

Deliver us from A.I.
Creatureliness, Pentecost, and the Limited Good of Technology
Dr. Jon Coutts, for ARC 2025

At best, technology represents humanity's creative effort to foster connection in a fragmented world. At worst, it distorts reality to the further exacerbation of estrangement. So how can we distinguish between technology that goes with or against the grain of the good? This lecture will take a decidedly theological approach to this question by framing it in terms of the good of creaturely interdependence and the Spirit of Christian reconciliation. The lecture will proceed in three parts before drawing some conclusions.

First, with reference to Walter Wink, Karl Barth, Marva Dawn, and Jacques Ellul, the lecture will trace twentieth century developments in demonology and exousiology in order to depict technology as a creaturely power that can either be lordless or antichrist. Like the tempting serpent in the garden of creation, technology will be seen as a creaturely force that has the power to wiggle between God, humanity, and creation with the offer to falsely mediate.

Second, with reference to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Deborah Creamer, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and Brian Brock, the lecture will recalibrate anthropology to the relational view of *imago Dei* in order to contrast the goods of limitation and interdependence with the false gods of autonomy and domination. From this it will be seen how technology can either foster or undermine creaturely connections, and must be assessed not by immediate utility but the vision of reality it mediates.

Third, with reference to Wendell Berry, Umberto Eco, Willie Jennings, and Kathryn Tanner, the lecture will contrast the Objective of Babel with the Spirit of Pentecost in order to posit a vision of reconciliation by which the goods of technology can be discerned. This will lead to a conclusion suggesting some creative limitations for various fields of technology that could chart trajectories for their relative goodness.