A LOVER'S QUARREL WITH THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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Category: Reviews

A Lover's Quarrel with the Evangelical Church by Warren Cole Smith is well worth a read. Though the author describes himself as a recovering Evangelical, it quickly becomes clear that his core beliefs about God, Scripture and redemption are in line with what Evangelicals are supposed to believe. His quarrel is with the dumbing down of much evangelical theology and practice. I particularly found the chapters on 'Body-count evangelism' and 'the Christian-industrial complex' to be compelling, but perhaps the most significant quote comes from a piece of Barna research:

> *... while a substantial majority of Americans claimed to be Christian, and more than a quarter claimed to be evangelical, only about 9 percent believed such core doctrines of the Christian faith as the deity of Christ, the resurrection and the authority of Scriptures. (p.19)*

The book goes on to demonstrate that all too often in the US, being an evangelical means fitting into a certain cultural mindset; reading the right books, listening to the right music and having a vaguely Christian worldview.Â The notion of repentance and conversion can be replaced by 'making a decision'. This can end up a long way from a thorough going, radical, Biblical Christianity.

> *A Lover's Quarrel is a penetrating look at the current state of theology and practice in the American evangelical movement and offers a helpful, if difficult way forward.*

It is not a comfortable book and for that reason, evangelical leaders should read it. Not all of the examples and concepts are applicable outside of the United States, but the broad sweep of the book is still valid.