

Chris Lee

1941 – 2007

The founder of EfM in the UK and its first Field Director

Chris trained as an ordinand in the 1960's and was both pious and political, traditional and radical, ritual and spontaneous. He was a Welshman, who loved his rugby, tolerated the English, a man of laughter and tears. Ordained as a Methodist Minister serving in South Norwood, Skelmersdale and Leicester, he transferred to be a priest in the Anglican Church where he served faithfully as a curate in Swansea, Oystermouth and as Incumbent for 10 years in the United benefice of Cromhall, Tortworth and Tytherington in Gloucestershire, before returning to Bishopston in his beloved Wales.

In 1989 Chris returned from a short sabbatical in the USA where he had become acquainted with EfM through La Donna Wind, who was then in a church education post in Alabama. Through a 'God- incidence' he was able to train as a Mentor at Sewanee, the headquarters of EfM, at the University of the South. He returned to the UK with a great enthusiasm for what he'd learnt, recognising that EfM was a gift for the Church.

He believed firmly in lay ministry and in equipping lay people to take on the commitment of discipleship. One of Chris Lee's many achievements was to make that happen wherever he went. His parishes were always alive and active and his enthusiasm and energy were stimulating and infectious!

During his time as Rector of the United Benefice of Cromhall, Tortworth and Tytherington in the Gloucester Diocese, he trained and established a lay worship team licensed by the Bishop to assist in the Benefice. He formed links with another Gloucester parish, a local Baptist congregation, and two churches in the USA. He encouraged lay people to broaden their spiritual horizons and worked hard to equip us to do so. He formed the pioneer group of students in Gloucestershire for the launch of EfM in the UK immediately he returned from America. That group enjoyed four years of study under his leadership. These pioneer EfM students went forward for the first 'graduation' at Westhill College in Birmingham, England in 1993, an event, not only historic in that they were the first UK



EfM 'graduates', but that the ceremony was attended by both Bishops from Gloucestershire – Rt Revd John Yates, Bishop of Gloucester and Rt Revd Jeremy Walsh, Suffragan Bishop of Tewkesbury - who enthusiastically offered their support to the 'graduates' in their lay ministry and the remarkable leadership of Chris Lee.

Two members of the original group trained as mentors and took the next groups on

to graduation after another four years. Meanwhile Chris selected others around the country, including Sue Price and Revd Peter Chicken in Gloucester and quickly established other groups around the UK, including Newark Nottingham, Oxford, Manchester, Bolton and a rapidly growing list of centres around England. He continued his involvement and leadership of EfM when he left Gloucestershire for Bishopston in his native Wales.



Sadly the tragic loss of his beloved Tess to cancer threw many plans into turmoil but Chris continued as always in his ministry and eventually moved to take the leadership of Christ the King in Baltimore. In Baltimore Chris was eventually to find happiness again with Christina Brennan. That their marriage and ministry was to be so suddenly cut short on September 28th last year was a double tragedy.

Christina shared that to know Chris Lee was to know a man of passionate beliefs and sincere action, albeit sometimes impulsive. To know Chris Lee was always to know clearly where you stood with him. To be known by Chris Lee was to be loved by him and to know it. Even if you were in disagreement, Chris Lee loved you – if you needed him at any time of the day or night, he was there for you, caring, helping, loving you. Chris always looked for and always found the positive side of anyone and everyone. Even in the occasional times when some might have thought he had a slight case of being obstinate, if you needed him he was there for you.

On the day before his surgery in Baltimore and, as it transpired, his tragic death, he stopped the gift cart in the ward to buy a toy he wanted to use in his Christmas sermon. That was typical of this remarkable, unique man who was always looking ahead to see ways to serve God and his flock. He brought so much of God's spirit to all those he touched.

Chris was an inspirational priest. He changed many lives, bringing them closer to God, establishing life values and spiritual growth within them and helping people to define their individual ministries – and then to act on them.

Chris was always enthusiastic about EfM, but then enthusiasm was one of the hallmarks of Chris Lee's ministry. He had a constant flow of ideas and would test them to see if God responded. He frequently did, and Chris kept all who worked with and for him busy – but, more importantly, he kept people inspired. He was

available for pastoral care of his flock at any time of the day or night – a rule that followed him to Baltimore and even there when, on his arrival and having little knowledge of the city and its numerous hospitals, he never failed to answer a call for help day or night.

We have all been told that we never know the hour, and now, his hour has come. We are blessed with the memory of this man who was so full of life and we must fully live out our lives as thanksgiving for his time with us. He laughed with gusto, he loved deeply and awoke in the morning proclaiming that This is the Day that the Lord Has Made, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad in it. We are not merely his survivors, we are the inheritors of his spirit, of his passion, of his love for each of us and for the God he served with all of his being.

Chris Lee was devoted to his Christian calling, a dedicated servant of God. He brought others closer to God and for this and so many other gifts, we shall always be grateful to him. Without Chris, EfM would not have touched the lives of so many over the past twenty years in the UK and Western Europe. Those of us who have grown through the programme can only have gratitude to God for this special man that He called to introduce EfM to us.

Acknowledgement to those who contributed to this article:

Gerald Bishop, Donald Eadie & Christina Lee



HIS LIGHT

I study this, examine that, -
I touch the edge of light,
I feel a thrill of understanding -
almost - nearly - quite.

I read a little, search a little,
come to Him in prayer,
I feel a warm encouragement
and know that He is there.

I stumble on a wisp of truth,
I grasp in firm in fright,
I stretch to understand the whole,
to catch the shimmering light.

And He is there - yes He is there -
He's in that light beside me,
His head thrown back and arms outstretched,
delighted laughter chides me.

To know that I have caused that joy,
my stumbling steps entrance him -
The utter oneness bathes my soul,
I rest in Him - beside Him.

O Joy and Peace and Light and Love,
O Grace - my senses reeling,
That you should be so close to me,
and bring your blessed healing.

Susan Appleford Fleet Evening EfM Group

THIS CHRISTIAN

Does God love me,
or does God love life?
Does he love the life that he has put within me?
He wants us all to be part of that great universal life.
We must die to self and so be absorbed into the ultimate
perfection of his eternity.

There will be no more inequality.
Christ through his Blessed Atonement has ensured that
we will all be one, united in him.
Like single snowflakes melting into drops of water
and joining an ever moving stream,
trickling, flowing, then gushing, rushing forward,
and so to the great still lake.

We will not recognise each other,
we will not need each other,
we will not need,
we will know, we will be.
Who will say then where the individual snowflake is,
where it starts or ends?
What price the uniqueness,
the brief given experience?
Who to care?
Is this love,
Such love?

Susan Appleford Fleet Evening EfM Group