



1992 TEMPLETON PRIZE FOR PROGRESS IN RELIGION

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: THE NOLAN / LEHR GROUP

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Chronicle

■ A broader smile at
the Everlasting Joy
Church ■ A birthday
song by Bernstein.



Kyung-Chik
Han



John Marks
Templeton

The Rev. Dr. KYUNG-CHIK HAN, an 89-year-old minister who transformed a 27-member prayer group in Seoul into the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world, has been named the winner of the 1992 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

He established the Young Nak ("Everlasting Joy") Church, which has 60,000 members. And there are now about 500 other Young Nak Presbyterian churches worldwide, founded by members of the original congregation.

The prize, £575,000 (about \$986,000 at current exchange rates), is to be presented to Dr. Han by PRINCE PHILIP at ceremonies at Buckingham Palace in London on May 7.

JOHN MARKS TEMPLETON, a Wall Street mutual-fund manager and investor who lives in the Bahamas, established the award in 1972. He said he wanted it to be the richest prize in the world because he considered religion more important to the betterment of humankind than any other discipline. Previous winners of the annual honor have included Mother Teresa, the Rev. Billy Graham and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Born in poverty, Dr. Han was raised in northern Korea and educated there and in the United States. A convert to Protestantism from Confucianism, he was a pastor in Sinuiju before being imprisoned briefly by the Japanese in 1941 for refusing to worship the Japanese emperor and then removed by them from his ministry. In 1945, he fled to the south, fearful of the Soviet forces occupying the north.

In addition to establishing an enormous church movement that now has missionaries in 21 countries, Dr. Han has also set up schools, a library, a seminary and centers for orphans, widows and elderly people.

"He will set aside the majority of the prize money to rebuild and spread the Gospel in North Korea as soon as it is politically possible," his son, the Rev. Hewon Han of Winston-Salem, N.C., said at a news conference at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York yesterday. "It has been his lifelong dream that Korea be reunited, and we think this will happen."

When his father learned of the prize, Mr. Han continued, "his first words to me were that he was very thankful to God and didn't think that he deserved such an honor."

NADINE BROZAN