TOWARD AN EVIDENCE-BASED SPIRITUALITY: SOME GLIMPSES OF AN EVOLVING VISION

by Charles T. Tart, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In my recent book *The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal is Bringing Science and Spirit Together*, I have argued that great psychological damage is done by a scientistic mindset of Dismissive Materialism, which automatically condemns all spirituality as stupid and neurotic, and that consideration of actual scientific evidence shows that it is reasonable to be both scientific and spiritual in one’s orientation to life. My focus now is on how we can begin to develop an evidence-based (or at least evidence-enriched) spirituality for the twenty-first century. Such a spirituality should be practically effective in enriching people’s lives as well as consistent with current and evolving scientific knowledge. After a brief review of the scientific evidence showing that humans sometimes possess the kinds of qualities we would expect in a spiritual being, I then discuss the nature of knowledge acquisition and refinement, showing its compatibility with essential science. Next, I sketch eight examples of possible research directions for building knowledge for an evidence-based spirituality, and briefly discuss irrational levels of resistance to such an enterprise.