



James C. Peterson

# A View from a High City

I am writing to you from the annual meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation that founded this journal. We are meeting this year at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, just west of Denver. Denver has long been known as the Mile High City, and has doubled down on that reputation with the legalization of recreational marijuana. Golden has its own provision for intoxication as the home of MillerCoors, the brewing company. I have not regarded this meeting locale as an opportunity to seek out legally spiked brownies. My theory is that there could be no good result from trying them. If I do not like their effect, it would be a waste of time and money. The alternative, that I might discover that I like them, would be the worst case scenario. While many new experiences can be fascinating or a delight, would this one be worth the risk of being drawn to, or maybe even psychologically or physically hooked on, a substance that is illegal where I live?

And beyond legality, for many, these and other substances quickly become deeply addictive. How many lives have been sapped, crippled, or even lost over one addiction or another? One may hope to toy safely with substances that are not always addictive, but how does the person experimenting know in time, which ones will become deadly for him or her? Circumstances and susceptibility dictate that the danger ranges from hard to impossible, to predict. And indeed addictions can become deadly. Deaths from addiction to prescription opioids, fentanyl, heroin, crack, and alcohol fill the obituary columns even when the cause of these deaths is not specifically noted. Legal nicotine has one of the most compulsive and deadly records of all. And behavioral addictions such as gambling and pornography stagger individual lives and our society in their own way as well. Why do so many bright and able people harm themselves and others, often against their best intentions?

Can we gain some insight here from both Romans 7 and neurology? We need "all hands on deck," all the help we can get, including that available from

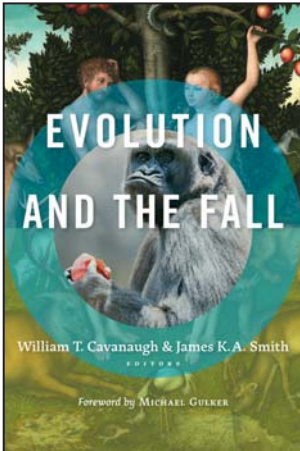
the best of Christian theology and the sciences. The sciences, social sciences, humanities, and theology interact at this juncture with lives at stake.

Judith Toronchuk gets us started working together on this challenge with her invitation essay posted on the web pages of both ASA and CSCA. Toronchuk (PhD, McGill University) teaches physiological psychology at Trinity Western University. Her essay informs readers of the latest developments in addiction research, and raises key questions for our understanding and response. Readers are encouraged to take up one of the insights or questions that she raises, or maybe a related one that was not mentioned, and draft an article that contributes to the conversation. These can be sent to her at [toronchu@twu.ca](mailto:toronchu@twu.ca). Toronchuk will send the best essays on to peer review, and then we will select from those for publication in a theme issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (PSCF).

The lead editorial in the December 2013 issue of *PSCF* outlines what the journal looks for in article contributions. That piece, along with all other *PSCF* content published more than nine months ago, is available through an index at <http://network.asa3.org/?page=PSCF>. For best consideration for inclusion in the theme issue, manuscripts should be received electronically before October 31, 2017. \*\*

Looking forward to learning from your contributions,  
**James C. Peterson**, *editor-in-chief*

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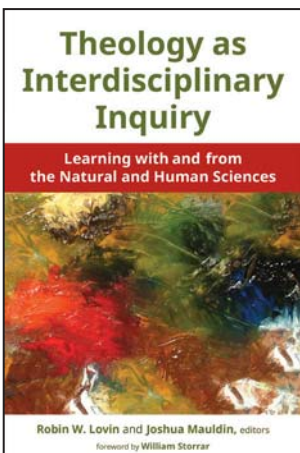
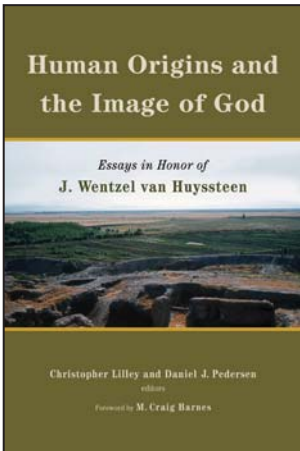
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