

Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger: An Evangelical Legacy

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Friends and family mourn their loss

If you were blessed enough to attend one of the many memorial services honoring the life and legacy of Catherine Clark Kroeger (1925-2011), you undoubtedly caught a glimpse of a Christian leader whose prodigious ministries touched the lives of thousands. Family members, foster children, friends, colleagues, and members of the community remembered how Cathie's faith directed her copious talents and energy. Cathie gave of herself on behalf of others, not only through the ministries she inaugurated, including Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) and Peace and Safety in the Christian Home (PASCH), but also through her church, denomination, neighborhoods, and academic societies. At the service I attended in St. Paul, Minnesota, it was abundantly clear that we were commemorating a leader who stands as part of a unique evangelical tradition. Cathie embodied the evangelical belief that God speaks through Scripture, that the cross redeems all of life, and that we are called to live out vigorously our reconciliation with God and others in word and deed. Cathie's utter devotion to these theological ideals places her beside evangelicals such as Pandita Ramabai, Frances Willard, and Katharine Bushnell.

When CBE decided to dedicate this issue of *Priscilla Papers* to Cathie's memory (she often reminded me that her friends call her Cathie), it seemed important to consider Cathie's life and ministry within a historical context. What follows, then, is a historical assessment of Dr. Catherine Clark Kroeger's contributions as part of a larger and thoroughly evangelical ethos, beginning first with a working definition of the term *evangelical*. From here, we will observe how females pioneered and enlarged the evangelical movement, though their leadership and initiatives were eventually censured and restricted. Finally, we will observe how Cathie's theological convictions were parallel to those of the early evangelicals so that she naturally gravitated to the very fields these early evangelicals had planted. With her broad shoulders and strong mind, she lifted the Greek and Hebrew texts over which Katharine Bushnell and Pandita Ramabai had labored for years and resumed their work as an evangelist and activist. Working without much rest, Cathie furthered our understanding of a loving God who speaks on the pages of ...

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