

# THE TWIG

MEREDITH



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## NUCLEAR POWER FACT AND FICTION

Nuclear power ... guaranteed electricity ... a source of energy that could sustain the United States for many years to come. But at what cost to the people, the people's children, the environment?

Many questions are going through the minds of people all over the United States, and the world, as nuclear power becomes a more important and more publicized part of energy issues. Nuclear power plants are being built all over the country, and because of the Three Mile Island incident they are coming more and more into the public's eye.

How many Meredith students realize that a major nuclear plant is under construction in southwest Wake County, only twenty miles from Raleigh? Being aware of that fact, could the student possibly understand the uncomplicated system by which the plant will operate? In the next eight issues of The TWIG, the major questions about nuclear power will be answered in a way that the

student can understand. Economics, safety, radiation, and waste disposal are a few of the topics that will appear in the nuclear power series as well as an explanation of how the initial energy is produced. The TWIG welcomes questions, opinions, or answers concerning nuclear power that can be printed at the end of each nuclear power article.

Next week: Nuclear power, where does it come from?

## Is Christianity declining?

by Regine Nickel

A recent issue of the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (The Mirror) published an interesting article dealing with what it called the "receding influence of the churches in the United States and West Germany." Even though the article was written in the usual cliché-ridden manner which the weekly reserves for matters relating to church and political opponents, it nevertheless pointed out an apparent trend in our societies, the decline of denominational Christianity.

Thirteen years ago an opinion poll on the religious feelings of the citizens of the Federal Republic was held by Ifak, the German equivalent to the Gallup-Institute. The questions: Does God exist? Can one be Christian without belonging to a church? Is there life after death? Who was Jesus Christ? Last year the same poll was conducted, and the results of the two polls were compared.

The results were indeed startling. In 1967 90 percent of the people questioned answered positively when asked whether or not they believed in the existence of God. Last year only 79 percent affirmatively answered the question. The second question, that of church membership being essential to being a Christian, was answered with 'yes' by 69 percent. Last year the number had increased to 77 percent. To the question of life after death 48 percent answered affirmatively in 1967. In 1979 the number had increased to 53 percent. To the question who Jesus Christ was 15 percent of the people questioned answered the following, "Jesus lived 2000 years ago, today we live in a different world. Today Jesus has no meaning at all for me."

In the past thirteen years the number of people who affirm this statement has increased by six percent. With all the caution due to statistics, the general trend is still visible.

For American Christians there is a small consolation. Even though the trend, which was above shown as investigated in the Federal Republic, is still apparent in the United States, Christianity is still seen as a very positive force in this country. Ac-

ording to a 1977 Gallup poll 58 percent of the questioned Americans believed their church to be very important to them, while only four percent believed their church to be completely unimportant. The answers of West Germans asked the same question; only seventeen percent were affirmative, ten percent believed their church to be completely irrelevant. The resulting question? I dare not ask it!

## Stringspeak

by Ann Stringfield

He has been with us for every major crisis for the past 18 years. He cried with us when John Kennedy died; he rejoiced with us as we celebrated our 200th birthday. He has attained status as the man America trusts more than any other American, including the President. He is the voice of America; he is Walter Cronkite. This past week CBS announced that Dan Rather, former White House correspondent and, more recently, "60 Minutes" reporter, will succeed Cronkite in 1981.

Cronkite has become an American institution. He not only reports the news - he lives it with us. Some of us are too young to remember the emotional newscast in which he almost tearfully told us of John Kennedy's death. NCSU basketball fans may, however, remember that he called the hospital to inquire after David Thompson following his fall in the NCAA Eastern Regionals game versus Pittsburgh in 1974.

Rather, however, cuts a more menacing figure. Best remembered for his lively confrontations with former President Nixon, he does seem to have mellowed some

in recent years. One can hardly forget, though, the famous March 1974 press conference, incidently, Nixon's final conference:

Nixon: "Are you running for something?"

Rather: "No sir, Mr. President, are you?"

