

National Report

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President of Campus Crusade Gets \$1 Million Religion Prize

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

Bill Bright, founder and president of the international ministry Campus Crusade for Christ, was named the recipient of a \$1 million religion prize yesterday, an annual award whose value is designed to be larger than the Nobel Prize's.

Mr. Bright, 74, whose organization's goal is to preach Christianity to everyone on the planet by the year 2000, will receive the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 8. The award was established in 1972 by the investor Sir John M. Templeton, an American-born British subject, to honor a person contributing to greater understanding of spirituality.

In an interview, Mr. Bright said he felt "very unworthy and humbled and awed" in being selected as the prize's winner. He said his organization would use the prize money to promote the spiritual disciplines of fasting and prayer among Christians worldwide.

A former specialty-foods vendor, Mr. Bright gave up his business in 1951, saying he had received a vision from God to evangelize others. He founded Campus Crusade as a ministry to students, then expanded its reach to include athletes, prisoners and many others.

Based in Orlando, Fla., with a budget of \$270 million and a worldwide staff of 13,000, the group takes a multimedia approach to evangelism. In the 1970's, it staged youth rallies and distributed bumperstickers that declared "I Found It," along with an 800-number.

In 1980, along with the religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, Mr. Bright organized "Washington for Jesus," a march that brought about 200,000 people to pray in the nation's capital. Campus Crusade also made a feature-length movie, "Jesus," on

Christ's life, which it has translated into more than 300 languages and shows to audiences around the world.

"I try to evaluate everything I do every day in light of the Great Commission," said Mr. Bright, referring to Jesus's commandment to his followers to proclaim his message (Matthew 28:19), "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ."

Mr. Bright recently joined 15 other prominent Protestants and Roman Catholics in co-signing a letter to the Republican Presidential candidates, imploring them to back a constitutional amendment against abortion and to include that position in the party's platform.

Asked about the letter, he said, "I'm really strongly opposed to murder in the womb, and that's the only way I can describe abortion." The letter was not a political statement, he said, because he regards abortion a moral issue, and "we'd say the same to any party."

Over the years, recipients have come from different countries and have included Christians, Hindus, a Buddhist, a Jew and a Muslim. Occasionally, the prize has gone to a scientist whose work has focused on the relationship between science and theology. Last year, it was awarded to Paul Davies, an English physicist who teaches in Australia.

Twice in the last two years, Mr. Bright organized conferences attended mainly by evangelical Protestant leaders who prayed that God would restore America morally.

Mr. Bright said a steep moral decline in the life of the nation resulted from the 1963 Supreme Court decision banning school prayer, a ruling that he said "insulted God."

But on a more optimistic note, Mr. Bright said he believed that through the efforts of evangelical groups like his own, the nation was on the verge of a spiritual revival.