

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)Contact: Mary Ann Meyers, Ph.D., *Senior Fellow*

Purpose

“In the midst
of death, we
are in life.”

from the Burial Service
Book of Common Prayer

The purpose of this symposium is to explore how the grand reversal at the heart of the Christian Gospel, with its proclamation of life, and life in abundance, but life coming through death, is reflected in various disciplines in ways that might speak to contemporary issues. The “hypothesis” of this symposium is that by his death, Christ has conquered death, and so life and death are inverted; that by dying, as a human, Christ shows us what it is to be God, offering us a way of participating in the life of God, and, in fact, becoming human. Every other aspect of creation is “spoken” into existence (“Let there be, it was, it was good”), but God’s particular project, “Let us make a human being,” is only completed at the end, witnessed by Pilate (“behold the human being”) and declared by Christ (“it is finished”). The *genesis* of a human being requires one who as a creature can say “Let it be!”, first Christ himself, then (seen in him) his mother, and subsequently all those who follow him. Approaching his martyrdom, Ignatius reflects: “the pangs of birth are upon me ... when I shall have attained to the light, then I will become a human being.” Irenaeus’ words, “the glory of God is a living human being,” again speaks of the martyrs. Death alone is common to all men and women throughout all time and space: thrown into this world without choice, our existence culminates inevitably in death. Yet, by showing us what it is to be God in the way in which he dies as a human being, Christ presents an alternative “use” of death: we now can actively “use” death, as a voluntary birth, completing God’s project of creating living human beings by giving our own fiat, establishing our existence in the free sacrificial life that is the life of God himself. Begun in baptism, in a symbolic “dying” to this world, the new life culminates in physical death, when the creature finally becomes clay in God’s hands as a living human being.

Such a bold “hypothesis” requires testing on various levels:

- Theologically: How has this insight been articulated (or overlooked) in the history of theological reflection and in contemporary approaches?
- Philosophically: Does the attention given in contemporary phenomenology (of the “theological turn”) to themes such as birth/death, life, flesh, icon, and gift add further insight, so opening up a constructive dialogue?
- Culturally: If Christ shows us the face of God in the way he dies (voluntarily for others), then is there a connection between the “denial of death” (the fact that we no longer “see” death because rather than allowing our departed ones to remain at home, mourned and celebrated by family, friends, and neighbors, the cadaver is instead taken to the mortician to be made up to look alive under the pink lights of the funeral home) and modern “secularism”? Is there a correlation between the denial of the sanctity of the ends of life (birth and death) and a hedonistic approach to

life?

- Anthropologically: Is “becoming human” through “dying to oneself” a more satisfactory account of the often-made distinction between person and individual? Would it provide the basis for an account of *human* distinctiveness, both with regard to the human origins and the possibility of a “post-human” future (real or theoretical, with genetic prosthetics, outsourcing of minds, etc.)?

- Biologically and astrophysically: Is the relation between life and death on the human level reflected in, and also informed by, similar phenomenon on the micro-level (e.g. cell death) or macro-level (e.g. the death of stars)?

- Medically: How does such a hypothesis contribute to what is fast becoming the greatest medical (but also financial and legal) problem in the western world: that the medical arts have become focused on the creation and extension of biological life, no longer knowing the art of helping the dying to die and those around them to accept this passage? Does there need to be a constructive dialogue between theology and the hospice movement/palliative care?

The conversation focused on these questions draws participants from three continents. Under the aegis of the John Templeton Foundation, it is taking place in Castel Gandolfo, a town in the Alban Hills southeast of Rome. Castel Vecchio is at the edge of the town and at the edge is Villa Barberini, the papal summer residence, which has on its grounds the Vatican Observatory.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION
SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Approach

The symposium is part of the Templeton Foundation's *Humble Approach Initiative*. The goal of the initiative is to bring about the discovery of new spiritual information by furthering high-quality scientific research. The "humble approach" is inherently interdisciplinary, sensitive to nuance, and biased in favor of building linkages and connections. It assumes an openness to new ideas and a willingness to experiment. Placing high value upon patience and perseverance, it retains a sense of wondering expectation because it recognizes, in Loren Eiseley's haunting phrase, "a constant emergent novelty in nature that does not lie totally behind us, or we would not be where we are." A fundamental principle of the Foundation, in the words of its founder, is that "humility is a gateway to greater understanding and open[s] the doors to progress" in all endeavors. Sir John Templeton believed that in their quest to comprehend foundational realities, scientists, philosophers, and theologians have much to learn about and from one another. The humble approach is intended as a corrective to parochialism. It encourages discovery and seeks to accelerate its pace.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)**JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Chair

