

International Bulletin

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Beyond Babel: Pentecost and Mission

Scattered in Western law is the subject of Finnish artist Peter Bruegel the Elder's famous painting, *Landscape with the Tower of Babel*, evoking the account in Genesis 11:1-9 of how human accord was abruptly shattered into linguistic, denominational and cultural fragmentation. In *New Testament counterpart in the story of Pentecost*, found in *Acts 2*, the inauguration at last of God's promised reversal of the Babel effect. Far from favoring the



monocentric standardization of cultures and languages being sought by the juggernaut of globalization, God demonstrated through Pentecost that the correlation of monolingual discourse was not to be mitigated through global meetings and schemes but through God's revelation of Himself in the mother tongue of every tribe and nation. It is not surprising, then, that two thousand years after the event marking the Holy Spirit's dramatic initiation of the church there should be the proliferation of translations highlighted in *Harriet Hill's* report update on the current and projected state of mother-tongue Bible translations.

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