

Perspective Digest

Manuscript 1220

Quit the Babel-ing

Charles Colson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd>

 Q U I T T H E B A B E L - I N G

“**I**n the Enlightenment, modern thinkers supplanted God as the source of knowledge with belief in Reason (often capitalized), through which they hoped to discover universal truths, cure disease and poverty, and create a rational social order. Reason provided the criteria for evaluating claims to deity and eventually would confer godlike omniscience—in essence, building a tower to heaven.

“But Genesis tells us that God judged the original Babel by destroying the basis of their pride: their common language. ‘Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other. . . . And the Lord scattered them over the face of the earth.’ Note. . . the parallel to our own time. The universal truths supposedly discovered by Reason (the ‘self-evident truths’) are now being dismissed as creations of a particular time and culture. Even a shared language no longer unites us, according to postmodernists, because of our varied ‘life experiences.’ No wonder Americans are asking what is left to bind us together.

“How can Christians have a reconciling influence on the contemporary confusion of tongues? By articulating a biblical understanding of truth.

“Contrary to postmodernists, we believe that human language *can* express ultimate truth, the truth necessary for salvation, not because it is discoverable through autonomous human Reason, as Enlightenment thinkers vainly hoped, but because God has spoken in Scripture. The divine perspective is communicable in human terms—not completely, but sufficiently” (Charles Colson in *Christianity Today*, Jan. 8, 1996, p. 72).