Dean and professor of patristics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York, [John Behr](#) writes about early church history, especially the development of theological reflection, asceticism, and Christian anthropology. He comes to America from England where he took his undergraduate degree at Thames Polytechnic, London. Going on to Oxford University to study with then Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia after a year studying in Greece, he earned an M.Phil. in Eastern Christian studies and a D.Phil. in theology in 1995. Dr. Behr then joined the St. Vladimir's faculty as a lecturer in patristics and was named a professor in 2000. He was ordained an Orthodox priest the next year. Currently a distinguished lecturer in patristics at Fordham University, he formerly served as president of the Orthodox Theological Society in America. He was editor of *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* and continues as associate editor of the Popular Patristics series published by St. Vladimir Seminary Press and as a member of the editorial board of *Pro Ecclesia*. In addition to publishing articles in scholarly journals, he is the editor (with Andrew Louth and Dimitri Conomos) of *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West* (2003) and the author of nine other books, including *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: On the Apostolic Preaching* (1997), *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* (2000), a two volume study of the formation of Christian theology, *The Way to Nicaea* (2001) and *The Nicene Faith* (2004), *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (2006), which challenges the modern historical approach to theology by reading the Old Testament as a thesaurus of imagery to be understood from the starting point of the risen Christ, *The Case Against Diodore and Theodore: Texts and their Contexts* (2011), and a landmark edition, translation, and commentary on the remaining fragments of the writings of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, *St. Athanasius: On the Incarnation* (2011). Forthcoming later in 2013 will be two new studies: *Becoming Human: Meditations on Christian Anthropology in Word and Image*, which will be published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, and *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity*, a full contextual study of the first great theologian of the Christian tradition, which will be published by Oxford University Press.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

[Jeffrey Paul Bishop](#)[Conor Cunningham](#)[Douglas James Davies](#)[Emmanuel Falque](#)[Alexei V. Filippenko](#)[Christina M.
Gschwandtner](#)[Daniel B. Hinshaw](#)[Luc Jaeger](#)[Henry L. Novello](#)[Gregory J. Velicer](#)

[Jeffrey Paul Bishop](#), a physician and a philosopher, is Tenet Endowed Chair in Health Care Ethics and director of the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics at St. Louis University. His research and writing are concerned with the historical, political, and philosophical underpinnings of contemporary medical theory and practice. A graduate of the University of Texas, Austin, he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in theology at the Austin Graduate School of Theology then an M.D. at the University of Texas, Houston, in 1993. He was awarded a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Dallas in 2009. Dr. Bishop began his teaching career as an assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas in 1998 and was promoted to associate professor in 2003. Two years later, he became the principal lecturer in medical ethics and law at England's Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, an institution then jointly run by the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth. He returned to the United States in 2007 on accepting an associate professorship of medicine and biomedical ethics at Vanderbilt University, where he also served as director of clinical ethics education and consultation services in Vanderbilt's Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society and held appointments as an associate professor of theological ethics in the graduate department of religion and as an adjunct professor of law in the university's School of Law. Dr. Bishop accepted his present position in 2010. A member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* and of *Christian Bioethics*, as well as the editorial advisory board of *Medicine Studies*, he serves as assistant editor of the Springer series *Philosophy and Medicine*. Dr. Bishop is the author of more than thirty papers published in scholarly and scientific journals or as chapters in volumes of collected works. His widely acclaimed first book, *The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying*, which was published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 2011, has been hailed as a "ground-breaking work in bioethics" that carefully builds the case that medicine is shaped by its attitudes toward death. He is completing two other books: (with Theresa Lysaught and Andrew Michel) *Chasing After Virtue: Neuroscience, Economics, and the Biopolitics of Morality*, an investigation of neuroscience evidence related to philosophical concepts of virtues and vices, which will be published by New York University Press, and *Body Work and Work of the Body*, forthcoming from Cascade Press.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop

[Conor Cunningham](#)

