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THE LIMITS OF SCIENCE AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

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**International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on the
Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education**

Speech title: "TWO RESEARCH PARADIGMS, WITH OR WITHOUT „GOD HYPOTHESIS": C.S. LEWIS AND RICHARD DAWKINS "

Conference summary:

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In this present paper we try to learn something about how to cope with analytical investigation of reality, by comparing the ideas of two iconic Oxford figures, on the one hand, the scientific popularizer, and the renowned atheist Richard Dawkins, and the literary scholar and Christian apologist C.S. Lewis, on the other. It is more than interesting to know how two great thinkers of the 20th century can raise and answer to questions of life, such as Reasoned belief, the so-called „God hypothesis” or concerning our place and purpose in this world. Dawkins is an evolutionary biologist who moved from a nominal Anglicanism to a committed atheism; Lewis is a literary scholar who moved from atheism to what he named ‘mere Christianity’, a form of Christianity that overlooked its denominational aspects. Both Dawkins and Lewis see intellectual reflection on the big questions as natural and significant. Both insist that their beliefs – atheism and Christianity respectively – demand and deserve intellectual seriousness and are capable of being developed into larger systems.

Lewis’s apologetic approach generally takes the form of identifying a common human observation or experience, and then showing how it fits, naturally and plausibly, within a Christian way of looking at things. For Dawkins, there is no room for faith in science, precisely because the evidence compels us to draw certain valid

conclusions. He proposes an absolute dichotomy between 'blind faith' and the 'overwhelming scientific evidence. Dawkins contends that a supernatural creator, God, almost certainly does not exist, and that belief in a personal god qualifies as a delusion, which he defines as a persistent false belief held in the face of strong contradictory evidence.

Lewis offers a Christian alternative: we need to undergo healing, renewal, and repair – and we cannot fix ourselves. Through faith we embrace a new way of thinking and living that is not of our own creation but opens the way to becoming what we are meant to be. For him, the Christian narrative allows us to hold together the functionality and meaning of our universe.

An inevitable conclusion is that both Dawkins and Lewis are men of faith, in that both hold committed positions that cannot be proved right, but which they clearly regard as justified and reasonable. We have to learn to live with a degree of rational uncertainty about our deepest beliefs and value.

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