

## A PROFILE OF TRANSFORMATION



**Name:** Grace Buchanan

**Hometown:** Flemington, New Jersey

**Profession:** Homemaker and retired Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant

**ASA Affiliation:** Member, Annual Meeting Attender

**Hobbies:** Enjoying flowers and trees, walking, oil painting, piano, and reading.

### **When did you first discover The American Scientific Affiliation?**

My husband, J. Scott Buchanan, learned the existence of the ASA through the articles by Paul Seely in the *PSCF* journal which were available online. We attended our first annual conference at Catholic University in Washington, DC, in 2010. I was blown away by a number of things, such as the intelligence and humility and grace of people like Jennifer Wiseman and Francis Collins. They did not use their brilliance and superior knowledge to intimidate but to graciously suggest a helpful perspective. They placed loving Jesus and embracing His ways and the unity of the Body of Christ above being right. Clearly knowing God and worshipping Him was more important than knowledge. They modeled that knowledge puffs up but love builds up. I was impressed at the value of the people to people fellowship within the conference setting.

### **How have you come to peace with faith and science?**

First, I would like to note that ASA does not take sides in controversial discussions. Thus, although my journey was toward acceptance of old earth and evolutionary processes, one of the things I appreciate about ASA most is that if I had the opposite journey, I would be treated with equal respect and dignity. That is a key reason I believe ASA is worthy of support.

As a teenager during the Jesus movement in the 70's, Scott came to faith and led me to the Lord during high school. We never questioned a literal interpretation of Genesis or any other part of the Bible.

Scott had graduated from Princeton and started Gordon Conwell Seminary expecting to pastor or teach. But God surprised Scott, calling him to be an engineer. So Scott started over as an undergraduate chemical engineering major. I had graduated from Gordon College and had begun teaching school. We were married in 1978.

When Scott was an undergraduate at Princeton University, John Whitcomb had visited to promote his message of young earth as explained in his book *The Genesis Flood*. It sounded plausible to Scott who started researching and defending that view. I was a happy camper. The young earth creation story meshed perfectly with my literal reading of the Bible.

Fast forward twenty years and we had been raising two children and teaching Sunday school. Scott had gotten a PhD in Chemical Engineering and taken a job doing industrial research. While recovering from minor surgery in 1997, Scott read a book by Hugh Ross refuting the evidence for a young earth as presented in *The Genesis Flood*. Being of an inquiring mind with a passion for truth, Scott was launched into personal research about geology.

Now Scott had another problem: me. He was challenging my literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and he was tapping into emotions of fear of which I had been unaware. Next came anxiety and guilt. If Genesis 1-7 were not literal, what were the implications for the rest of the Bible? Was I now guilty of misleading my children and Sunday school students for decades and therefore a party to the possibility of their losing their faith in college? I also felt anger and rage; Scott was forcing me to face complexities that deeply threatened the child in me, and I was aware that I sometimes felt like shooting him.

Fast forward ten years to a church men's retreat at which Scott heard a brother in the Lord present young earth creationism; Scott felt compelled to tell the men present that there are other views among Bible believing Christians. The subsequent dialogue with the speaker launched Scott into research of biology and genetics, eventually convincing him of the evidence for evolutionary processes, apart from how God chose to instill His image in human beings.

Along the way, Scott discovered the writings of Paul Seely, Darrel Falk, and Denis Lamoureux, men of strong evangelical faith and insight into scripture as well as men of science. These books were of invaluable encouragement as Scott wrestled alone, sorting through so many issues. In addition to a confused and angry wife, our local church contained no one sympathetic. (Even now Scott has exactly one friend in the church with whom he can discuss issues of faith and science. We realize now that some Christians in the sciences have not a single person locally with whom they can talk freely about these issues.) The unfolding of my own understanding of how scripture is compatible with science was a process over a number of years. Those same authors that helped Scott helped me also.

I also got help from a graduate course on the wisdom books of the Bible. I learned that some of the psalms were acrostics, intricate poems written in Hebrew literary forms of the day, requiring much human involvement, thought, and effort. That completely messed with my simplistic view of scripture having been downloaded by Holy Spirit with virtually no human partnership other than moving the stylus across the clay or the pen across the parchment. Jesus communicated truth through parables; the fact there was likely no literal Good Samaritan does not detract from the truth Jesus was communicating. The fact that God spoke to the people of Moses's day using the literary forms and science they understood at the time does not detract from the eternal truths God was revealing to them and us through the message of Genesis. As Paul Seely pointed out, the ancients had a science of their day and God used their understandings to begin to reveal His own nature and purposes in creation.

### **What is tangible evidence of the growth you've experienced?**

I have learned to honor the Bible as the Bible itself describes its own purpose (II Timothy 3:16): teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, equipping us for every good work.

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

ASA operates on a shoestring budget with total integrity in financial disclosure and accountability. The few modestly paid staff coordinates an army of volunteers with a heart of service as unto the Lord.

As believers who take the Great Commission seriously, we grieve over the barriers to faith for unbelievers. The sad deception of young earth creationism has made the Body of Christ in America a laughing stock to the world, preventing the claims of the gospel from being taken seriously by thinking educated people. St Augustine pointed out that Christians who profess ignorant opinions about the natural world only undermine their authority about the things of the spiritual world.

Just as bad or worse, our own children may grow up at home and in Sunday school hearing some Genesis Bible stories presented as literal truth and then go to college science classes and find out they were misled. Many therefore lose their faith. There are other good groups working on these issues but we know of no other organization quite like ASA. How can we get the word out more effectively to college students, teachers, and researchers in the sciences and technologies that they are not alone in their integration of faith and science? How can we spread the good news to homeschoolers and pastors that a faithful reading of the Bible is completely compatible with every area of scientific studies? ASA annual conferences promote person-to-person dialogue, mentoring, encouragement, and unity in the Body of Christ. Because Scott and I so appreciate the mission of ASA, we believe whole-heartedly in financially supporting ASA.