Douglas James Davies

Emmanuel Falque

Alexei V. Filippenko

Christina M.
Gschwandtner

Daniel B. Hinshaw

Luc Jaeger

Henry L. Novello

Gregory J. Velicer

An associate professor of theology and lecturer in the philosophy of religion at the University of Nottingham, [Conor Cunningham](#) serves as co-director of Nottingham's Centre of Theology and Philosophy. He writes about religion and science and Western philosophy from the perspective of Christian orthodoxy. After reading law at the University of Kent where he earned an L.L.B., Dr. Cunningham studied philosophy and took an M. Phil. with distinction at the University of Dundee. He then moved on to Cambridge University where he was awarded a Ph.D. in theology in 2002. He held a post-doctoral fellowship at Nottingham before being named to his present position in 2006. In 2012-2013, Dr. Cunningham was a research fellow at the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton. A member of the editorial boards of *Philosophy, Theology, and the Sciences*, *Radical Orthodoxy: Theology, Philosophy, and Culture*, and *Synesis*, he serves as editor for three book series: *Veritas* (Wipf and Stock/SCM Press), *Interventions* (William B. Eerdmans), and *Kalos* (Wipf and Stock). In addition to some twenty papers published in scholarly journals, he is the co-editor (with Peter M. Candler, Jr.) of *Transcendence and Phenomenology* (2007), *Belief and Metaphysics* (2007), *The Grandeur of Reason* (2010), and, most recently, *What Is Life? Theology, Philosophy, and Science*, which was published by SCM Press in 2013. He is the author of the *Genealogy of Nihilism* (2002), a reading of Western philosophy in the light of nihilistic logic that suggests philosophies of nothing might be transfigured by engagement with theology grounded in Trinitarian thought, and the award-winning *Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong* (2010). The witty and provocative presentation of the author's case both for creation and evolution, which argues that science and religion give meaning and provide insight to each other, has been translated into Korean and French and will come out next year in Spanish and German editions. Dr. Cunningham also wrote and presented an award-winning BBC2 program, "Did Darwin Kill God?," in 2009, which was subsequently aired in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand after its original broadcast in Britain.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)**JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop

Conor Cunningham

Douglas James Davies

Emmanuel Falque

Alexei V. Filippenko

Christina M.
Gschwandtner

Daniel B. Hinshaw

Luc Jaeger

Henry L. Novello

Gregory J. Velicer

Douglas James Davies, an anthropologist and a theologian, is professor in the study of religion at Durham University where he serves as director of the Centre for Death and Life Studies. Internationally acknowledged for work that focuses on anthropological and religious questions about death, mortality, and grief, he has written on rituals and beliefs surrounding funerary rites and cremation, as well as about Mormon spirituality, challenges to Christianity in contemporary Britain, the transmission of spiritual capital by Anglican leaders, and church life in rural England. Dr. Davies studied for his first degree in anthropology at St. John's College, Durham, then took a second bachelor's degree in theology at Durham after beginning his study of Mormonism with Bryan Wilson at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Oxford University. His work at Oxford led to a M.Litt. in 1971. He earned a Ph.D. in theology and religious studies at Nottingham University in 1979 and was awarded a D.Litt. by Oxford in 2004 in recognition of his published work. Dr. Davies was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1976. Having joined the Nottingham faculty two years earlier as a lecturer in religious studies, he was named a professor in 1993, a post he held until accepting his present professorship at Durham in 1997. Dr. Davies has been a visiting fellow at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford, a Mayers Research Fellow at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, and a visiting research fellow at the Collegium for Advanced Studies at Helsinki University. He is an academician of the Academy of Social Sciences, a fellow of the Learned Society of Wales, and a serving brother of The Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Uppsala University awarded him an honorary doctorate in theology in 1998. A former chair of the Religious Studies Group of the British Sociological Association and a former president of the British Association for the Study of Religion, he currently serves on the editorial boards of *Mortality*, *Tanatologia*, and *COLLEGIUM* (the open-access journal of the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies). He is editor of the Ashgate series on Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective and The Cultural History of Death series for Bloomsbury Publishers. In addition to publishing numerous papers in scholarly journals, he is the editor or co-editor of two books, most recently (with Chang-Won Park) *Emotion, Identity and Death: Mortality Across Disciplines*, which was published by Ashgate last year, as well as the co-editor (with Lewis H. Mates) of the *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (2005). He is the author or co-author of eighteen other books, including (with Alastair Shaw) the award-winning *Reusing Old Graves: A Report on Popular British Attitudes* (1995), which was influential in fostering burial reforms in the United Kingdom, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (1997 and, in an expanded and revised edition, 2002), *Private Passions* (2000), a meditation on the betrayal of Jesus which was selected as the Lent Book for 2001 by the Archbishop of Wales, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (2000), *Anthropology and Theology* (2002), *An Introduction to Mormonism* (2003), *A Brief History of Death* (2004), *The Theology of Death* (2008), a reflection that presents death within the context of life and integrates Christian doctrine and lay perspectives based on individual experiences, *Joseph Smith, Jesus, and Satanic*

