

Rev. Prof. Dr. Jooseop KEUM – Doctor honoris causa of Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania.

Revista Teologică publică aici, atât în engleză cât și în română, următoarele documente legate de acest eveniment:

- Cuvântarea *Laudatio*, scrisă și prezentată de Pr. Prof. Dr. Aurel Pavel, Prodecan al Facultății de Teologie ;
- Cuvântarea de acceptare a Dr. Jooseop Keum;

LAUDATIO
Prof. Dr. Jooseop KEUM

V. Rev. Prof. Dr. Pavel Aurel

Your Eminence Prof. Dr. Laurentiu STREZA, Archbishop of Sibiu and Metropolitan of Transylvania,

Your Excellency Prof. Dr. ing. Ioan BONDREA, Rector of “Lucian Blaga” University,

Respected members of the Senate of “Lucian Blaga” University,

Dear colleagues, students,

Honourable guests,

We are gathered today here to honour Jooseop Keum from South Korea, senior pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, professor and leading figure of missional and ecumenical studies, prominent personality of the ecumenical movement and of global Christianity.

Born in 1967 in Republic of Korea, Prof. Keum studied theology firstly at the Theological Seminary and at the Presbyterian University in Korea, then later at New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he defended his doctoral dissertation in 2002.

He started his professional life as general secretary of the National Youth Association of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. Already as a young student, Prof. Keum was active in the Ecumenical Youth Council and opposed the military dictatorship which ruled in that time South Korea. Because of his leading activity against the totalitarian regime, Prof. Keum`s graduation was delayed with two years.

After a few years of vivid engagement at the leadership of the National Youth Association, Prof. Keum was ecumenical officer of his own church, Presbyterian Church of Korea (1996-1997). In 2003 Prof. Keum started his international engagement in mission. He served between 2003-2007 as Executive Secretary for Mission Program at Council of World Mission in London, UK. In 2007 he started working for the World Council of Churches in Geneva,

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Switzerland, firstly as program executive for Mission and Evangelism and, between 2010 - August 2018 as Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. He was recently appointed as professor for mission and ecumenism at the Presbyterian University in South Korea. This appointment followed other invitations to be tenure professor at other high-level universities in the United States of America or in Europe. As a genuine patriot, Prof. Keum chose to serve his own country and church and accepted an offer to be professor at the Presbyterian University and at the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church of Korea in Seoul. All these are not surprising, since Prof. Keum was for many years deeply involved in teaching and academic research. His activities as Guest Professor of Mission Studies at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul; Research Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Stellenbosch University, South Africa, or Visiting Fellow at the School of Theology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, are just some of his academic involvements.

Prof Keum is an outstanding authority in field of missionary and ecumenical study and research. He authored, edited or co-edited several books and reviews and published hundreds of articles, review and reports in leading periodicals. He was for 10 years chief editor of *The International Review of Mission*, one of the leading publications in field of mission studies. He is also a member of the board of *Mission Theology*, another important periodical for missiology. He served as main editor or member of editorial teams for the following crucial publications in field of missiology: WCC new mission statement *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (2012), *Handbook for Mission Studies*, Oxford, 2017-2019 (editorial advisor), etc.

His engagement in mission and ecumenism is not limited only at research and theory. Apart of the leading roles he played in world mission as leading figure at Council of World Mission and at the World Council of Churches, I would like to mention here just a few other facts from Prof. Keum's activity as world missionary: he organized more than 50 international ecumenical consultations and committee meetings; he leded the process of organizing or was involved in preparing the following meetings of crucial importance for missionary work in our times: WCC Conferences on Mission and Evangelism, Arusha, Tanzania, 2018; Manila, Philippines, 2013; WCC Assembly in Busan, 2013 (leading role in the preparation of Bible studies and Mission plenary); World Mission Conference, Edinburg, 2010 (member of the Executive Committee); General Assembly of Christian Conference of Asia, Kuala Lumpur, April 2010 (mission advisor); General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Accra 2004 and Leipzig, 2017 (as a mission consultant).

