

- And we are now recording. So first of all, some background, if you could say your name.
- My name is Sue Swanson.
- And are you lay or clergy?
- I'm lay.
- And what is your denominational affiliation, if any?
- Episcopalian.
- Okay. And when and where were you born, Sue?
- I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1949.
- Okay, and where did you go to school, graduate or divinity school?
- I went to school at the University of Minnesota to be an elementary teacher and then I went to Metro State University to do a executive communications degree and united theological seminary for my master of divinity.
- What an interesting background. And how and when did you first become aware of feminist theology?
- I was working with the United Methodist Women Organization and they did not do anything with feminist theology and Mary Gates became involved with the Re-Imagining Conference and told me that I had to go.
- Is that right, so she invited you to it.
- Yes, yes, she told me I had to go.
- Yes.
- It was mandatory.
- Knowing Mary, I can imagine that.
- So that was, Re-Imagining was your introduction to feminist theology.

- Yes.

- Wow. And this was the 1993 conference that you went to.

- Yes, yes.

- Okay, well that is exciting, I wanna hear more about that. Can we talk about your relationship to the Re-Imagining community?

- I think I'm gonna go chronologically.

- Good, good.

- So I attended the 1993 conference but I didn't do anything, I just was an attendee, and then in 1994, I was a member of the ritual committee and we planned the ritual for that year and in 1995, I was working with small group formation for our small group, one of the only two that has survived up to this point, but we had many many different small groups that were formed in 1995. And then in 1996 and through 2003, I was a conference planner, I was on the Coordinating Council, I was Membership Chair, I was Chair of Quarterly Worship, I also presented different faith labs as well as writing for the quarterly publication, and writing music for the conferences as well as all three of the books that were published.

- You were involved in all three of the books.

- Right, right. I had a song in the first book that was sung at one of the conferences, I think 1996, and a song in the songbook that Madeleine Sue Martin edited and that song was written with Nancy Berna King and then of course I was the editor of the ritual book, Bless Sophia, in 2003.

- Wonderful, that's an amazing amount of participation, that is really, and I wanna hear about a lot of these different ones, so we'll need to explore that a little bit more. In fact, why don't we talk some about small groups because I think that was really important. Do you recall about what motivated people to wanna have the small groups, what went through that process, how successful it was?

- Mhmm, well what we were doing, we were thinking about the fact that really the theology that we were doing required a lot of participation with members, a lot of discussion, a lot of reading, so we thought that the best way to have the maximum participation would be to break people into small geographical groups so we tried to take people that lived pretty in close proximity and so we took a survey at the 1994 conference of who would be interested in being in a small group, put it all together by geographical area and then several of us just started calling people and seeing if they were interested in getting involved. And so we formed quite a few groups, I have how many, I have the list, so if you wanna see that.

- I would like to, yes.

- But I would say, I wanna say that we formed about 25 or 30 groups.
- And this is across the country?
- Mostly in the Twin Cities because there wasn't really much of a geographical concentration anywhere else.
- It is interesting when I look at the quarterly newsletter to see that small groups did form around the country eventually.
- They did, they did form from some theological groups that were already going.
- Okay.
- Out of Voices of Sophia and some denominational groups and some other groups that were feminist oriented that kind of were loosely affiliated with Re-Imagining. So I'd have to look at the list and see.
- Yeah, good. That is wonderful. In terms of the faith labs, what did you teach for faith labs and what was that experience like?
- I taught beadwork, beadwork is a spiritual discipline so I taught some classes on actually making prayer beads.
- But how did you get interested in that, Sue?
- Oh, in prayer beads?
- Yes, yes.
- I was traveling for business about eight to 10 times a month and I was in hotel rooms all over the country and airplanes constantly and got very tired of movie theaters and shopping malls, so I needed something small that I could carry with me and beadwork worked really well, so I started in just regular, secular kinds of beadwork and wrote for Beadwork Magazine and Bead and Button Magazine and then I started learning about prayer beads and that's where I was really interested because I had already been doing some studying on spiritual practices, so beading as a spiritual practice became something that I started teaching in 1997.
- 1997?
- Mhmm.
- And were you teaching in churches?

