

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Monday, July 8, 1985

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. The words "war" and "holy" seem contradictory, and yet they have been used together -- as in Holy War -- for centuries. When we began planning today's program, I used as a working title the question, "What's a nice thing like religion doing in the middle of a war?" If that sounds fluffy, be assured that the subject is not light at all. Around the world today, religious sects are associated with terrorism, fighting and, yes, killing. We talk about Northern Ireland and the ongoing struggle between the Protestants and the Catholics. Often when we talk about the Middle East we identify groups by religious identities -- Moslems, Shiites, Jews, Christians. Another major area of conflict is Latin America. Are these physical and psychological struggles really the products of religion, or religious differences? Do we need new names by which to identify the groups and the factions within groups?

We'll talk about all this today with three faculty and staff figures in religion at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Let me introduce them.

Dr. Peter Manchester is associate professor of religious studies and director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Religious Studies at Stony Brook. Dr. Manchester, you've been teaching a course on the Holy Wars. Will the current struggles one day be classified as holy wars?

Joseph Topek is with Stony Brook's Interfaith Center, serving as director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation. Mr. Topek, your studies have taken you through much of the history of the struggles for religious independence. Are the present struggles any more, or less, significant than those of centuries past?

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Steven Paysen is also with Stony Brook's Interfaith Center, serving as Roman Catholic chaplain to students. Your activities, Mr. Paysen, bring you in touch with young people seeking individual religious identity. Do you have any sense that these young people generally are concerned about combat in the name of religion?

INTERVIEW ALL:

- Have Manchester review some history of Holy Wars
- How have religious differences been resolved in past?
- Can religion, ethnicity, politics, culture be separated?
- Do we need new names for identities?

14:00

We'll return in a moment for more on religion and fighting. Please stay with us.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi. I'm Al Oickle, and I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with three faculty and staff members. We've been talking about war in the name of religion. We've been using religious sect names. Does our doing that contribute to misunderstanding of religious issues and causes? Should we be using different names? Like Democrats? Or Liberals?

INTERVIEW ALL:

- Should more effort be directed to understanding religious differences?
- Should more effort be directed to removing rel. diff.?
- Back to separation of religion, culture, politics et al
- Theological issue: Can any killing be justified?
- What's ahead?

29:00