
Centur

OVERSHADOWING THE CROSS: From across the big pond, British writer Michael Northcott thinks that the U.S. is both the most religious country in the Western world and the most violent. (Since 1945, he notes, the U.S. has invaded or bombed 40 countries.) And he detects a connection between American religiosity and violence—a conservative Christian view of the atonement involving redemptive violence. Religion, he suggests, is all about mimesis—ritually acting out the events by which God or the gods have made a people into the people of God. “If the central event of the Christian story of divine salvation is about violent death, then it would be unsurprising if over their history Christians had not begun to copy, to act out the violent death, in their relations with people of other faiths, and in their punishment of criminals and heretics.” Northcott, it turns out, is not a rabid revisionist theologian; he’s writing for *Third Way*, a progressive evangelical publication in the UK (summer issue). He argues that Christians should make the center of faith not the cross—especially not a cross deemed necessary to propitiate divine wrath or restore God’s honor—but the resurrection, which demonstrates God’s power over evil, violence and death.