

## 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.

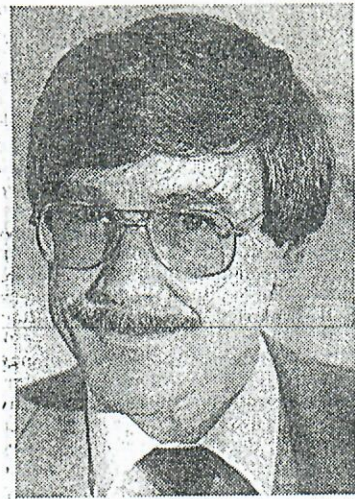
"Most people think that as science advances, religion retreats," he said in a telephone interview yesterday. "But the more we discover about the world, the more we find there's a purpose or design behind it all."

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-



Jack Manning/The New York Times

Paul Davies

ham and Lord Jakobovits, former chief rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth. Last year's recipient was Michael Novak, the neo-conservative Roman Catholic scholar.

But the award has also been given to scientists; Dr. Davies is the third physicist to receive it.

Dr. Davies, 48, who was born in London, previously taught at King's College at the University of London and the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In the 1970's, he worked with Stephen Hawking in researching the thermodynamic properties of black holes, collapsed stars whose gravity is so intense that light cannot escape them.

He has two books due out later this year: "About Time," on the paradoxes of time, and "Are We Alone?," about what discovery of extraterrestrial life might mean to science and religion.

Dr. Davies said he was reared an Anglican but gave up organized religion as an adolescent. About 15 years ago, after researching theories of the origin of the universe, he decided to examine philosophical arguments for God's existence. He entered into discussions with theologians, finding some "quite sophisticated in their reasoning" and in what they accepted from science.

"The gap is not between science and the theologians," Dr. Davies said. "That gap is really rather small. The gap is between the theologians and the ordinary believers."

Yet, he has directed much of his work in this area at a popular audience. "I think everybody is searching for something deeper," he said. "When I go around giving lectures on scientific topics, the questions at the end are always of quasi-religious nature."

Dr. Davies said he was not conventionally religious, instead describing himself "as Einstein described himself," holding a deep reverence for nature and convinced that the universe has a design or purpose.

Asked his plans for the prize money, Dr. Davies said he had resigned a job as a physics professor at Adelaide two years ago in favor of his present position, which he described as a "temporary fix-up."

"It really removes that whole worry," he said of the prize money. "It means that I can devote the rest of my career" to this research.