

Christians so disillusioned that they began an unsuccessful campaign to abolish the student government altogether.

A similar fracas occurred at Duke in 1984 when leaders of the Campus Crusade for Christ encouraged their members to apply for positions as residential advisers (r.a.'s) within the dorms. Before long some students began to complain that their advisers were using the dorms to conduct Bible-study sessions that offended students of other persuasions. After consulting with the university's religious leaders, the administration banned r.a.'s from conducting the sessions within their own dorms. "What we were saying," recalls Richard Cox, dean for residential life, "is if you want to participate in Bible studies, go participate. But don't do it where you are intensely a role model."

The cross and the ring: The response to the decree was overwhelming. From around the country alumni wrote in to complain that Duke—which was originally founded as a Methodist school—was discriminating against the devout. The prohibition also produced an outcry from many of the students it was meant to protect. "It was a huge blowup," recalls a Methodist minister, the Rev. William Willimon, who had tried to defend the university's decision. "The students were talking about taking over the [administration] building. I'd never seen anything like it on a similar scale." Now the school faces another religious dispute: Jewish students are pressing for a new, alternative school ring

Controversial circles: Prayers at Duke, whose administrators made r.a.'s stop leading Bible study in their dorms; Duke ring (inset)

PHOTOS BY CHARLES LEDFORD

Eating by the rules: Jewish students at Brown's new Hebrew House enclave choose to observe the Sabbath and eat kosher meals



ROBERT HAGEN—PICTURE GROUP

that would not be engraved with the cross that is part of Duke's official seal.

Elsewhere, however, religious students have been turning away from political activity and focusing more attention on spiritual growth. In Rhode Island, for example, the hottest political issue is Question 14, a referendum that would ban abortion and some forms of birth control. But while feminists and others have been active in their opposition, Brown University Christians have contented themselves with writing letters to the Brown Daily Herald to express their support. Some religious leaders worry that the emphasis on personal salvation amounts to a kind of selfishness. "There is in a private sort of way a growing excitement, but there still tends to be a division between private and public life," says Kevin Offner, staff coordinator of the Brown Christian Fellowship. "We need to get beyond the personal and talk about social and political things."

Devious attractions: Other students would prefer that religion were more private still. Colette Jordan, a senior at Illinois, says she resents the "Bible thumpers" who have ambushed her in the dorms. "They'd ask you what you believed or if you believed and try to suck you in," she complains. The reaction was even stronger at UT, where in 1981 students organized Students for Freedom from Religion, an atheistic organization created "to further the First Amendment separation of church and state." The group disbanded in 1983 ("Atheists are a hard group to organize," says its former "pope," Jay Cherin) but evangelism at Texas continues to stir up occasional fights.

On a typical afternoon



Religion fosters a sense of ethnic identity—but it can also breed intolerance and ethnocentricity

