

EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith

Winter 2011

On Earl's Calendar

In Seattle

The Kindlings Muse Podcast*

Feb. 14: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

March 14: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

April 4: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Theological Dialogue

Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton

Feb. 15: 9 - 11 a.m.

March 15: 9 - 11 a.m.

April 5: 9 - 11 a.m.

University Presbyterian Church*

Evening with Second Wind Group

April 7

Reunion of The Oxford Gathering

April 30

Around the Country

Orcas Island, Washington*

The Kindlings Winterfest 2011

Feb. 11 & 12

Laity Lodge Leadership Forum

Naples, Florida

The High Calling of our Daily Work

Invitational Conference for Leaders in

Government & Business

March 4 - 6

Beeson Divinity School*

Samford University

Birmingham, Alabama

Conger Lectures on Biblical Preaching

March 8 - 11

Alderbrook, Washington

CRISTA Board Leadership Retreat

April 13 - 15

A Day with New College Berkeley*

Berkeley, California

The Gospel of John Revisited

May 7

Outlook Magazine Web Seminar*

May 17

Around the World

RockRidge Canyon

British Columbia, Canada

Young Life Canada, National

Conference for Staff & Volunteers

May 20 - 27

* Contact info@earlpalmer.org for more information on this event

I've been thinking ... *To Change the World* (Oxford University Press, 2010) by James Davison Hunter is an important book for today. Let me explain why. Hunter describes some of the ways that we as Christians attempt to relate our faith to the world. This professor of history at the University of Virginia writes about what he sees as a legacy of ambivalence among Christians. We want to make a difference in the world for the gospel as we understand it, and sometimes we think we know exactly how to go about it, but then again we are not so sure. He analyzes two approaches. There are those who seek social power and advocate an activist strategy of high involvement in the present culture in order to affect change. These folks may occupy the left or the right side of religious conviction, but their strategy is basically the same. There are others who withdraw to the edge of culture, thereby minimizing their involvement in the dominant social whole; these take a separatist position. Yet, the goal of each strategy is the same—to change the world.

Hunter suggests a third way that he describes as “faithful presence.” I resonate with this third way. He writes, “At root, a theology of faithful presence begins with an acknowledgement of God’s faithful presence to us...only by being fully present to God...can we be faithfully present in the world.” (243–44). The real presence of Jesus Christ in and alongside of us is the foundation for our “faithful presence” in the world. It is Jesus Christ who enables us to stay near to the neighbor and stranger but stay as an active, caring, and, therefore, a changing presence in the world. This third way is decidedly neither withdrawal nor dependence upon the use of power to enforce change. I believe Dr. Hunter, a committed Christian, challenges us to think in a good direction. His analysis of this third way makes sense of the full title of his book: *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*.

—Earl F. Palmer



Chinese Academic Consortium conference on Chueng Chua Island

From the Board

As longtime UPC members, my family and I have been very grateful for Earl and his gift for expository teaching and worship. He has had a huge impact on many generations at UPC and has helped let the Word speak for itself as each of our individual walks with Christ has grown and been strengthened.

After retiring from UPC, Earl had the opportunity to serve as Preaching Pastor-in-Residence at The National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. My wife and I had a chance to attend services there and to see him continuing to bring scripture to life.

Now back in Seattle, Earl will focus on the local and global ministries that make up EPM. Locally, The Kindling's Muse and Theological Dialogues continue to touch and inspire many pastors and laypeople. Through both of these ministries, Earl, through his humble nature, gently lets the words of great writers speak truth to our hearts. Whether it's Mark Twain, Dorothy Sayers, or C.S. Lewis, he dissects the text to help us see the author's true intent and connects it to our faith.

EPM proudly seeks to continue these great ministries and to help broaden the impact of the expository style of preaching and worship even further. EPM is there to help make possible Earl's role as pastor at large as he continues to work toward this goal.

—Dan Wilson, EPM Board Member

See You at the Burke!