Opposition: Atonement, Evil and Mormon Vision (2010), *Emotion, Identity and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity and Otherness* (2011), and, most recently, *Natural Burial: Traditional-Secular Spiritualities and Funeral Innovations*, which was published by Continuum in 2012.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop
Conor Cunningham
Douglas James Davies
[Emmanuel Falque](#)
Alexei V. Filippenko
Christina M.
Gschwandtner
Daniel B. Hinshaw
Luc Jaeger
Henry L. Novello
Gregory J. Velicer

Professor and dean of philosophy at the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP), [Emmanuel Falque](#) is a philosopher of religion whose research and writing focuses on patristic and medieval philosophy and phenomenology. His conversation partners range from the eminent 13th century theologians St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, the great Franciscan and Dominican doctors of the Church, to the 19th and 20th century German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Dr. Falque has endeavored to articulate new connections between philosophy and theology and is attempting to rethink how phenomenology can deal more adequately with Christian revelation. A graduate of the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne), he received his license in Catholic theology *summa cum laude* from the Centre Sèvres, a university level Jesuit institution in Paris, in 1993, then returned to the Sorbonne to study with Jean-Luc Marion and earned a Ph.D. in philosophy *summa cum laude* in 1998. Dr. Falque was awarded a HDR (Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches) by the Sorbonne in 2006. He had begun teaching at the ICP in 1998, was named a professor in 2007, and was made dean two years later. He also serves as an honorary professor at the Australian Catholic University. In addition to papers published in scholarly journals, Dr. Falque is the author of six books: *Sainte Bonaventure et l'Entrée de Dieu en Théologie* (2000), *Dieu, la Chair, at l'Autre: D'Irénée à Duns Scot* (2008), and a trilogy—*Le Passeur de Gethsémani* (1999), *Métamorphose de la Finitude* (2004), and *Les Noces de l'Agneau* (2011). The second volume was published last year in English as *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection* by Fordham University Press, which will also publish the third volume. The three-volume study, *a newly imagined phenomenology*, is a meditation on the Pascal Triduum. His newest book is *Passer le Rubicon—Philosophie et Théologie: Essai sur les Frontières*, which was published this year by Lessius, discusses the fruitful interaction of theology and philosophy.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION
SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

[Jeffrey Paul Bishop](#)[Conor Cunningham](#)[Douglas James Davies](#)[Emmanuel Falque](#)[Alexei V. Filippenko](#)[Christina M.
Gschwandtner](#)[Daniel B. Hinshaw](#)[Luc Jaeger](#)[Henry L. Novello](#)[Gregory J. Velicer](#)

[Alexei V. Filippenko](#), professor of astronomy and Richard and Rhoda Goldman Distinguished Professor in the Physical Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, is one of the most highly cited observational astronomers in the world. He is the only person to have been a member of both teams that revealed the accelerating expansion of the universe propelled by mysterious “dark energy.” The teams received the 2007 Gruber Cosmology Prize for their discovery, and the 2011 Nobel Prize in physics was subsequently awarded to their leaders. Dr. Filippenko makes frequent use of the Hubble Space Telescope and the Keck 10-meter telescopes, and primary areas of his research are supernovae, active galaxies, black holes, and gamma-ray bursts in addition to continuing to study the implications of the breakthrough detection of cosmic expansion. A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, he earned a Ph.D. in astronomy in 1984 at the California Institute of Technology, where he was a Hertz Foundation Fellow. He went on to conduct postdoctoral research at Berkeley as a Miller Fellow and was appointed an assistant professor of astronomy there in 1986. Promoted to full professor in 1992, Dr. Filippenko was named to the Goldman chair in 2009. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, he is also a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences, and the many other honors he has received for his research include a National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator Award, the Newton Lacy Pierce Prize of the American Astronomical Society, and the Robert M. Petrie Prize of the Canadian Astronomical Society. He has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar. Winner of the most prestigious teaching awards given by Berkeley, he was voted the “Best Professor” on campus a record nine times in addition to being named the Carnegie/CASE National Professor of the Year in 2006. He has served as president of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and as a councilor of the American Astronomical Society. The author of more than 700 papers published in scientific journals, he wrote (with Jay Pasachoff) an award-winning astronomy textbook, *The Cosmos: Astronomy in the New Millennium* (now in its fourth edition), produced five astronomy video courses, and has appeared in some 100 television documentaries. His work in making science accessible to the general public was recognized by the 2004 Carl Sagan Prize for Science Popularization.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)**JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop

