

Tower of Babel story is instructive

An Oct. 10 letter to the editor on our economic crisis ends with the words, "Nothing goes up forever ... when it comes down, watch out!" This made me think again about the biblical Tower of Babel story. "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).

It is a classic story of human idolatry. The story does not end with sought-after security. It ends with babbling confusion and the wreckage of human community. Idolatry, whether personal, political, economic or military, may work for a while, but it sows the seed of its own downfall.

Is this becoming an American story?

Human life is not intended for competitive bane, but for cooperative blessing; and the Hebrew writers follow the tower story's dire end with the call of an Abraham that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

That needs to be the American dream.

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