The hallmark of evil in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is not might or power, but pettiness. That's one idea Earl shared at last month's The Kindlings Muse event. It is the innkeeper, Thénardier, and his wife who embody evil in the world of Jean Valjean, Cosette, and Fantine; Thénardier's small wickedness brings pain to the lives of all he touches. I never thought of evil as petty before, this insight that has been working its way through my devotional life all month – and just one of the many I've had since first attending The Kindlings Muse evenings.

Once a month the Burke Museum Café at University of Washington is filled to capacity as Earl Palmer and well-respected author/broadcaster Dick Staub introduce us to notable people in history and literature. The discussion is lively and engaging, and there is time for the audience to ask questions as we wrestle through the material together. We leave stirred in our spirit to see things a little differently and open to tackling a new book, although it might seem daunting (my copy of *Les Misérables* is 1463 pages). To have two such knowledgeable men of faith unpack this often ambitious material in an interactive setting is a rare gift. And people are flocking to hear more. In October a show of hands revealed an audience of all ages, many of them college-age men and women. There is no charge, reservations fill up early, and, unlike many "free" events, people keep their commitment to come!

Over the past three years, the standing-room-only crowd has been on a literary journey of faith looking at the lives of Fannie Crosby, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, C.S. Lewis, and Mark Twain to name just a few. Last year, The Kindlings Muse even traveled to Washington D.C.'s National Presbyterian Church for a special event with Earl, where attendance numbered over 200. These are intellectually rich, spiritually insightful, and memorable evenings for all who attend. Many of my friends will readily share a quote or insight they took away from the evening and still reflect on months later. This is learning that "sticks."

These evenings are an outreach and a tremendous gift to the community by Earl Palmer Ministries. I'd like to express my thanks to all who help make it possible.

—Pamela McCann, Friend of EPM

From Abroad

As I reflect back on the recent Asian Pastors' Conference in the Philippines and worship at Union Church of Manila, I give thanks for my "partners in the gospel" and for our amazing God who choreographed our time together. In this increasingly nomadic world, it's exciting to think of how God is using the international churches around Asia to expand his Kingdom. Our international churches, with their unique mix of nationals and internationals all working together, have a special role to play in this area of the world where the church is experiencing rapid growth in numbers and influence. Given his background and teaching experience, it was so good at the conference to be able to "sit at the feet" of Earl and benefit from his years of church leadership. Indeed, the conference "encouraged and built us up." As you read this, pray for our churches throughout Asia that Christ would be the center of all that we are and do, and thank you also for your partnership in prayer.



Worship at Union Church of Manila

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1: 3–6

—Steve Gaultney, Pastor of The Community Church Hong Kong



University of Washington
Burke Museum Café

February 14

JRW Stott Makes the Case for Christianity
Basic Christianity, JRW Stott

March 14

Faith & Doubt: One Man's Struggle
The Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan

April 4

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* & the
Battle Between Good & Evil
The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, J.R.R. Tolkien

To attend a live event, register at:
www.thekindlings.com/events

Each event is podcast and made
available to download at:
www.earlpalmer.org
Under "Resources"



Scott Loo, Earl Palmer & Charlie Pridemore in Batangas, Philippines

From a Friend: An Interview with Scott Loo

How did you first meet Earl?

Well, my family started going to First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley in the mid-1970s. I was still pretty young at that point—near the ages of his kids.

What is your first memory of Earl?

He baptized me when I was 12, but before that I remember one retreat when I was pretty young. Earl was hilarious in a skit at the family conference at Mt. Hermon.

Was there a lesson in that?

I think it was that we could have fun together as a church, it wasn't all serious.

I still remember in 1990 when Earl announced from the pulpit that he was headed to Seattle, and there was an audible gasp in the congregation.

As you grew older did you get to know Earl on your own or mostly through your parents?

I really didn't know him except through the youth and high school groups, as the parent of Liz and Jon, until in college when I went on the summer mission trip. I got to know him and Shirley personally because Shirley was the main driver behind the college group's Summer Ministries program, and they had us over to their house regularly for orientation and training for the year of our involvement.

