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World Formative Rest: Faithful Cultural Discipleship in a Secular Age

Cooke, C.B.

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SUMMARY

My dissertation constructs a way to pursue faithful cultural discipleship in a secular age. Its chief concern is whether it is possible to reconcile, immediately in day-to-day cultural interactions, the Calvinist motivation to re-form culture and the Augustinian motivation to “rest” in the *visio Dei*. The fundamental thesis is that by painting and practicing a background picture that reconciles these Calvinist and Augustinian aims, Christians may become faithful cultural disciples—cultural disciples attuned, as it were, to “world-formative rest.” The dissertation makes this argument in three parts—each of which focuses on what philosophers label our “background.” Part I, while acknowledging that reconciling Calvinist and Augustinian aims is a perennial challenge, delineates the *secular* form this challenge takes in the twenty-first century. It unpacks how the background picture of our secular age poses a daunting challenge to faithful cultural discipleship. Part II outlines two key elements of an alternate background picture—a Neo-Augustinian theological anthropology and a Neo-Augustinian, Neo-Calvinist theological cosmology. Finally, Part III expounds the fit between these pictorial elements to paint an alternate background picture that “turns” us toward the experience of world-formative rest. In addition, this final section considers how Christians might practice this alternate background picture so it becomes more habitual, like a second-nature. In the end, the goal is to seek a form of discipleship whereby, in everyday cultural endeavors, Christians may proleptically experience the “chief end” of glorifying and enjoying God forever.