- In churches and stores and conferences and different kinds of schools, yeah.
- So a variety of different settings, very neat. We can get back to some of this but when we talk about maybe, let's talk about the backlash for a minute.
- Yeah.
- Were you aware of the backlash?
- Yes definitely, I was aware of the backlash.
- And did it affect you directly?
- Yes because my pastor was head of the National Promise Keepers and very anti-feminist and very discouraging to me because I didn't have any theological credentials. So I did not have a voice, period, I didn't have a voice that was credible, any of it, up until I went to UTS.
- So you had conversations with the pastor.
- Many conversations about feminist theology, there was actually two pastors, one was maybe a little bit more compassionate about it. My son and I did the Boy Scouts God and Country badge using all different kinds of images for god from the bible and he was our advisor for that and it was a good project. He wasn't very interested in it but he was willing to listen.
- Yes, yes, good, okay. How did you react to the backlash, what was your response to it?
- Well I was invited to quite a few of the meetings after the conference about the backlash and at that time, I was heavily involved in United Methodist Women which had sponsored some of the programs so they had gotten into some of the problems with a denomination putting their weight behind feminist theology and so basically, I was interested in it because I was very engaged with the whole ideas of feminist theology and I started doing a lot of reading. I probably was the only person around any of the tables when they said that, during the first conference, of let us speak the names we have never spoken for god that didn't have one word, one name to speak, besides God the Father, I hadn't heard any of it. So it was quite an education.
- I wanna hear more about this, Sue, this is fascinating, so this was your introduction to feminist theology.
- Absolutely.
- Tell me about what that was like to be at the 1993 conference.
- I had been involved in an awful lot of open space conferences, like it was, so the idea that it wasn't very organized and that there was no one person speaking and keeping us on time or in line was not a problem

for me. I had done a lot of firsts in my church, I was the first administrative chair that was female, I was the first usher that was female, they had me wear my navy blue suit that day.

- Really?

- Yes, and they asked if the offering plates were too heavy to lift up above my head for blessing. So I had been involved in some of these feminist sort of things and of course a lot of feminist activities in business but it never basically came up in church. There was nothing, no inclusive language, nothing. I at that time wasn't involved in the Catholic Church at all so didn't even have the images of Mary, so I basically had no images of feminine deity at all.

- And I'm curious, did you feel the lack of that until you went to Re-Imagining, did that?

- Well I don't know that I thought that was an option.

- Yeah, right.

- 'Cause you don't really think about it.

- Sure.

- And questioning wasn't really an option and we were kept very very busy with the structure of the United Methodist Church, I mean United Methodist Women has 1000 committees and the church itself has a huge structure so we were very busy just upholding the normal structure and yeah, that's what I was doing.

- So it obviously was an important experience for you because you were even involved in planning the very next conference, so in what way was that so important to you?

- I just saw this huge lack of woman in anything having to do with church and putting that together with my business background and lack of women that were allowed to sell data and women that weren't allowed to do different things, it just kind of all clicked, it made sense there. And I didn't really have any access to any of those authors because I wasn't in academia and there wasn't, and the Methodist Church certainly wasn't allowing us to see any of that, so there was just nothing.

- Did you say after the conference you started reading the authors on your own?

- Definitely, definitely, yeah.

- And that was obviously a good experience for you.

- Very good experience, yeah. Although somewhat confusing, 'cause some of the speakers were pretty well over my head at that time. It was pretty heavy going to study it on your own, but.

- How did you react to the claims afterwards that people who attended were heretics and pagans?

- That's changed over the years. I think we were.

- Oh, interesting.

- Yeah, I really do. We started the conference as Christian women and we had a very serious conversation in the coordinating council about remaining Christian and there was a lot of push for us not to remain Christian.

- From where?

- From people who had attended the gathering and it was a real heated discussion within the coordinating council of whether or not we wanted to be a Christian organization or open things up like the women in spirituality conference that they do at Mankato, which is just completely open.

- Right.

