

## Should the Evangelical & Ecumenical Women's Caucus Change Its Name?

In the Jan-March 2007 issue of *Christian Feminism Today*,

twelve members of EEWC presented responses to

Reta Halteman Finger's 2006 opinion piece "Framing the Name: Naming the Frame."

The response from Anne Eggebroten is printed below.

(p. 11)

### Anne Eggebroten

What's in a name? History. Names are very anchored in a place and time. State and city names in the US continue to reflect the native American presence long after most traces of their culture have vanished. Connecticut. Malibu. Chicago.

I like the idea of using just the initials EEWC with an explanatory phrase that could evolve over the years, such as "biblical feminism for today." Other groups do this as a means of preserving identity and history but not advertising it.

As a linguist, I like the word *evangelical*--rooted in *eu angelion*, "good news"--no matter what George Bush and James Dobson do to it. Its first definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971 ed.) is simply "Of or pertaining to the Gospel."

Here's the second definition in the OED:

Since the Reformation, adopted as the designation of certain theological parties, who have claimed that the doctrines on which they lay especial stress constitute "The Gospel." This claim is of course disallowed by their adversaries, but (as in the case of other self-assumed party names) the designation has received the sanction of general usage.

Thus those who claim to define *evangelical* right now do so only in an adversarial stance, and I hesitate to drop my end of the rope in this tug of war.

From another angle, if you consider people's reactions today, especially people under thirty years old, the words *ecumenical* and *caucus* are as much a problem as *evangelical*. They seem archaic. Even the words *Christian* and *feminism* are outdated today, much as I love them. I know a Presbyterian pastor who considers herself a strong believer but post-Christian; I know strong activists who eschew the word feminism. I myself feel very far beyond the old labels Protestant and Catholic; I take as a given what was once felt to be an ecumenical position.

Therefore, I suggest keeping the letters EEWC but identifying them only in a lengthy historical and theological statement that will evolve as we evolve, while also providing a catchy and evolving tagline that women can relate to.