Philosopher Smith attempts to understand man, religion

(Continued from Page 1)

Although Dr. Smith makes no claim for spiritual development in his students, he says that his legs have certainly changed.

What then, are Huston Smith's personal views on religion? Although he does not doubt that he has been "slightly influenced by Asian thought," he has "no inclination to become an Orientalist or to become entrenched in one camp." Instead, he insists, "It's the sociological view that interests me. And as to his own behavior, he states "In theology I'm a universalist, and in practice, a Liberal Christian. What I mean by this is that the forms and symbols of many religions are suitable for many different kinds of people."

Failing personally impressed LSD, Dr. Smith notes that "from four to one-third of the general population will have religious experiences if they take the drugs under naturalistic (unbiased) conditions." "This," in his opinion, "raises all kinds of theoretical questions about the understanding of religion."

Author, teacher

Author of The Purposes of Higher Education, Professor Smith is quite concerned with the problems of modern education. He suggests, for example, that "One of the weaknesses of higher education is that what students are learning is under-religious; that is, it is not being integrated into their daily lives. In an effort to deal with this he is teaching Philosophical Anthropology (21.547). In a word, it's a "superexperimental" course. Designed as "a laboratory course in religion," it is an attempt to "become more concrete, to get ideas out into the real world." A second problem he sees is that education is "still too much . . . of the top down," that is, "teachers telling students what to think." He heartily admits that the other course he is currently teaching, Philosophies and Religions of the East (21.691), is of this nature.

Attitude toward students

Recipient of the Distinguished Teachers Award in 1964 and one of Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholars this year, Professor Smith's attitude toward his students reflects his attitude toward his own academic interests: "Students need to see the facts they learn as integrated with meaning derived from the theory to which the facts relate. They need to see the import of the theory as deriving from the basic purposes and methods of the discipline that produced it. They need to understand the meaning of the discipline as deriving from its place in human life. Understanding all, students need to sense significance in life itself."

This is his opinion, "raises all kinds of theoretical questions about the understanding of religion."

Seek federal jobs

By Mark Bobalin

The newly-created Massachusetts Collegiate Political Science Association, dedicated to increasing student understanding of government, held its organizational meeting Friday evening in the Student Center.

About 50 representatives of twelve Boston area schools attended the conference, designed for the transfer of ideas on acquiring summer government employment and arranging regular seminars with government figures.

Co-chairman of the MCPSA, Gerald Darman of Boston University and Jack Rector '68, explained the goals of the MCPSA to the representatives, most of whom were unfamiliar with programs for government internships, showed that this program was the support of the public.

(Due to space in Page 2)

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