- I think if we had, that it's a very small step to people's thinking from new age to pagan to heretics because it's very, even today, I think it's even more dangerous. Some of our stands today are completely unacceptable. The Episcopal Church has been censored for three years for their stand on homosexuality, so today it's no real better to me. I don't see any difference in the language from 1993 to today, it's not there, the militaristic, patriarchal language is still in churches, you might hear a couple mentions of a female saint or a female theologian but not very often and there's absolutely no compromise in using all-male language for god in the Episcopal Church. None.

- Yeah, yeah.

- And even if you say, if you use a female image once but you're using a male image 99 times, what are the children and how are we raising people? We're just raising a God the Father mentality still.

- Now, you just raise an important point, that the Episcopal Church has really been censured, I guess you could say, for its stance on homosexuality. Now, it's interesting that, do you have any thoughts on why the Episcopal Church has moved forward on that issue but not on the issue of feminism?

- I think that they would say that they're ahead on the issue of feminism because they've had a nation of women for a long time and that they are fully accepting of women in all the leadership positions. However, the language doesn't reflect it in any possible way, I can't see it.

- Right, yep.

- I wish I could put a positive spin on it, but I don't see it.

- Right, I wanna get back to a couple important things you said earlier, first of all, the part about the coordinating council discussing whether to remain Christian or not, so they decided to remain a Christian organization, do you recall why that decision was made, what were the reasons for that?

- I think it's directly because of the backlash, that they wanted to stay in the fight and stay members of their churches and have voices within their churches. We all really felt like we had work to do and that would have some sort, it would come to some sort of fruition. And talked about planting seeds that we would never really see blossom into flowers but we were gonna plant the seeds anyway.

- Given what you just said, do you feel like the seeds have not come to flower yet?

- No, they have not, no. In a few places, I see Wisdom Ways and we had a program about Hildegard of Bingen a few weeks ago with 120 people there and people came up to me afterwards and said it was refreshing to see the feminine face of god again tonight, so there's people that are still very very hungry for it and there are small pockets of places that are still doing that in a Christian setting. Of course, when you go to Minnesota State, the Women in Spirituality, it's all feminine, feminist images of god and it's very refreshing and it's wonderful but then you are opening yourself up to witches and elves and fairies and extra-terrestrials and there's no bounds on what they do. And by the way, this is their last year, this is their final year.

- Oh, is it, okay.

- So there isn't any fence around it, it's everything.

- Why did you say, it was an interesting comment, that in fact, you decided we were heretics and pagans, why do you say that, how are you defining those terms or why is that?

- A questioner, a questioner of the faith, and I think we were questioning. Well, no doubt about the fact that we were seriously questioning and the way I look at it is that we were doing constructive theological work, a systematic theology base with the feminine face of god intertwined in that work and it was constructive and it worked. And in the past, a lot of the academic theological work that had been done was deconstructionism, very dramatic, sometimes very negative speech of taking apart and dismantling the organization. What we did was different, we put it together and we actually did the ritual, we actually had an inclusive community and it was like one brief shining moment like Camelot that it worked and I think that's what really scared people, is that it worked and it worked beautifully.

- So why was that heresy and paganism?

- Because we were questioning the basic beliefs and the basic structure of the church. Especially for different denominations it affected in different ways, we had the call to action in the Catholic Church where

women couldn't preach or couldn't be ordained and then we had some denominations where women were marginally accepted but the language and the ritual was never accepted and never there. I've never seen it and I've been in a lot of different churches, lot of different denominations.

- How do you account for the backlash and then maybe why you don't think there's been more progress in the church because I know those are two questions but they're kinda related.

- Well a lot of the backlash had to do with money, of people who had spent money to support the conference so it kinda hit people in the pocketbook and that's always some place that people will look and also in employment of people that had a voice in the church that were, that didn't affect me. So I think it just kinda hit 'em where they could feel that difference, that they'd actually sponsored something.

- Right, yeah, it was really actually tied to the mainline churches.

