

Prize winner attempts to link science, God

NEW YORK (AP)—An Australian physicist who once wrote that science offers "a surer path to God" than religion yesterday won the \$1 million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Paul Davies, a 48-year-old professor of natural philosophy at the University of Adelaide in Australia, has written more than 20 books, including 1992's "The Mind of God," which explores the relation between science and religion, and "The Last Three Minutes," a 1994 account of various ways the universe might end.

"It is impossible to be a scientist, even an atheistic scientist, and not be struck by the awesome beauty, harmony and ingenuity of nature," Davies said in a statement.

"What most impresses me is the existence of an underlying mathematical order, an order that led the astronomer Sir James Jeans to declare: 'God is a pure mathematician.'"

Davies, who in 1983 wrote that "science offers a surer path to God

than religion," said the prize recognizes that religions cannot remain credible if they ignore scientific advances. Davis is the third physicist to win the prize.

"By affirming that science and religion can engage in a constructive dialogue, the Templeton Prize serves to remove one of the abiding myths of our age—that science is dehumanizing and that scientists peddle a message of despair. I for one will continue to teach my message of hope," he said.

The Templeton Prize was established in 1972 by investment manager John M. Templeton to recognize individuals who advance the world's understanding of religion. It is the largest monetary prize for achievement in any field. It will be awarded at a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 5.

Previous winners include Mother Teresa, the Rev. Billy Graham and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Last year's winner was Michael Novak, a conservative Roman Catholic scholar.