



BY MITCH JACOBSON—ASSOCIATED PRESS

Freeman Dyson contends that science and religion should be working together to overcome the injustices of the world.

Physicist, Champion of Social Justice Takes Prize

*Freeman Dyson
Is Templeton Winner*

From Wire Reports

NEW YORK—Freeman Dyson, a world-renowned physicist and author who for more than 50 years has worked to make science a tool for social justice, has been awarded the 2000 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Dyson, 76, a professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., has long supported the idea that if science and religion work together, "the gross inequalities of the world could be abolished."

"Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here," he said Wednesday at a news conference at the United Nations. "Both views are one-sided; neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect."

The British-born physicist first made his mark at 25 by synthesizing three competing theories in quantum electrodynamics. He joined the Princeton institute in 1948 to work with J. Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb. He worked on nuclear applications in medicine and space travel but became an opponent of the arms race.

The author of 11 books, Dyson frequently has challenged scientists to use ethics, not profit and trendy research, to set their agendas. In "The Sun, the Genome and the Internet" (1999), a collection of essays, he argues that scientists and technologists have the means of closing the gap between rich, industrialized countries and poor, underprivileged ones. Current practice is widening that gap, he writes.

Over the years, Dyson has taken controversial positions against "big science"—splashy projects, like the \$8 billion supercollider atom smasher, whose costs, he says, are out of proportion to their scientific value. And he has criticized scientists for focusing technology on making "toys for the rich," such as cellular phones and miniature computers, rather than spreading knowledge and improving people's lives.

He also believes that expensive new medical technologies will "exacerbate" the inequalities that exist within and between societies and that biotechnology and genetic engineering pose the greatest ethical threats in the new century.

"Look at fertility clinics where genetic engineering is done. Parents determined to get babies are willing to pay for it," he said. "The technology is becoming so sophisticated you can determine what kind of baby you have. You can buy good genes. The real danger is only the rich will get the good genes."

The Templeton Prize, valued at \$948,000 this year and funded in a way that will always make it worth more than a Nobel Prize, was named for its founder, John Templeton. The global financier created the award in 1972 to recognize living individuals for their contributions in advancing the world's understanding of God and spirituality. He believed the Nobel Prizes overlooked spirituality as a major human discipline.

Announced this week, the prize will be presented to Dyson by Britain's Prince Philip at a private ceremony May 9 at Buckingham Palace.

A public ceremony will be at 7 p.m. May 16 at Washington National Cathedral, featuring an address by James H. Billington, librarian of Congress. The Rev. Lloyd Ogilvie, Senate chaplain, will offer the invocation.

Dyson is the fifth scientist to be awarded the prize. Physicist and theologian Ian Barbour was the winner in 1999. Other recipients include Mother Teresa (1973), the Rev. Billy Graham (1982) and Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1983).