



A PROFILE OF TRANSFORMATION



Name:	Sy Garte
Hometown:	Rockville, Maryland
Profession:	Scientist, writer, editor
ASA Affiliation:	Fellow; VP, Washington DC ASA Chapter; Editor-in-Chief, <i>God and Nature</i>
Hobbies:	Music, writing, nature walks
Favorite Sports Team:	ASA Volleyball

When did you first discover the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA)?

In 2010, when I attended my first ASA Annual meeting in Washington, DC, I had only recently converted to Christianity from atheism, and I knew of no other scientists who were Christians—except for Francis Collins, whose book I had just read. As I stood in a room of scientists booming out “How Great Thou Art” with passion and gusto, I was overwhelmed. I remember sitting back down and praying my thanks to God for bringing me to witness that moment of worshipful praise from people like me.

How has your personal and spiritual life been changed because of your involvement with the ASA?

I had spent several years alone with my new-found faith, isolated and silent. At the ASA, I could learn and speak with others whom I knew would not mock me or look away when I talked about my belief in Christ. I made many friends, including some who lived near me in the Washington DC area. I began sending articles expressing my thoughts to the online ASA magazine *God and Nature*, edited by Emily Ruppel, and was always amazed and grateful when they were accepted. Later I even had a few papers accepted in the ASA journal *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*.

I finally joined a church, and I found other scientists, whom I convinced to join the ASA. I became active in the local chapter and eventually became the vice president. A few years ago, I also started presenting talks at the annual meetings, and made even more friends. I have never gotten over the miracle of finding so many Christians in the sciences with whom I can fellowship.

What is the tangible evidence of the growth you have experienced?

As a newer Christian, I had a lot to learn, and the ASA was a key part of my education. I found theology harder than science, but so many teachers helped me make sense of the Bible and of the subtle truths of the intersection between Christian faith and science, including in my own field of biology. When I retired from my post at the NIH, I began working hard on a book that chronicles my journey to faith, and several ASA members were kind enough to read an early draft and give me valuable advice. I was also greatly honored and humbled to be asked two years ago, when Emily stepped down, to become the Editor-in-Chief of *God and Nature*. One of the blessings of this development was to bring me closer to saintly people who manage the work of the ASA, both on the staff and on the Executive Council, and I became even more excited by the enormous potential the ASA has in promoting the peaceful union of science and faith in our divisive culture.

When my book *The Works of His Hands: A Scientist's Journey from Atheism to Faith* was published in November 2019, the ASA local chapter co-sponsored a very well-attended reading and signing event at my church. Many ASA members have promoted and praised the book, and I will be speaking at other local ASA chapters in the coming months.

How long have you been a member/donor and what has the ASA meant to you?

My ten years of membership included the great honor of being elected to Fellow two years ago. I have donated both money, and, as Editor-in-Chief of *God and Nature*, my time to forward the mission of the ASA in reaching out to new generations of Christians who are either in or contemplating

a career in science. I mention the ASA whenever I speak or write about the compatibility of science and faith, and I rejoice when I find a new follower or friend on social media who confesses to be a believing scientist and has joined the ASA and takes part in the movement to change the cultural outlook regarding Christianity with respect to modern science.

What do our friends and financial partners need to know about how the ASA is making a difference?

Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith is the best scholarly, academic, peer-reviewed journal on the relation of science and faith that I have seen. The articles *PSCF* publishes are of the highest quality, and, unlike in purely scientific journals, mention of God and theology are not forbidden. I am not aware of any other journal that can match *PSCF*'s high standard of excellence and indisputable reputation. On a less lofty level, I have tried to maintain the format and style set by Emily Ruppel for the online ASA magazine *God and Nature*, with informative and sometimes provocative essays, inspiring photographs and poetry, and an overall more informal and entertaining tone appropriate to a magazine.

The local chapters are making a huge difference in how people view science in the church and how they see Christians as intelligent, informed members of the scientific community. Local chapter meetings are open to the public, often held in churches or local colleges, and they feature speakers and discussions in an informal, friendly, and caring atmosphere.

And, of course, the annual meetings, with their famous and engaging plenary speakers, special events, and tours of nearby scientific institutions, as well as with their support and encouragement of students and young scientists, bring together scientists of faith from around the country and the world.

Recently, I gave a talk at my church's Lenten lunches program, and at my request, we sang "How Great Thou Art," the hymn I learned at my first ASA meeting. Please join me and so many others in helping ASA bring more people to see the beauty of science as part of the magnificence of God's creation.