Scientist Wins Religion Prize Of $1 Million

Linking of Theology And Science Is Cited

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

Paul Davies, a mathematical physicist who has written and lectured on connections between science and theology, has won a $1 million prize for his contributions to religious thought and inquiry.

Dr. Davies, a professor of natural philosophy at the University of Adelaide in Australia, was named yesterday as winner of the 1995 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He is the author of more than 20 books, among them "The Mind of God" (Simon & Schuster, 1992), which discusses ideas about the origin of the universe, order in nature and the nature of human consciousness.

"Most people think that as science advances, religion retreats," he said in a telephone interview yesterday. "But the more we discover about the world, the more we find there's a purpose or design behind it all."

The Templeton prize was created in 1973 by the investor Sir John Templeton, an American-born British subject who is founder of the Templeton Growth Fund and the Templeton World Fund.

He required that it be given annually to an individual judged to have shown singular creativity in advancing public understanding of God or spirituality, and that its cash value exceed the Nobel Prizes, which he believed overlooked religion.

This year's prize is £650,000, or about $1,047,000 at yesterday's exchange rate. It will be awarded in a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 5. The nine-judge panel this year included former President George Bush and Baroness Margaret Thatcher, the former British Prime Minister.

Previous winners have included Mother Teresa, the Rev. Billy Gra-...