

The Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship
The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary

Finding Aid for

The Re-Imagining Community Records, 1988-2003



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Summary Information

Creator: The Re-Imagining Community, 1993- 2003
Title: The Re-Imagining Community Records
Inclusive dates: 1988-2003
Bulk dates: 1993-2003
Abstract: An Ecumenical Christian movement working to challenge patriarchy in the church and society. Newsletters, publications, videotapes, audiotapes, and copies of records related to the conferences of the Re-Imagining Community; minutes, publications, and miscellaneous records of the governing board of Re-Imagining.
Size: 11 boxes, 5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: The Re-Imagining Community donated its records to the Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship in 1999. Subsequent donations of material were made in 2001 - 2005.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access restrictions: Some files in Series III concerning conference registrations and scholarship applications are restricted until 2018. The majority of series IV, with the exception of published items, is also restricted until 2018. The remainder of the collection is unrestricted.
- Preferred Citation: item, folder title, box number, The Re-Imagining Community Records, Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

Organizational History

The Re-Imagining Community is a grassroots, ecumenical movement that was organized to challenge what it sees as a patriarchal church hierarchy, promoting justice and equality in the church and society as a whole. The Community centered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, calls for the revitalization of the Christian church.

The Re-Imagining Community is an outgrowth of a “global theological colloquium” held in November 1993 in Minneapolis, Minnesota that gathered women, scholars, and church leaders together to address the goals of the World Council of Churches report, *Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women*. Mary Ann Lundy, who worked in the national office of the Presbyterian Church, first had the idea to hold the conference five years earlier in 1988. As Lundy began to garner support for her plan, a group of women at a retreat in Minnesota chose the name “re-imagining,” trying to capture the idea of a new image in the church. A group of nearly 150 volunteers, both clergy and laypersons, worked together to plan, produce and implement the Re-Imagining Conference. It drew 2,200 people from around the world. The conference was sponsored by the Minnesota, Greater Minneapolis, and St. Paul Area Councils of Churches and supported partially with funds from several denominations.

In 1993 the *Christian Century* listed the heightened involvement of women in the church as one of the top ten religious stories of the year. Unfortunately, the Re-Imagining movement encountered hostility and backlash from groups within several denominations, including the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA). They, and other conservative critics, charged that the conference was heretical and sought to prevent church funds from supporting any further Re-Imagining activities. The PCUSA called for the resignation of Mary Ann Lundy in 1994.

Ironically, it was these actions that sparked the call to continue the Re-Imagining experience. In February 1994, nine women friends met and drafted a statement to the press, "A Time of Hope, A Time of Threat." Over 800 endorsements followed. After a number of discussions and debates, in September 1994, the Re-Imagining Community was incorporated with a coordinating council of lay and clergy volunteers to continue the work begun in 1993. Using quarterly newsletters and regular e-newsletter services to keep in touch, major conferences were held.

At the "Gathering" in 2003 over the future of Re-Imagining, it was decided that the organization had achieved its aims and was no longer needed. Because of declining membership, the Re-Imagining Community disbanded in 2003, although email support was still to continue. In an article in the final Re-Imagining e-newsletter, former Re-Imagining members were encouraged to connect to the organization "WATER".

Collection Scope and Content Note

The records of the Re-Imagining Community consist of organizational newsletters and other publications; audio and videotapes of conferences; copies of minutes, financial records, and correspondence, with collected responses to the 1993 conference.

The collection is organized into four series:

- **Series I: Publications, 1994-2003 (1 box, 0.5 lin. ft.)**
This series consists of the Quarterly Newsletter, arranged chronologically and miscellaneous other publications.
- **Series II: Audio and Video, 1993-1998 (2 boxes, 0.75 lin. ft.)**
Many of the sessions and speeches given at Re-Imagining Conferences were recorded on audiotape. This series contains 47 cassette tapes from various conferences and two videocassettes. There was no conference held in 1997. Arrangement is chronological.
- **Series III: Re-Imagining Event, 1988-2003 (3 boxes 1.5 lin. ft.)**
This series consists of copies of organizational records pertaining to various aspects of the annual conference. It includes financial information, meeting minutes, correspondence, and program material. Arrangement is chronological and then topical within conference.
Access to files concerning conference registrations and scholarship applications is restricted until 2018.
- **Series IV: Administrative Records, 1994-2003 (5 boxes, 2.25 lin. ft.)**
This series consists copies of the general files, including correspondence, newspaper clippings, brochures, and committee minutes, of the Re-Imagining Community. The majority of the records concern the Coordinating Council, the governing body of Re-Imagining. Arrangement is topical by folder heading. Of particular interest in this series are the press, personal and denominational papers responding to the 1993 Re-Imagining conference. Arrangement is by title for journals and clippings and by date for responses from participants' and other denominational circulars, resolutions or correspondence.

