

Funding the Future

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At Christmas, cultures across the world speak of light returning. This is not theology or astronomy. It is about survival, hope, and responsibility in hard times.

In this video, I explore how wisdom traditions — Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Islamic, and Indigenous — understand light as care, presence, and justice. And why modern capitalism inverts that meaning, treating wealth as light and poverty as darkness.

This is the Christmas story without preaching — and with a question we cannot avoid as 2026 approaches: who do we illuminate, and who do we leave unseen?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5KzethXUxk&si=QWqfMZpZlqBZlf7D>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=5h4hr-19ffc12-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

First of all, happy Christmas. I hope you have a good one, and I hope that those you spend it with enjoy it as well.

This is the second in our videos on the meaning of light, which to me seems particularly important, because at this time of the year, many cultures, and I do mean way beyond Christianity, talk about light returning.

The timing is unsurprising, but this is not about a freak of astronomy. It's about survival in hard times. Returning light is the language of hope. That is why the metaphor and celebration of this moment appears everywhere.

Christians speak of the light of the world at this moment, and of course, that is how they portray Jesus.

Buddhists speak of enlightenment.

Judaism emphasises justice as illumination.

Islam speaks of guidance and mercy as light.

Indigenous traditions centre on the sun as life-giving.

This isn't about doctrine; it's about wisdom. These traditions are not making scientific claims; they're making social ones.

Light within them represents presence, hope, care, and responsibility. It is then about how we live together, not what we believe.

To be enlightened or to act in the light is not to dominate; it is to serve.

Light does not overwhelm darkness; it enters it, it changes it, it illuminates it. It makes things visible without coercion.

In this sense, light is about wisdom, and in wisdom traditions, light is consistently located amongst the poor, the excluded, and the vulnerable. It's not to be found in palaces or markets, and if in doubt, read the Magnificat, which is in Luke's gospel, part of the Bible, of course, and is the song supposedly sung by Mary to celebrate the child Jesus she was about to give birth to, and she's reported to have said,

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

My spirit rejoices in God, my saviour; he has looked with favour on his lowly servant."

And she continued:

"He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit, casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty."

Now if that isn't political insight, I'm not sure what is, and this is a part of the Christmas story, and it's part of the gospel liturgy that is maintained every day by all the major churches in Christianity. It might sound radical. It's even revolutionary in the things that it says, but literally, day in, day out, it's sung just a mile away from where

I'm recording this, every evening in Ely Cathedral, as it will be in every church where Evensong is sung throughout the Anglican community, but it's also used by Roman Catholics, by the Eastern Orthodox Church, and others as well.

This is mainstream Christian thinking. The light is to be found amongst the poor, and the rich are sent empty away.

Now, I'm not here to convert you to anything, and I'm not going to try to. It would be hypocritical if I did, but this is the Christmas story without preaching.

It's about vulnerability.

It's about a child, and not a ruler.

It's about dependence, and not power.

It's about care, and not conquest.

This is why it still resonates, as does the story of the wise men who followed a star, a light, in search of the truth, wisdom, and guidance.

Capitalism inverts all of this. Modern capitalism, in fact, tells a totally different story.

Wealth is celebrated as light.

Poverty is treated as darkness.

Success is illuminated.

And failure is hidden.

That's not the Christian story. It's a moral reversal, and it's a reversal of all the old wisdom traditions. It blames those left in the dark for what is happening to them. It celebrates hoarded brightness, and it calls that progress, but it describes what is a true moral failure, and every tradition agrees upon this. Light that is hoarded ceases to be light. Hope monopolised becomes oppression. Meaning only survives when it's shared.

A society that excludes many cannot claim wisdom.

A system that concentrates light is unjust.

Care requires diffusion, not accumulation.

And light is decidedly relational.

The question to be asked then is not about belief, it is about responsibility. Who do we illuminate? Who do we leave unseen? That choice is political and highly pertinent on

Christmas Day.

These traditions endure because they ask hard questions. They remind us that hope is fragile and that light is a duty and not a reward.

Enjoy your Christmas. Enjoy it in the light. Be sure that you are willing to share it because that is our duty as 2026 approaches.

Previous posts in this series:

* **[Why light matters this Christmas](#)**

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