Sessions will run from 7 to 9 p.m.

Adults interested in working with youngsters age 6-16 should plan to attend these sessions. For background information, call Patti Reedy, volunteer coordinator, at 858-0041 Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



"Staying with It," a brochure on how to get started and stay with an exercise program, is available from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports by calling 1-800-543-2925, Dept. E.D.

## Heart attack? Never knew

Did you know that...  
 • More than one-quarter of all heart attacks are unrecognized. In other words, they occur in the absence of severe chest pain and other ominous symptoms. Furthermore, the proportion of unrecognized heart attacks is higher in women (35 percent) than in men (28 percent).

• "Staying With It," a 16-page brochure that teaches you how to get started and stay with an exercise program, is now available by calling this toll-free number: 1-800-543-2925, Dept. E.D. The free pamphlet is published by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

• There is no scientific evidence that a vasectomy increases the risk of heart attack.

• Decoding the prescription jargon between your doctor and phar-



maicist is really quite simple. A sample of such terms: qh, every hour, qd, every day; bid, twice a day; tid, three times a day; qid, four times a day; prn, as needed; a.c., before meals; p.c., after meals; and h.s., at bedtime.

• Fast-food addicts would appear to be better off by eating more tacos and fewer double cheeseburgers. Mexican-style fast food tends to be lower in fat, cholesterol and salt. Pizza is also another reasonable al-

ternative if topped with tomatoes, green peppers and/or mushrooms.

• A regular weight-training program may promote favorable changes in blood fat levels in men and women. Several recent studies have shown that low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, the "bad" form of cholesterol, is substantially reduced by a resistance exercise program. Moreover, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, the "good" form of cholesterol, is increased!

Barry A. Franklin is director of cardiac rehabilitation and exercise laboratories at William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, and associate professor of physiology, Wayne State University's School of Medicine.

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### Video looks for help

Some 30,000 high school and college students are sought for "Reach Out and Touch," a one-hour music video to be filmed Sunday, Nov. 8 at Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor.

The video will air nationally. It promotes substance abuse awareness. It kicks off alcohol abuse awareness week.

Filming begins at 2 p.m. in the stands along the 50-yard line. Participants should enter through the stadium tunnel near Chrysler Arena. Admission and parking is free.

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