- And I think that the reason we haven't made progress is it's just been quelched everywhere, you just can't do that, you aren't welcome to do that, you would not be welcome to change the language of a psalm to a feminine language or to a first-person language, you wouldn't be welcome to do it in church, you'd just be happily told that that's not something that we do here, or you can do it in your small groups or you can do it other places but not in the worship gathering on Sunday morning.

- Any thoughts on why that's still the case?

- Yeah, the church is very defensive and the mainline churches are in a defensive position of shrinking and aging and when you start shrinking and aging and thinking of the pie as shrinking and shrinking, you're not gonna be in a position for expansive language or expanding what you're thinking.

- Thank you, this is really good. How would you define Re-Imagining? We've already been talking some about it but maybe explicitly.

- I would define it as a community of women who are engaged in theological thinking and also in a new way of being the church together.

- Yeah, mhmm, mhmm. As you were involved in the community, you were not involved in it being formed, or were you involved in the actual community being formed after the '93 conference?

- Yeah, oh yeah.

- You were, you were, okay. Okay, oh, I'm glad I asked that. So could you say more about how and why the Re-Imagining Community was formed?

- We just wanted more, I wanted more, we just needed to get together again, we needed to talk to each other and support each other so I think it's just 'cause there was just such a huge hunger for that kind of



organization.

- So some people have argued that it only happened because of the backlash, do you think if the backlash hadn't happened that that hunger would have been there and it still would have been formed?

- The hunger would have been there but I don't know if we would have been able to do it ourselves. We always go between centralization and decentralization and that was a moment in centralization. I don't think if we would have just gone off on our own we would have been able to pull anything off alone. I certainly wouldn't have been able to do anything on my own with United Methodist Women.

- So we needed the community.

- Yeah.

- As you look back, and you were involved in many different ways, how would you say that feminist theology affects the structure and functioning of the community?

- Of the Re-Imagining community?

- The Re-Imagining Community, yeah.

- Oh, well first of all, I think we really tried to be a round table so when we got together, we always had a beautiful of ritual or poetry when we started and then we started with check-ins rather than starting with business and a business agenda so we got to know each other on a personal basis rather than just a business basis and we took the time to do that, so I think just the way that the meetings were run, I think people trying to communicate as much as possible on an equal footing without titles and without authority, we had a lot of people with academic credentials and a lot of religious and I think people just tried to listen to all the voices, and that was important, so it was a different kind of community, very inclusive community.

- As you're talking, I'm thinking, you had a business background which not many people had, so that must have been, how would you, coming from a business background, how would you reflect on the way the community and the meetings were structured?

- Well it wasn't hierarchical, we didn't have an org chart, we tried to have a coordinating council instead of a more administrative name with a president, we had coordinators, we had co-coordinators usually, and we had different interest groups rather than, we didn't really use the business terminology, although we did agendas and we did minutes, thank goodness, but we didn't adhere to a, what do I want to say, an unchangeable structure that we started and just filled slots in an org chart, we didn't ever really do that, so I think that was important.

- What challenges were faced by the community during its 10 years of existence, and you were involved in various ways during that time and how were they addressed?

- Well I just wanna say the biggest one was inclusivity and diversity because when we started the group, it was mostly older white women, I was actually on the younger side of people. Most of the people that were planning it were my age now or 25 years older than me, so when it gets started by an older group of white women, it's difficult to then later on change your personality and invite in diversity. You can invite in a speaker or two which we always did, but according to a lot of people now, that's just another form of tokenism, really. So we were interested, it wasn't that we weren't wanting to hear those voices but we just didn't really know how to do it, and when we did it, we didn't do it in the very best way possible. We made a lot of white privilege kinds of mistakes, inadvertently, and sometimes it was kind of sad. It just reminds me of when we had Linda Hollies, did you go to that meeting? Linda Hollies is a black womanist and she came in and she was talking about art in the black community in the South and made a comment about quilts and I was thinking, "Oh, how beautiful," the story quilts were and I just commented to her that I loved the colors that they used in the quilts and she came down from the podium and started screaming two inches away from my face saying, "We could only use "the pieces of materials that came from the slave masters "and came from your mothers, your foremothers," she said, "We never got to choose anything, we never got anything new" and screamed at me, and then we had to have Alika Galloway come in and actually do another quarterly worship to try and do some healing after what happened so we didn't always make the best decisions, I think they were fairly innocent, but we didn't always do it right.