Prof. Keum has been or is a member in numerous committees, boards, associations etc. I will mention here just a few of them: member of the Committee

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on Ecumenical Relations, Presbyterian Church of Korea (since 2007), of the executive committee of the Council on World Mission (1995-1999); of the Committees of Church and Society and International Relations, National Council of Churches in Korea (1993-1999); founder and board member of Korea Institute for Future Ecumenism (KIFE); member of International Association of Mission Studies, fellow of the Academia Christiana of Korea ; research member of International Colloquium on Christianity, Wealth and Poverty in the 21st Century (1999-2002); special advisor to National Human Rights Commission of Korea on North Korean Human Rights and to the President of Korean Red Cross.

As a leading missiologist, especially as a director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Prof. Keum showed special interest and sensitivity for the Orthodox tradition, especially for Orthodox missiology. He realized the importance of having Orthodox missiology well-articulated and explained in major missionary gatherings, as well as in studies and collective volumes published by the World Council of Churches, for the benefit of the entire ecumenical movement. Therefore, he generously supported the participation of large Orthodox delegations in world mission conferences and other gatherings on missiology. As an admirer of Prof. Bria's missiology and as a constant supporter of several present missiological projects of Romanian missiologist, Prof. Keum is a friend and a supporter of current Romanian-Orthodox missiology. Therefore, a significant group of Romanian missiologists are present here at this festivity.

I would also like to highlight here Prof. Keum's involvement for peace and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula. Along with many other clergy and devoted Korean Christians, Prof. Keum suffers that his own people, the Koreans, life since several decades divided into two different states with very different and opposed political systems. They are at the same time deeply involved in efforts to pacificate and reunify Korean Peninsula. It is opportune to remind here that we as Romanian people share the same historic drama as the Koreans: both nations life divided in two states. As we see the level of involvement of Korean society, of intellectuals and of clergy and churches in the process of reconciliation and unification of the Korean people, we as Romanian society, intellectuals, clergy and churches may only learn from our Korean brothers and sisters, especially in this year, as we celebrate the centenary of our unification. By the generosity of Prof. Keum, students of our university, as well as a larger auditorium, has the possibility to listen yesterday at the Institute for Global Studies, his outstanding lecture on the last development on Korean Peninsula and on the involvement of the Korean churches in this crucial matter. I hope I do not leak to much here if I tell you that from Sibiu, Prof. Keum will fly to the United States where he is expected at Jimmy Carter Foundation, an institution founded by the former US American president who was deeply involved in negotiations on Korea.

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I would also like to say here a few words about Prof. Keum`s activity as senior pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. It is unfortunately not unusual for academic clergy to get deeply involved in teaching, research and other academic activities and to forget church life and involvement in ecclesial realities. Prof. Keum is exactly the opposite. He used to be very active in the life of his church, already as a young fellow and as lay preacher and continue to be deeply involved as senior pastor. He is an excellent preacher, an organizer of the diaspora of his church, especially in Europe and a visionary of his church. He constantly reminds his church to keep its otherwise tremendous missionary work worldwide.

Last, but definitely not least, it should be mentioned here that Prof. Keum is a wonderful husband of his wife Huyang, who is present here today, and father of two wonderful children.

Having in mind all these activities, one may not be surprised that Prof. Keum was elected in 2017 by University of Edinburg as one of the most recognized names in the studies of World Christianity. By awarding Prof. Keum with an honorary doctorate at the proposal of its Faculty of Theology, “Lucian Blaga” University is joining a long list of academic and ecumenical institutions, churches and personalities who already honoured and decorated Prof. Keum in the last years. And because Prof. Keum is still very young, we also look forward for seeing Prof. Keum`s future involvement in the leadership of the ecumenical movement, in global mission studies and in all efforts for witnessing the gospel and for justice and peace in the world.

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