Where did you go to school, and what did you study?

I studied zoology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Roderick on the Road with Earl ...

It may get a little redundant that in every post by a study assistant we mention what a blessing it is to work with Earl, but frankly it cannot be overstated. In our latest trip we got to spend time with pastors in Manila and English language teachers and Chinese scholars in Hong Kong. Although there were so many memorable moments, the one dearest to me was getting to sit in on the Q&A that Earl held after his teaching to the Chinese scholars. These are all PhD students and professors from across mainland China who have been selected to be part of the China Academic Consortium (CAC), and it was fascinating listening to their questions. In a world where few of these people have mentors, the questions did not stay on the topic that Earl had been teaching, but extended in every direction. These scholars were thirsty for the Living Water of Jesus Christ, and in that time the questions were not about complex theological doctrine, but about the fundamentals of the Christian faith. These peoples' faith and appetite for knowledge revealed to me how much I take for granted living in a country where I am free to practice my faith as I choose and rekindled in me a desire to preach and live out the Good News of Jesus Christ.

When did you feel called into ministry?

It was a gradual calling. I was working with the youth as a college student. Then I had some friends doing inner city ministry who encouraged me to join them. When I graduated I was trying to decide between a master's in entomology (zoology) or going into ministry, and I thought that I would just take a year and do inner-city ministry. One ministry opportunity led to another. And to make a long story short, here I am.

What is your role at Union Church of Manila?

I am the Executive Pastor.

How did you end up at UCM?

I knew about the church and had ties to it, so I responded to the call.

Do you sense fingerprints or marks Earl has left on UCM, even after all these years?

Definitely. I think number one, UCM is very much centered on Jesus Christ and the hope of salvation in him, which is true from all that I've known about Earl. Also, I think people at Union Church take the authority of scripture very seriously. It's not "scripture and something else" or "scripture and the latest trend," but there is a real sense of being Biblically literate, knowing scripture.

Are there areas of your ministry that you feel Earl's teaching has impacted?

One has been to come at stuff with as much intellectual integrity as you possibly can. Second would be faithfulness; being faithful to the text, to the people, to the congregation. And just listening to people and where people are at: who's in the hospital, whose kids are struggling in the youth group, etc.

Finally, what have you thought about the Asian Pastors and Spouses Conference?

We've loved it. We've been able to connect with these men and women from the other churches and to build a sense of camaraderie. We understand each other and can empathize and rejoice with each other. Having Earl here to minister to us has been great. Not just as a teacher but as a practitioner. I've been able to get a lot of really pragmatic advice that will help me in ministry. Having someone really pouring into you and ministering to you is an encouragement.

Scott Loo is Executive Pastor of Union Church of Manila

Charlie Pridemore is Interim Pastor of Union Church of Manila



Earl with translator at conference for Chinese scholars in Hong Kong

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Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith

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If you have questions regarding Earl Palmer Ministries and its events, or to schedule an event, visit us at www.earlpalmer.org or e-mail us at info@earlpalmer.org.

If you know of others who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you would prefer not to receive this mailing, e-mail Roderick at roderick@earlpalmer.org.

Mission Statement

EPM's mission statement comes from 1 Thessalonians 5:11 — "Serving to encourage and build up in Christian faith." These words from the Apostle Paul inspire our ministry of teaching, writing, and mentoring. First, we seek to mentor young theologians through our internship program and monthly theological dialogues. Live podcasts through *The Kindlings Muse* offer regular teaching and conversation for all ages to consider major Christian themes. EPM's wider ministry focuses primarily on encouraging pastors and giving a case for expositional worship.

Your support makes this ministry happen. As we continue in this third year of ministry, we invite you to share in this outreach again with your prayers and your financial investment. To make a tax-deductible contribution, please send a check made out to Earl Palmer Ministries, PO Box 85117, Seattle, WA 98145, or electronically via PayPal at www.earlpalmer.org. On behalf of the EPM team, I thank you.

