



COLLEGE LIFE

GOD GOES BACK TO COLLEGE

We praise you for the fervency you've given us and ask you to increase it. Start a fire burning. There's nothing we desire more than for God to sweep across this campus.

—Excerpts from a recent Brown University prayer meeting

To a remarkable extent, the prayers have been answered at many a school. In the midst of the supposedly cynical and materialistic '80s, a groundswell of religious ardor is creating a breadth—and depth—of religious participation that has not been seen at American colleges in decades. At least 9,000 of the 35,000 students at the University of Illinois are active members of religious organizations: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim and more. The University of Southern California boasts branches of the Chinese Christian Fellowship, the Bahai Campus Club, the Navigators (an evangelical Protestant sect) and the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (a branch of the Unification Church of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon). While there were just 19 religious groups at the University of Texas, Austin, in 1972, 49 now flourish. "There's a spiritual dimension today in the lives of

these young people that I did not notice 10 years ago," declares the fundamentalist Rev. Jerry Falwell, who says he has been able to curtail his college evangelizing because so many students are keeping the faith.

Falwell believes that today's religious revival is part of the surge in conservatism on campus—and so do some who do not share his brimstone beliefs. In these stressful times, says Velma Ferrell, adviser to the Baptist Student Union at Duke University, "there is a desire to have somebody telling you what to do, whether it be God or President Reagan." Those who embrace conservative politics are probably less likely to question the beliefs of their elders—although some are turning to church or temple in defiance of nonobservant parents. "I think some of this is a return to traditional values," says Roger Jenks, senior minister of the Disciples of Christ Church at the University of Illinois. "There's a little less stigma against going to church. When I went to college [in the late 1960s], I never said where I was going on Sunday morning."

To some extent, the renewed piety of 1986 may

Rallies and hecklers:

Proselytizing at the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship table on the University of Texas's West Mall