- Yeah, that was at a quarterly worship that that happened?

- Mhmm, two quarterly worships, then.

- You know, I wonder if you could, you have such experience of the quarterly worships, of the conferences, of so many things, could you just reflect on what some of your memories of striking moments in those experiences? That was a very striking one.

- That was striking to me, yeah, I think there were, I think, although it's Jeannie Williams' story to tell about Letty Russell because Letty Russell obviously was one of the female academics that was leading, she wrote, what was it, the Feminist Theology Dictionary, I think was Shannon Clarkson and very very famous woman and she came into our round circle planning for the gathering and of course we checked in and we did all of our things, she thought she was going to be running the meeting and afterwards, after several, several meetings, the pre-meeting and then when she came in for the conference, when Jeannie went to take her to the airport, she said she had learned a lot about power from us.

- Really?

- Yes, which surprised me because she was expecting to come in as the powerful woman and tell us what to do and it didn't happen. Probably it happened in everything else that she had ever done, and so we were a little different and she could kinda feel that difference.

- That is an important story. Are there other things that come to mind?

- There are just so many, there's just so many. I think we had some real poignant moments during the quarterly worship, we did one midsummer worship out at a labyrinth and I don't know if you were there in Eaton Prairie and it was just a beautiful evening and we actually served milk and honey at the center of the labyrinth and it was very beautiful evening surrounded by a huge group of people that had a big bonfire and sang Re-Imagining songs afterwards.

- Really?

- Yeah, it was really beautiful. And some of the different kinds of rituals that we did. I think it was always very poignant to me when Sister Martha would bring her bread that she had made and we would share bread or share communion together and we did some things that were really thoughtful, really good.

- Yeah. And this is related, but a little different. What aspects of Re-Imagining were most significant to you and why?

- Well I enjoyed reading the books that we did in our small group, I think that that helped me a lot, not knowing a lot about feminist theology, it helped to discuss it with the small group and to choose books that we would be interested in and that we would have some handle on, so that made a big difference, that was sort of my reading guide for many years. And I would have to say when we were disbanding the community, too, how we kind of thoughtfully went about that, taking the community apart and yeah. Just a lot.

- Yeah, yeah. How did your involvement in Re-Imagining change your perspective on feminist theology and toward the church.

- Well of course. (laughs) Basically, I guess once your eyes are opened you can't shut 'em again, so it caused a real critical phase for me in the church because I wasn't being fed in the church and I was being fed in other groups. Re-Imagining and Women's Spirituality Conference and Wisdom Ways and all of those women's groups were where I was really feeling that I was being fed spiritually. In church it got to be kind of a fight, unfortunately. It just got to be a huge amount of structure and a lot of people saying that what we were doing wasn't mainstream and didn't really count when I felt like in my heart that's all that counted so basically, I have, when I was in seminary, I switched from Methodist to Episcopal because I just felt that the Methodist Church had absolutely no interest in the kind of spirituality that I was interested in, I just wasn't being fed there in the least and just felt like I was fighting it and that my voice wasn't ever really going to be heard there.

- Have you found a home in the Episcopal Church?

- I wish I could say I had. (laughs) Not really, not really. I missed, I spent a couple years without church and I missed having a community and I missed the rituals and the holidays and that sort of thing. It's very difficult to go into a strange community and share communion, you really can't, it just doesn't work and so I thought having a small community might work and it still is, to a certain extent, working but I'm not finding that

there's any interest in any of the retreats or workshops that I do at all, none.

- Couple of questions, 'cause you've said a lot of important things. One is, before I forget, what led to you going to United Theological Seminary?

- Oh, well just the fact that I had absolutely no credentials, educational credentials, and I felt like if I was ever gonna have a voice at all or to be able to go into different religious communities and different women's groups studying theology, that I really had to have a systematic education and that's what it gave me.

