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## Physicist-Theologian Awarded A \$1.2 Million Prize in Religion

By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

The world's largest monetary prize, the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, has been awarded this year to Ian G. Barbour, a physicist-theologian who has spent four decades to fostering a dialogue between science and religion.

His selection as recipient of the prize, valued at £750,000, or \$1.2 million, was announced yesterday at the Church Center for the United Nations.

Mr. Barbour, 75, professor emeritus of science, technology and society at Carleton College, in Northfield, Minn., has written or edited a dozen books on religion and science. In an interview, he said the relationship between the two fields had developed into a far wider discussion, as a result of technological breakthroughs, than when he first began writing about it in the 1960's.

"If you ask what's different, it's that we are able to do things we couldn't before and these raise ethical issues," Mr. Barbour said, citing cloning and genetic engineering.

He added that in questions raised by new technologies, religious tradition mattered most because it sensitized believers "to enter into the public debate and hold up values, like the value of the individual."

"And of course the religious community has to be informed about the scientific side," he said.

Mr. Barbour said he planned to give \$1 million of the prize money as an endowment fund to the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, an affiliate of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif.

The Templeton Prize was created by Sir John M. Templeton, founder of several investment funds, to honor originality in advancing public understanding of God or spirituality. An independent jury selects a recipient each year.

The first, in 1973, was Mother Teresa, founder of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic order. In 1998, the prize went to Sir Sigmund Sternberg, a British businessman who promoted interfaith dialogue. In 1995, it went to Paul Davies, a British-born physicist in Australia who argued that advances in knowledge of the universe pointed to evidence of a design or purpose behind it.

Mr. Barbour, a member of the United Church of Christ, a Protestant denomination, graduated from Yale Divinity School and the University of Chicago, where he completed a doctorate in physics.

Mr. Barbour has said the idea of an unbridgeable conflict between re-



G. Paul Burnett/The New York Times

Ian G. Barbour won the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

ligion and science is only one of four possible models of interaction between the two fields. Alternatively, he said, one could see science and religion as coexisting separately; or science, through its discoveries about the universe, as inspiring a sense of religious awe, or — his own preference — science and religion entering into dialogue, discovering each other's wisdom.