

Canadian philosopher wins \$1.5-million Templeton Prize

By K. CONNIE KANG
Times Staff Writer

Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher who for 45 years has advocated the inclusion of spiritual dimensions in the study of humanities and natural and social sciences, won the 2007 Templeton Prize worth more than \$1.5 million, it was announced in New York on Wednesday.

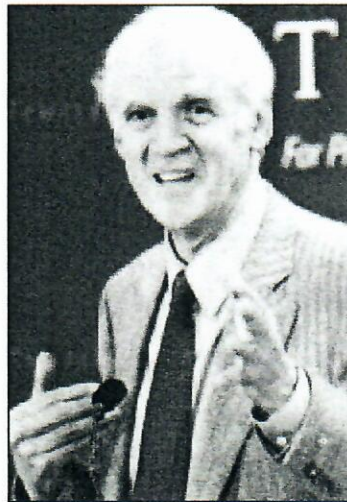
Taylor, 75, who teaches at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., is the first Canadian to win the Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries About Spiritual Realities.

Taylor will receive the award, the world's largest annual monetary prize given to an individual, from Britain's Prince Philip at a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 2.

In a telephone interview from New York, Taylor said the prevailing emphasis on the secular in the contemporary culture of science and academic study had shortchanged humanity.

It is impossible, he said, to "really understand" what makes people and societies "tick" without considering both the secular and spiritual.

"People must be able to think in both languages, in both levels — not just with one half of their brain," Taylor said. To leave out the spiritual is like "working with the other half [of the brain] from



MARY ALTAFFER AP

He is the first Canadian to win the spirituality award.

zen."

Born in Montreal in 1931, Taylor grew up in a Catholic home. His first degree was in history, but a 1952 Rhodes scholarship led him to study philosophy at Oxford, where he encountered what he describes as "an unstructured hostility" to religious belief.

It led him to question the so-called objective approaches of psychology, social science, linguistics, history and other human sciences.

He has written a dozen books, including studies of secularism

and modernity, the German philosopher Hegel and pioneering American philosopher and psychologist William James.

In "A Secular Age," scheduled to be published in the fall, Taylor challenges what he called the "master narrative of secularization" — that religion would decline with advancing modernity.

In announcing the winner at a news conference, John M. Templeton Jr., president of the Templeton Foundation, said Taylor had "given us bold new insights that provide a fresh understanding of the many problems of the world, and, potentially, how we might together resolve them."

Taylor, a professor emeritus in philosophy at McGill University in Montreal, made four attempts to become a member of the Canadian House of Commons — once losing to Pierre Trudeau — in a contest that drew nationwide attention because both men were considered intellectuals and had high profiles.

Taylor said he planned to use his prize money for his research on the relationship between languages and linguistic meaning to art and theology.

The prize was created in 1972 by investor and philanthropist John Templeton. The Templeton Prize seeks to promote research that will expand spiritual awareness.

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