This little exchange is thought by many to be directly related to Rather's departure from the White House beat after the fall of the Nixon mandate.

It is uncertain whether Rather's journalistic achievements or merely a penitence for his previous ousting as White House correspondent landed him the anchorman spot. Roger Mudd has long been speculated to assume Cronkite's position, Mudd, a Carolina graduate, is similar to Cronkite in style, so it is for some a surprise to see Rather named as successor, although he is clearly the better newsman.

It does seem only just, though, that Nixon is living in an East Side apartment where all the tenants despise him and Rather is soon to become anchorman of the "CBS Evening News." Perhaps there is something to the deuteronomic theology of history after all.

## Doomed to repeat history

Editor's Note: In lieu of the editorial that usually appears in this space, this letter submitted by a faculty member at University of Montana to the student newspaper, *Kaimin*, has been inserted. It represents a viewpoint on war and its consequences that few of us have considered in our discussions on draft, being that of previous experience.

(Taken from February 1, 1980 issue of MONTANA KAIMIN)

As I read the recent editorials and letters in the *Kaimin* I am sad, because I hear the same things which I said as a college student way back then. Everybody knew that World War I was caused by the selfish profits of the munitions manufacturers. If we had only provided the Kaiser with an example of peace and democracy, he would never have attacked Belgium. Also, we students in the 1920s and 30s sure didn't want to be drafted.

It is said that those who do not read their history are doomed to repeat it. I didn't read mine then; and many students (who didn't live through the 1940s) haven't read theirs. Nobody wants war, especially with new and ultra-deadly weapons. I talked for peace then, wrote for peace and voted for peace. But I hadn't learned the lesson that you don't stop the school bully from terrorizing the little kids by telling him we are nice guys and would never fight.

While I lived the good life as a college student and later as a young professor,

Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Finland, Poland, Ethiopia, Burma, China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Luxemburg, Yugoslavia, France, and England (free, independent countries when I was a sophomore) found to their sadness and the deaths of millions of their people that it doesn't pay to be weak. Some of those countries don't exist anymore—having been swallowed up by Soviet Russia, others still exist in name—but the university students in them better not write letters to newspapers criticizing the government. Believing their ideologies and way of life were superior, Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, totalitarian Japan, and communist Russia imposed their will on one neighbor after another through subversion and military force—just like the Soviets are doing again now.

I have sons who, I hope, will never have to go to war, but if the times demanded would I do it all over again—relinquish the comfort of a "wealthy" professorship and volunteer for ugly, army life? I guess I'd do just the same. They probably wouldn't take me again, but if real war came it would be a lot safer in the Army these days than at home.

However, I wish things had been a bit different. We did have a president who said, "My friends, the easy times are over; no more business as usual. We can't do just as would like." But I and my classmates didn't believe him. And neither did the totalitarian nations. We should have boycotted the 1936 Olym-

pics, geared up the "munitions makers," started the draft in 1935, not 1939, and have said to the international bullies when they first entered Austria, Ethiopia, and Manchuria, "Stop now." Instead we waited until they had secured enormous resources, strategical positions, and mobilized almost half of the world against us. As a result, thousands of my friends, classmates, and students are no longer alive.

Yes, peace can come when all nations disarm—all, not just America. I understand there are plans for a "no-draft" rally. When I see an equal one being held in Moscow's Red Square, I will enthusiastically support both. The issue really isn't oil; it is merely survival.

Oh well, this is 1980. It can't happen again. History never repeats itself. If the Russian's seize the Persian Gulf we can always ride bicycles to class and build 500 nuclear reactors to keep our factories going. What difference does it make if they send their radical professors to Siberia or kill off a few hundred thousand people in Cambodia or Afghanistan? It's none of our business. And why support a president who starts to talk like a Winston Churchill, when he always seemed to be a Neville Chamberlain. The Soviets, after all, are a reasonable bunch. You only have to give them what they want, and we can have "peace." If you don't believe me ask the Czechs, the Poles, the Latvians, the Lithuanians, etc., etc., etc., etc.

John G. Watkins  
professor, psychology

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