Conor Cunningham

Douglas James Davies

Emmanuel Falque

Alexei V. Filippenko

Christina M.
Gschwandtner

Daniel B. Hinshaw

Luc Jaeger

Henry L. Novello

Gregory J. Velicer

A philosopher and a theologian who specializes in the emerging field of continental philosophy of religion, [Christina M. Gschwandtner](#) is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Scranton. She has been a visiting associate professor of philosophy at Fordham University this past year. A *summa cum laude* graduate of Eastern Nazarene College, she earned a master's degree in theology with distinction from the University of Manchester, a master's degree in philosophy *summa cum laude* from Boston College, a Ph.D. in philosophy with distinction from DePaul University in 2003, and a Ph.D. in theology with high honors from the University of Durham last year. Dr. Gschwandtner began her teaching career as an instructor at DePaul and joined the Scranton faculty as an assistant professor in 2003. She is the recipient of several Scranton research and teaching awards. In addition to papers published in scholarly journals and numerous translations of the works of French philosophers, she is the author of three books: *Reading Marion: Exceeding Metaphysics* (2007), *Postmodern Apologetics: Arguments for God in Contemporary Philosophy*, an introduction to continental philosophy of religion, which was published in 2012 by Fordham University Press, and *Degrees of Givenness: On Saturation in Jean-Luc Marion*, forthcoming from Indiana University Press.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

[Jeffrey Paul Bishop](#)[Conor Cunningham](#)[Douglas James Davies](#)[Emmanuel Falque](#)[Alexei V. Filippenko](#)[Christina M.
Gschwandtner](#)[Daniel B. Hinshaw](#)[Luc Jaeger](#)[Henry L. Novello](#)[Gregory J. Velicer](#)

[Daniel B. Hinshaw](#) is a professor of surgery at the University of Michigan School of Medicine. The founding director of the Palliative Care Consultation Service at the Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, he formerly served as chief of surgery, then as chief of staff at the VAMC. His clinical research interests are focused on care at the end of life, spiritual distress in advanced illness, and the use of complementary medicine in the relief of pain. Basic research interests include the toxicology of mustard gas and the role of the microfilament system in coordinating the events of programmed cell death. Dr. Hinshaw was educated at Loma Linda University (LLU) and earned his M.D. at the Loma Linda School of Medicine in 1978. After a surgical residency at LLU Medical Center, he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Immunology at the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, California. He became an assistant professor of surgery at the Medical College of Virginia in 1985, an appointment he held for two years while he also was a staff surgeon at the McGuire Veterans Administration Medical Center in Richmond. Joining the Michigan medical faculty as an assistant professor of surgery in 1987, he was named to his present position in 1999. Dr. Hinshaw took a clinical fellowship in palliative medicine at the Cleveland Clinic during a sabbatical two years later. Recognized as among the nation's "Top Doctors" by *US News & World Report* on the basis of a peer nomination process, he has helped establish hospice programs in Uganda and Ethiopia, as well as in Romania, where he is a visiting professor at the University of Transilvania in Brasov and has worked with local faculty to create master's level courses in palliative care. He also has served as a visiting professor at the University of Belgrade in the Republic of Serbia, and he is visiting professor of palliative care at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in 2012-2013. A fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Hinshaw is the recipient of several commendations from the Veterans Integrated Service Network for his work with the dying. He currently serves as associate editor of the web portal eFACS for Pain and Palliative Care. In addition to more than eighty papers published in scientific journals and in volumes of collected works, he is the author of *Suffering and the Nature of Healing*, which will be published later this year by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)**JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop
Conor Cunningham
Douglas James Davies
Emmanuel Falque
Alexei V. Filippenko
Christina M.
Gschwandtner
Daniel B. Hinshaw
[Luc Jaeger](#)
Henry L. Novello
Gregory J. Velicer

A professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), [Luc Jaeger](#) works on informational biopolymers to further the development of new methodologies and materials with potential biomedical applications in the emerging fields of RNA nanobiotechnology and RNA synthetic biology. His research involves an effort to decipher the logic of RNA self-assembly and to unravel how complex RNA molecules evolved at the origins of life. He is attempting to characterize self-autonomous folding and assembly properties of various RNA structural features identified in natural RNA molecules, such as the ribosome, ribozymes, and riboswitches, with the aim of, one, defining new RNA structural and assembly principles for the three-dimensional structure prediction and rational design of RNA, two, deciphering the evolution of the structural and functional modularity of RNA, and three, developing innovative strategies for controlling the self-assembly and organization of nucleic acids at a nanoscale level with an exquisite degree of precision. A graduate of the University Louis Pasteur (ULP) in Strasbourg, Dr. Jaeger went on to earn a master's degree in chemistry and biology and then a Ph.D. in structural biochemistry and biophysics at ULP in 1993 under the supervision of Eric Westhof and François Michel. He was awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship from NASA to work with Gerald Joyce at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, and, in 1995, returned to France as a research scientist at the Institut de Biologie Moléculaire et Cellulaire in Strasbourg. He joined the faculty of UCSB in 2002 and was promoted to his present position in 2012. Dr. Jaeger has been a visiting professor at the National Cancer Institute, and he has held a ULP-NIBH (National Institute of Bioscience and Human Technology and Information Services) grant for work in Japan, as well as being the recipient of a UCSB Junior Faculty Research Incentive Award. A member of the John Templeton Foundation board of advisors, he serves on the editorial boards of *RNA Nanotechnology* and *The Scientific World Journal*. A member of the advisory board of the *Journal of Molecular Recognition*, he is the author or co-author of more than seventy papers published in scientific journals.

[home](#) | [approach](#) | [chair](#) | [participants](#)**JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

The Role of Life in Death

Castel Gandolfo, Italy | 5, 6, and 7 June 2013

[Home](#)[Approach](#)[Chair](#)[Participants](#)

Participants

Jeffrey Paul Bishop
Conor Cunningham
Douglas James Davies
Emmanuel Falque
Alexei V. Filippenko
Christina M.
Gschwandtner
Daniel B. Hinshaw
Luc Jaeger
[Henry L. Novello](#)
Gregory J. Velicer

[Henry L. Novello](#), an honorary research fellow in the Department of Theology at Flinders University in South Australia, began his professional career in chemistry. Educated at Sacred Heart College in Adelaide and at the University of Adelaide, where he took a B.Sc. degree, he worked in the university's Department of Physical and Inorganic Chemistry before earning a second baccalaureate degree in theology at Flinders. After another three years as an industrial research chemist, he went on to study at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome) and received a licentiate in dogmatic theology in 1998. He was awarded a Ph.D. in theology by Flinders in 2002 and worked there as a research associate in theology for the next year. He accepted appointment as a lecturer in theology at the University of Notre Dame Australia in 2004 and assumed his present position in 2009. In addition to papers on eschatology published in academic journals, Dr. Novello is the author of *Death as Transformation: A Contemporary Study of Death*, which was published by Ashgate in 2011. Concerned with an area notable for its theological neglect, his book construes death positively as a privileged moment wherein humans have the opportunity to share in the redemptive death of Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be created anew.

Professor of evolutionary biology at ETH Zurich, Gregory J. Velicer is a leading scientist in the field of experimental evolution. His research focuses on cooperation, conflict, and multicellularity in the microbial world, particularly with regard to the ecology and evolution of social behavior in the Myxobacteria, which exhibit some of the most sophisticated cooperative behaviors among bacteria. A graduate of Cornell University, he received a Ph.D. in genetics from Michigan State University (MSU) in 1997. Dr. Velicer stayed on at MSU as a postdoctoral researcher in the laboratories of Lee Kroos and Richard Lenski for two years before joining the faculty as a research assistant professor in the university's Center for Microbial Ecology. He became an adjunct research professor at MSU in 2000, when he moved on to the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology in Tübingen, Germany, as a junior group leader. Promoted to group leader in Tübingen in 2004, he was appointed an associate professor of evolutionary biology at Indiana University in 2006, a post he held until accepting his present position at ETH in 2011. Dr. Velicer has published nearly fifty papers in major scientific journals.

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