- Do you, and I don't wanna put words in your mouth, do you feel like Re-Imagining was an important part of that decision?

- It was because that was the kind of work that I was doing. I was probably, near about the time that I left the business world, I was doing about half spiritual kinds of work and half business work. Because of the fact that I traveled so much, I had a lot of free time, so I was state coordinator for United Methodist Women, I was Vice President of the district for eight years in a row, I was doing just a lot of different kinds of work and by that time, the feminist voice had definitely entered what we were doing and it was very welcome in the small groups of women, just not on Sunday morning.

- Small groups of women in the United Methodist Church?

- United Methodist Church, it was just fine and not necessarily probably using the word Sophia but the basic tenets behind what we were doing were okay. So I just felt like I needed a better education.

- And I wanna get back to another comment you were making about, so how now at this moment, how are you finding your spiritual life fed?

- Through my yoga class, on Saturday mornings, we have a very spiritual person who always, she leads it like a retreat, a two-hour retreat, leading us through some of the great spiritual thinkers and leading us in embodied spirituality including meditation, so body, mind, and spirit. I always felt like that was one of the things that we were missing the most in the mainline Christian church, was the body wasn't there, and I think if we're gonna have an integrated spiritual life that we have to have body, mind, and spirit, all three together, and that's where kind of the appeal of yoga and some of these spiritual classes have come in. And I still really don't find the body present in the mainline churches, it's just really not there besides maybe a few gestures of walking up to communion and that sort of thing, so I need all three and I need them together, I also do a lot with art and with, what do I wanna say? Finding your spirit through the creative acts.

- And you lead workshops and retreats on these topics?

- Absolutely.

- Could you say a little bit, you do many interesting, could you say some about what you do?

- Well, yes. It's called Prayer Craft because Nancy Berna King came up with that word, she said what you do is using art as a gateway to healing and wholeness and meditation is like combining prayer craft and at that time, taking two words and making them into one word was trendy so that's what I've kept it called up to this day. Just a few years after Re-Imagining, I became really heavily involved with the labyrinth community and I still am very involved with different groups having to do with prayer walking and using different kinds of physical activities to incorporate spiritual meditation so anyway, I do, I teach beadwork, collage, soul collage or story cards, knitting and crocheting, mainly for groups that are doing prayer shawls and different kinds of charity knitting, and just using art as a gateway to prayer and one person put it as prayer for people who can't sit still. So since meditation, Buddhist meditation, was sort of designed by men in monasteries and we're not men in monasteries, a lot of women resonate with drawing or painting or beadwork or that sort of meditative activity and that helps them, helps them to pray and to meditate.

- Mhmm, wonderful. What do you think are the specific contributions Re-Imagining made to Christian theology and/or liturgy.

- Ah, wow. (laughs) I don't think, I don't see any. I don't see any, and I gathered the book of ritual, of all of our rituals, and they're very very meaningful to me but I don't see any that I could probably do. I couldn't even do them at UTS Chapel, except we did a few things, not much, not much, music, sometimes, will ameliorate the message so you can move in, if you're not changing the words of existing hymns and you're using new music, sometimes that helps people with some new metaphors, but.

- Well you were very involved in both ritual and music and I wonder if you could say some about what was distinctive about, you said it was meaningful, why was it meaningful?

- Well, I think it was the metaphors, using different metaphors for god, not necessarily female metaphors, just using either unisex types of things like basket-maker god or god ecclesia, god calling in the church, god with us. I like the term expansive language. It's just that we're thinking of god from all different perspectives and realizing that our little slice of what we see is nothing compared to what god is so I think ritual and music are a way just to open us up to seeing in a different way, and anything that we can do that's expanded, to me, is helpful. I think when we try to contract to one little image of god that we end up in a dualistic fight with other religions in the world, that there's just many many ways up to that top of the mountain and we have to be able to at least appreciate what other people are seeing. The smaller our slice gets, the more competitive and defensive we get.

- Yeah, very good. To move toward the future, and you've already talked some about that, but what do you think is the greatest legacy of the Re-Imagining community?

