

Kids' Chronicle

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God creates many languages

BY JOE SARNICOLA

There was a time when everyone on earth spoke the same language. As the people traveled across the country, groups of them would stop at various places along the way and settle there.

One group settled in a fertile region east of Babylonia. There were brick masons in the group who said, "We have plenty of water and material for making good bricks."

And so the masons began making bricks. The designers said, "It is not enough to have good bricks. We should build something with them."

The leaders considered the idea. They held many meetings and voted several times. When they had finally come to a consensus, they called the people together for a formal announcement.

Everyone waited to hear what was to be done with the bricks. As the chief elder stood on a stone platform, the crowd became quiet and leaned forward in anticipation. The elder spoke.

"It has been decided by the council of elders, and I now officially declare, what will be built with our beautiful bricks. We will build a city. A city with stately structures for assemblies, elegant dwellings for the elders, and fortified walls for safety. Our gardens will be fruitful and our wells rich with cool water. It will truly be a city like no other."

The people cheered and clapped in excitement. The elders stood and bowed. The brick masons shook each other's hands in pride. Then the chief elder raised his hands in a call for silence.

"There is one more thing," he said. "We will build a tower in the center of our city. It will reach to the clouds as a symbol of our achievements. With this tower we will have made a place for our-



Illustration by Kathy Welsh

selves in the history of our people. Our children and grandchildren will remember us as the Tribe of the Tower. No longer will we wander without direction over the earth. And we will never be forgotten."

As the great city and its tower were being constructed, the Lord looked down from heaven. He turned to his angels and said, "These people will not be satisfied with a tower that reaches the heavens. They will want to be seen as gods. But there is only one God."

"What would you have us do?" asked one of the angels.

"We will divide their one language into many," God said. "Then they will

scatter like chaff in the wind."

The building site turned to immediate confusion. Those who could understand each other quickly joined together, took what they could carry and left in search of a new place to settle.

And the great city and the mighty tower were never completed.

Read more about it: Genesis 11:1-9.

Q&A

1. What did the people decide to do with their bricks?
2. Why did God want to stop the people from building the city?

Bible Accent

The Lord confused the people of Babylonia by changing their one language into many. The people then proceeded to settle into many other parts of the world. Today we have many different languages, dialects, and cultures. The Lord was not concerned that the Babylonians spoke one language. He was angry because of their pride.

Thousands of years later, on the first Pentecost after the death of Christ, Jesus sent his Holy Spirit on his apostles and a miracle of languages occurred. People who observed flaming tongues of fire hover over the Christians were from different parts of the world and spoke several different languages. Yet each person there heard what the apostles were saying in the language of his or her own country at the same time. (Acts 2)

Not everyone who heard the apostles proclaim the wonders of God was convinced. Some scoffed and said the men were just drunk. Peter addressed the crowd and said that God was in their midst and that no one had been drinking. Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, came to believe in God from that day on. We still celebrate this miracle of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday (June 4 this year).

St. Justin

Saint Justin was born in Greece one hundred years after the birth of Christ. Neither of his parents were Christians, and they raised him to be a student of the great philosophies of the day. While discussing the theories of Plato with a man visiting from Rome, the man introduced the teachings of Jesus Christ to Justin. Justin was fascinated and devoted much time to studying the Scriptures after that. As a result, he became a Christian and a teacher of Christianity.

Justin moved to Rome and opened a school there. He taught many subjects, but focused heavily on Christianity and Jesus. He frequently debated with the pagan philosophers and was critical of their religious ignorance. He made many political enemies and was eventually arrested and sentenced to death. He was whipped and his head was cut off with an ax. Six other Christians died with him.

Justin is remembered as an early martyr of the Church, and is the patron saint of philosophers. We honor him on June 1.

Word scramble

Unscramble the words and their order to learn what Peter said God's message to the people was according to Acts 2:17. Answer is on page 16.

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ripits novereye

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

If God had asked you how to stop the people of Babylonia from completing their tower, what would you have told him to do, instead of changing their languages?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is June 22, 1995. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was Samantha Roth, a third-grade student at Rochester's Holy Cross School. In response to the question *How does Spring remind you of God's promise of new life for his people?* she wrote:

Spring reminds God's people of new life because in spring plants bud and eggs hatch. Birds come back from their winter homes to bring new life into the world, and flowers that are dead are blooming. God gave his Son to die on the cross so that we could have new life.

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