

Faith facts

Fingerprints of God

By Barbara Bradley Hagerty

Riverhead Books

by KIRSTEN POWERS

Can science prove that God exists?

This was the ambitious question that led award-winning NPR religion correspondent Hagerty on a fascinating trek through the burgeoning scientific field of the study of spirituality.

Hagerty interviewed top scientists who have researched previously taboo subjects like near-death and out-of-body experiences, the efficacy of prayer, and spiritual healing. Hagerty describes these "guerilla" scientists as "passionate in their convic-

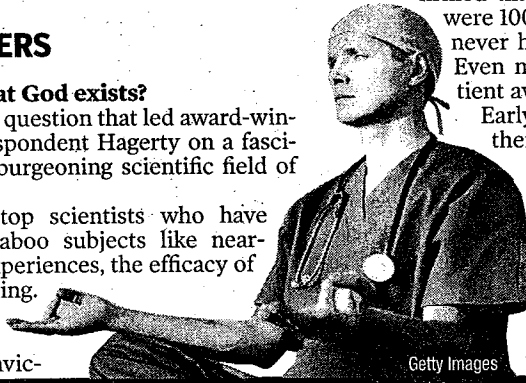
tion that the materialist assumptions of modern science are not as sturdy as they look."

Her investigation of near-death experiences is downright creepy. Hagerty tells of a man with cerebral palsy who could not uncurl his right hand.

After a his heart stopped in the hospital, he claimed to have left his body. Like all the near-death experiences Hagerty describes in her book, doctors later confirmed that the details this patient recalled were 100% accurate, even though he could never have seen the things he described. Even more curious is that when the patient awoke, he could use his right hand.

Early in her book Hagerty asks: "Is there more than this [life]?"

She then reaches an inspirational conclusion: "Science is showing that you and I are crafted with astonishing precision so that we can, on occasion, peer into a spiritual world and know God. And rather than dispel the spiritual, science is cracking it open for all to see."



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