Dr. Sara Miles has taught science at the high school and college levels, been a missionary teaching science, and earned a PhD in the History of Science from the University of Chicago. She is the Founding Dean Emerita of Esperanza College of Eastern University in Pennsylvania, where she led a five-year process to put together a junior college for primarily Hispanic students. Her school soon achieved an AA degree graduation rate two and a half times as high as the national retention rate for Hispanic students. Sara has been very active in the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), and has already served on the Executive Council including past president of ASA. She was also Co-Program Chair for the 2002 ASA Meeting at Pepperdine and serves on the PSCF editorial board. See more about Sara at her profile in the ASA membership directory.

Why are you a Christian? I was raised in a Christian home, and was baptized just before turning eight years old. My earliest memories are of Sunday School, and I never knew a time without Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I’m still a Christian because it is the best way to live one’s life, to know you’re in God’s grace and care and that He loves you as you are. With that, why wouldn’t I want to be a Christian?

Why are you a scientist? I’ve always liked math and science; I had a rock collection and pet snakes as a child; I love the idea of trying to understand how God put things together. I’m a questioner. When I was teaching at Wheaton, my colleague said that I came up with more questions than anybody else he knew. Questioning is part of who I am. I ended up with a PhD in the History of Science because of my missionary work. In the Congo, teaching high school science, I was trying to explain living versus nonliving things in a culture that didn’t understand that type of classification. Later, while doing my masters degree, I took a course in virology, and I again ran into a debate about whether a virus was living or nonliving. I began to wonder why we impose the classifications we do on nature. Where did that come from? I was teaching at Wheaton and I saw a brochure about a PhD program in the History of Science at the University of Chicago. So I went there to further my career – and to ask more questions!

How do your faith and your science enhance each other? In Psalm 111:2 it says “Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.” I love God’s works and like trying to think God’s thoughts after Him. I ask Him, “When You put this together, how did You do it?” The more I learn about that, the more I learn about God. The more I learn, the more amazing He becomes. At a workshop on “Youth, Faith, and Science,” we discussed what takes a greater mind – to build a stick figure out of playdoh, or to build a robot that can build other things? That’s how I see God and evolution – that God created something that could create something else. Evolution doesn’t diminish God, it glorifies the greatness of God. And, the more I know about how God did things, and is doing things, the more I am aware of what it takes to be a good steward of His creation.
**What, or who, have been the three greatest encouragements for you personally in your career?**
The first that comes to mind is ASA, which helps me know other people who share and support my interests in faith and science. Second, my husband has been a great encouragement; he lets me ask stupid questions. And, when we had the kids and I had a full time job, he encouraged me to go back and get my doctorate. Thirdly, my churches have encouraged me, too. I have shared with my churches about science because they cared about finding new ways to love God.

**What advice do you wish you had received as a student or earlier in your career, or would you like to offer others?**
1) My first thought is “know yourself” -- know what God is calling you to be and to do. That’s going to be the most important thing -- to know that you are walking where God wants you to walk. You can do a job if you know it has a purpose, no matter how hard it is.
2) Get involved with a community that supports you in that call. You should be with people who will help you as you move along.
3) Don’t be afraid to ask for help. That’s probably one of the worst mistakes I made. I was around people who seemed to be self-sufficient in their careers, so I thought I was supposed to be self-sufficient too. Not true – ask for help when you need it.

**What is your vision for Christian Women in Science and/or the American Scientific Affiliation?**
I would like to see us find a way to encourage junior high and high school girls to begin to love science. That’s the point at which many of them get turned off. I was the only girl in my senior high interested in science. Wouldn’t it be great to have Templeton Foundation decide to give us a grant to do regional summer Christian camps focused on science and faith for middle and high school girls! I’d like to see a lot more done in areas of helping local churches help their young people. We need better curriculum for this. Creation Research has loads of people doing curriculum, but that’s not the approach we need. And ultimately, I’d like to see us not need CWIS or ASA at all, because the churches would say, “Of course, it’s a foregone conclusion, that science is the way you’re going to think about things.” I’d like to see us be that effective. Unless you dream that big, you never get even partway!