- I think we do have a legacy, I think we have a legacy of opening up the discussion at a time, at that millennial time. Unfortunately, the third wave women have struggles with the church, but I think it's something that people can go back and look at what we've done and hear those voices and there's a validity to those voices and what we did, it does stand the test of time. When I go back and read it, I'm happy with

what we did. Sometimes I'm shocked, yeah, and very happy, so I think that that's a legacy. And we still have small pockets of people that are looking at our rituals and looking at what we did. So I think there's a future.

- Yeah, yeah. What do you think Re-Imagining means today?

- Well first of all, the word's all over the place now so we don't really own in any way that word, everything is getting re-imagined. I think today, I'd hate to see it lost, but it's not mentioned very much, it's just a very little bit, kind of a blip on the radar screen of what was happening around the millennial. And so that's about as far as our organization. I think unless you were directly involved with it you probably wouldn't know anything about it.

- What would it mean to re-imagine today? What needs to be re-imagined, do you think?

- I think the same things as we were doing. If you look at the ritual book and you look at the first chapters of inclusivity and different women's ways of worship and the different ways that we did administration and ritual, it's not being done, so yeah, I think we still have work to do. I don't think it really, there's not much that's there that doesn't still have to be done. It's getting watered down by different kinds of gender studies and it's getting watered down by different other kinds of social issues that are so pressing right now, so now feminist theology is just kind of one thing, especially at UTS. They're doing a lot of other really fine work but it's just not getting lifted up like it was at that little wave that we had.

- How does it make you feel to think about that? Are you discouraged?

- Well I'm not discouraged 'cause I get a chance to teach this three or four times a month so I'm just out there doing it, so that's what, I'm happiest when I'm teaching, and that definitely was a direct effect of Re-Imagining and the way that we did business, that way that we actually conducted a retreat or a workshop, same way as I do it now and people love it, so that helps me.

- Yeah. What would you include in the current Re-Imagining website? Who would benefit from it and why and how would they find out about it?

- Well, yeah, I'm gonna take the last one, that's always been our hardest thing, is publicity, of how you get the word of who you are out there and it's easier now with social media so I would say not only do we need a website, we need to get into social media and we absolutely have to have a Facebook or a place to comment. Websites are more like a brochure that somebody's gonna open if they know that it exists, they're not gonna go to a website or go, they're just not gonna go searching for a website and find Re-Imagining, what they're gonna find is a lot of the conservative backlash on Re-Imagining, so it's not an easy thing to find and unfortunately, the only way that you can get about that is to get enough hits on a good website. So that's hard, and one of the ways to do it is through other social media, every single time there's a meeting, it should be on Instagram and it should be tweeted and it should be on Facebook. Just so that, and then it does get out there to a lot of different people, that's the only way. It's hard. We always struggled with how to

get people included, always, and it's not any easier.

- And this has been wonderful, your insights are really helpful. What have we not discussed that you feel like you wish you had been able to say or include?

- Besides the people that spoke at gatherings, there were some people that were really important in the community and I think somehow we should figure out how we could gather their biographies. Some people like Madeleine Sumardén and Nancy Berna King and Sally Hill, even, 'cause she wasn't really a speaker and I don't know if we've ever tried to gather the biographies of these organizers or the beginnings so the interviews are kinda the beginning but that might be part of a website too, how people build the organization that weren't more behind the scenes.

- Yeah, very good.

- And as far as what should be included in the website, because Google goes pretty deep in websites, if we start putting speakers' names and what they said, it's going to show up, so if you google Mary Bednaraski, our website is gonna show up as a hit there, so just getting as many names and as much stuff on there as we can is going to start boosting the awareness too.

- Good point. Thank you so much, this was great.

- I hope it's helpful. Well I'll make us lunch, how does that sound?

- Wonderful.

- Actually, it's all made.

- Boy, Sue, that was great.

- But what have you heard from other people? What are they saying? Some people are really positive and saying, "Oh yeah, you totally changed the Presbyterian church"?

- No, no, everybody's been saying what you have about how, yeah, that it's not really entered into the church. I think everybody, I mean, you said, the good thing is, Annie asked me this.