

Recommendation:

"The Neural Buddhists" by David Brooks, *The New York Times*, May 13, 2008.
www.nytimes.com.

David Brooks discusses how new scientific ideas in neuroscience and genetics began another debate about whether God exists, but Brooks believes "the atheism debate is going to be a sideshow. The cognitive revolution is not going to end up undermining faith in God, it's going to end up challenging faith in the Bible" (1).

He summarizes recent research that suggests:

First, the self is not a fixed entity but a dynamic process of relationships.

Second, underneath the patina of different religions, people around the world have common moral intuitions.

Third, people are equipped to experience the sacred, to have moments of elevated experience when they transcend boundaries and overflow with love.

Fourth, God can best be conceived as the nature one experiences at those moments, the unknowable total of all there is. (2)

I have discussed these same ideas in **Do It Yourself To Spirituality: Seven Simple Steps** and in recent newsletters. They are beginning to affect our view of ourselves and of our God. Brooks states:

The real challenge is going to come from people who feel the existence of the sacred, but who think that particular religions are just cultural artifacts built on top of universal human traits. (2)

Brooks sees science and mysticism coming together. He predicts that orthodox believers are going to have to defend their doctrines. "We're in the middle of a scientific revolution. It's going to have big cultural effects" (2).

I have always felt that science and spirituality would reinforce one another. As Brooks shows, this has been happening. The debate isn't whether or not there is a God, the debate is how to define this new view of God in relation to the new scientific evidence.

We know that 92% of Americans believe in the existence of God or a universal spirit (Religious Landscape Survey from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life), but only 70% say they are certain of God's existence and only 60% believe that God is a person with whom they can have a relationship. 25% see God as an impersonal force (Pew forum.org).