The majority of this series, with the exception of published items, is restricted until 2018.

Processing

Folded materials were flattened. Newspaper clippings were photocopied on acid free paper. Staples, rubber bands, and metal clips were removed and replaced with plastic clips. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

Contents List

Series I: Publications

Box 1

- Re-Imagining: Quarterly Newsletter [1994-2000, 2003]*
“Re-Imagining God...Community...the Church” in *Church and Society* [1994]
Re-Membering and Re-Imagining, edited by Nancy J. Berneking and Pamela Carter Joern [1995]
Made in Her Image: Exploring New Perspectives in the Bible and Christian History: Facilitator Guide [1997]; Participant Resource Book [1997]
Bring the Feast: Songs from the Re-Imagining Community [1998]
Re-Imagining Journal [2000]
Bless Sophia: Worship, ritual and litany of the R-Imagining Community, book & Word files on two diskettes [2003]

Series II: Audio/Video

Box 1 Audio

- Re-Imagining Conference
1993 (24 cassettes)
1994 (3 cassettes)
1995 (6 cassettes)
1996 (6 cassettes)
1998 (15 cassettes)
2003 (3 cassettes)

Box 2 Video

- Responses to 1993 conference
1994 General Assembly Report concerning Re-Imagining Conference
1994 Ted Koppel (Nightline); MacNeil/Lehrer

Series III: Re-Imagining Event

***Access to files concerning conference registrations and scholarship applications is restricted until 2018.**

Box 1

- Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women*, 1993 Conference
Steering committee minutes [1988-1993] (3f)
Arrangements [1992-3]
Daily conference newsletter [1993]
Evaluations and thank-you letters [1994]
Name lists of participants [1993]
Program [1993]
Publicity [1993 - 4]
Speakers' correspondence [1991-3] (3f)
For responses to this conference,
See Series IV: Administrative Records, Boxes 1 - 3

Series III: Re-Imagining Event (cont'd)

Box 2

Re-Imagining: Jesus, Christ, and Us, 1994 Conference

Evaluations [1994]

Program [1994]

Publicity [1994]

*Registration [1994] Restricted until 2018

Soundings: Re-Imagining the Word, 1995 Conference

Budget [1994-1995]

Correspondence [1995]

Committees

Quest group [1995] (2f)

Program Committee [1995]

Evaluations and Thank-you letters [1995]

Program [1995]

Publicity [1995]

*Registration [1995] Restricted until 2018

Volunteers [1995]

Worship [1995]

Naming, Claiming, and Re-Imagining Power, 1996 Conference

Committees

Arrangements [1996]

Membership/publicity [1996]

Program Committee [1996]

Public Relations [1996]

Quest [1995-1996]

Ritual [1996]

Evaluations [1996]

Program [1996]

Publicity [1996] (3f)

*Registration, R - Z [1996] Restricted until 2018

Box 3

Re-Imagining Revival, 1998 Conference

Committees

Arrangements [1996-1998]

Fundraising [1998]

Planning ("Flow Committee") [1997-1998]

Evaluations [1998]

Exhibitors [1998]

Program [1998]

Publicity [1997-1998] (3f)

*Registration [1998] Restricted until 2018

*Scholarships [1998] Restricted until 2018

Speakers [1997-1998]

Volunteers [1998]

Series III: Re-Imagining Event (cont'd)

Box 3 (cont'd)

From Vision to Vessel, 2000 Conference

Evaluations [2000]

Program [2000]

Speakers [1999-2000]

Generations of Wisdom: One body of water, 2003 Conference

Arrangements [2003]

Program [2003]

Publicity [2003]

Honeycomb conference session [2003]

Series IV: Administrative Records**Access to the majority of this series is restricted until 2018.**

Box 1

Certificate of Incorporation [1994]

Article of Dissolution [2003]

Coordinating Council - Post 1993 Conference controversy [1993-4, 97]:

Press response: AFA Journal – Presbyterian News (11f by journal title)

Box 2

Coordinating Council - Post 1993 Conference controversy [1993-4, 97]:

Press response: Presbyterian Outlook – Worship Arts (6f by journal title)

Correspondence: participants (6f by date)

Box 3

Coordinating Council - Post 1993 Conference controversy [1993-4, 97]:

Other responses: circulars, reports, resolutions (5f by date)

Box 4

Coordinating Council - Correspondence [1994-2000] (6f)

Coordinating Council - Minutes [1994-2003] (7f)

Box 5

E-Newsmail [1998-2003] (4f)

Faith Labs [1997-2000] (4f)

Membership [1995-1997] (2f)

Public relations [2000]

Publicity [1995-1997] (4f)

Quarterly Worship [1999-2000] (2f)

Small Groups [1995-1999] (3f)

Speakers' lists [1988 – 2003]

Worship [1998]