

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

by James I. Lamb

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Einstein was not all that complicated. He answered the centuries-old question of whether light existed as particles or as a wave by saying, "Yes!" He said that light consisted of bundles of energy called photons, which, when they are all zipping along together, behave as a wave. Simple!

The Bible was way ahead of Einstein. The Bible refers to Christians as "children of light" (Eph. 5:8). We are individuals, but the Bible never refers to a "child of light." We are all members of one body. As we "zip" along together as little Christian "photons," we are a wave of light, children of light, who can make a real difference in this dark world.

There is a particular darkness we remember this month. January 22 is the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 that legalized abortion in our country. The darkness of that day has cast its ever-deepening shadow upon the value of human life. We have moved from abortion to late-term abortion to infanticide. We have moved from abortion laws to assisted-suicide laws to prime time euthanasia. We have moved from legal to acceptable to laudable.

For some, the darkness has actually become light. For others, the darkness has become an overwhelming burden on their hearts.

The darkness spawned by *Roe v. Wade* gives children of light some real opportunities to shine—and this is an especially good month to think about that. January 6 is Epiphany. Epiphany means to "show forth" and is that time in the church year when we rejoice that Jesus was made known to all the nations as the Son of God.

The symbol of Epiphany is light. We remember the light of the star that guided the Magi to Bethlehem. He who said, "I am the light of the world," is shown to be just that. The prophecy is fulfilled, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a Light has dawned" (Is. 9:2).

How do children of light respond to the "shadow of death" brought about by *Roe v. Wade*? The writer to the Hebrews offers two ways. "Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated" (10:32-33). Children of light are to "stand against" and "stand with."

Stand against

Children of light are to stand against the assaults and insults of the darkness. Paul goes even further. “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11). We are not to dismiss the deeds of darkness with the worn-out, illogical cliché, “Well, I wouldn’t do such deeds myself, but I must defend the right of others to do so.”

We are not to overlook the deeds of darkness as irrelevant, as if they have nothing to do with the Church and her mission. We are to stand and expose them. In an age of relative truth, where darkness has become light and light darkness, someone has to take a stand and say, “There is a truth.”

In an age of moral pluralism, someone has to take a stand and say, “Some things are morally wrong.”

In an age where abortion is called “a right” and “a choice” and “a sacrifice” and even “self-defense,” someone has to stand up and call it wrong!

In an age where sex outside of the one-flesh union of husband and wife is called “natural” and “moral” and “safe,” someone needs to stand up and call it wrong!

In an age where hastening someone’s death is called “good” and “merciful” and “compassionate,” someone needs to stand up and call it wrong!

To be sure, it is to be done in love. It is to be done with a keen awareness of our own sinfulness and shortcomings, *but it is to be done*. If the children of light will not take a stand, if the children of light will not expose the deeds of darkness, who will?

Stand *with*

Children of light, however, are also called upon to “stand with” those who are suffering. The light of Jesus not only exposes the deeds of darkness, it brings healing and hope to those burdened with the deeds of darkness. He who masquerades as an “angel of light” has done his best to make this a very deceptive darkness.

Many have found themselves caught up in the false hopes and false promises of the darkness.

Some of these are Christians. Some are members of our congregations. Some are members of our own families. Those hurting because of the darkness do not need the children of light to stand against them but to stand with them.

Children of light can stand with young people—to love and respect them and help them as they face the difficult choices of the darkness.

Children of light can stand with women and men facing a crisis pregnancy—to love them, help them choose life, and support them in that choice.

Children of light can stand with women and men experiencing the aftermath of an abortion—to love them and offer the forgiveness and hope of Jesus Christ.

Children of light can stand with people with disabilities or terminal illnesses—to love them, care for them and be with them in their suffering.

Children of light can stand with the elderly—to love them, speak well of them, honor their gifts of wisdom and insight, and recognize God’s purposes for their lives.

The darkness of *Roe v. Wade* gives children of light opportunities to share with those who feel trapped in the darkness Jesus’ powerful words of hope: “I have come into the world as a light so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (John 12:46).

It is not easy being children of light. It is not easy standing against the deeds of darkness. It is not easy standing with those hurting in the darkness. That’s why it’s always important to remember what God knew long before Einstein. We are not alone. We are a wave of light, and working together we can make a difference in the darkness of our times.

It is not easy being children of light. That’s why it’s most important to remember that we are not the Light. We are children of the Light. The Light of the World, whose Epiphany we celebrate, shines with in and through us. The Light we have to share is the Light in which we live.

As we stand against and as we stand with, we stand in the Light. We stand in His forgiveness. We stand in His strength. We stand empowered to let His light shine.

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LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

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The organization has educational resources available on all the life issues. Its newsletter, “LifeDate,” and magazine, *Living* are a means of staying in touch with what is going on in these areas.

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