

# MCCLURE LECTURE 2025

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## W. DON MCCLURE LECTURE 2025

**OCT. 21, 2025**  
**PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Soon after Kenneth E. Bailey passed away in 2016 at the age of 85, the title of his obituary in *Christianity Today* captured the significance of his life in a few words: “The Scholar Who Made Jesus Middle Eastern Again.” In the McClure Lecture this year, historian Michael Parker will discuss Bailey's life as a Presbyterian missionary in the Middle East and the key ideas that marked his scholarly contribution. Parker will also note the ways in which Bailey's unique insights into the New Testament were only possible because of his work as a missionary.

Following the lecture, the World Mission Initiative at PTS will gather mission leaders and mission scholars for a panel discussion: “The End of Mission? What’s Next for U.S. Denominations in a Post-colonial World”. Last March, the



Interim Unified Agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) announced the closing of its World Mission program after nearly two centuries of work in more than 80 countries. Part of the rationale given for this significant structural shift was "to de-colonize our theology, missiology, and practice". Many U.S. mainline Protestants have become increasingly wary about the use of words like "mission" and "missionary", given the colonial connotations of the terms. Thus, a central question for American Churches today is "what's next?". If the heart of the Church's calling is to join God in God's mission in the world, what are the attitudes, postures, structures, models, and styles of leadership necessary for the churches to engage faithfully and effectively in that work in today's context? The panel will discuss the implications of the end of Presbyterian World Mission for the ways our churches engage with the world.

## REGISTRATION

**Click here to register!** (Registration closes Oct. 20 at 4:00 p.m. Register by Oct. 10 to guarantee dietary accomodation.)

## ABOUT PRESENTER DR. MICHAEL PARKER

## SCHEDULE

## QUESTIONS

## ABOUT W. DON MCCLURE LECTURE

The W. Don McClure Lectures in World Mission and Evangelism honor the Rev. Dr. W. Don McClure, a 1934 graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, who served as a missionary in Africa for nearly 50 years. Born in Blairsville, Pa., Don McClure began teaching in Khartoum in 1928, upon graduating from Westminster College, Pa. After studying at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, he returned with is wife, Lyda, to Sudan to evangelize among the Shulla people.

In 1938, Don initiated a mission at Akobo, on the Sudan-Ethiopia border. The "Aniak Project" employed a team of specialists in education, agriculture, medicine, and evangelism, with the intension of fostering a self-sustaining, self-governing Aniak Church within 15 years. So successful were they that, in 1950, the McClures opened a new work at Pokwo. Later, while serving as general secretary of the American (Presbyterian) Mission, Don was asked by Emperor Haile Selassie I to establish a similar project on the Somali border. For some years McClure worked as a mission representative to the Ethiopian government. He negotiated an agreement allowing Christian missionary doctors and nurses to supervise government medical programs, and he worked for better relations between Presbyterian Mission programs and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

McClure's years in African spanned dugout canoes to jet boats, in an arc through Sudan and Ethiopia equal to the distance between Pittsburgh and Dallas. After retirement, he continued as a volunteer at Gode, Ethiopia, until he was shot to death by guerrillas on March 27, 1977. Don McClure's life is told in *Adventure in Africa: From Khartoum to Addis Ababa in Five Decades* (1990), written by Charles B. Partee, P.C. Rossin Professor Emeritus of Church History at PTS.



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