

ence of women in combining task and maintenance functions (getting on with the job while caring for the individuals) in their group work could benefit the existing systems.

4. Access to an international network is another important reason for women to participate in the WCC. Opportunities for women to experience global sisterhood are few and far between. When they do take place, we begin to see the commonalities of our place in society. The specific problems may be different, but the root causes are remarkably similar — devaluing of women's work, stereotypical

attitudes about women's abilities, taboos related to the participation of women, and so on.

5. Most importantly, we can transform the Church. The full participation of women will enable the Church to be what it was intended to be — a community of faith, a community that draws equally on the gifts of women and men, that rids itself of the barnacles of gender-specific taboos and rituals.

Anyone who anticipates quick change will be enormously frustrated. However, faithfulness to the vision of a new age and perseverance in the task of ensuring its ar-

rival requires the involvement of all women of faith.

#### Further Reading:

Betty Thompson. *A Chance to Change: Women and Men in the Church*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.

Constance F. Parvey, ed. *The Community of Women and Men in the Church: The Sheffield Report*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983.

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## By His Wounds You Have Been Healed\*

### 1. Peter 2:24

O God,  
through the image of a woman†  
crucified on the cross  
I understand at last.

For over half of my life  
I have been ashamed  
of the scars I bear.  
These scars tell an ugly story,  
a common story,  
about a girl who is the victim  
when a man acts out his fantasies.

In the warmth, peace, and sunlight of your presence  
I was able to uncurl the tightly clenched fists.  
For the first time  
I felt your suffering presence with me  
in that event.  
I have known you as a vulnerable baby,  
as a brother, and as a father.  
Now I know you as a woman.  
You were there with me  
as the violated girl  
caught in helpless suffering.

The chains of shame and fear  
no longer bind my heart and body.  
A slow fire of compassion and forgiveness  
is kindled.  
My tears fall now  
for man as well as woman.

You, God,  
can make our violated bodies  
vessels of love and comfort



to such a desperate man.  
I am honoured  
to carry this womanly power  
within my body and soul.

You were not ashamed of your wounds.  
You showed them to Thomas  
as marks of your ordeal and death.  
I will no longer hide these wounds of mine.  
I will bear them gracefully.  
They tell a resurrection story.

*Anonymous*

† In a Toronto church the figure of a woman, arms outstretched as if crucified, was hung below the cross in the chancel.

\* Reprinted from *No Longer Strangers: A Resource for Women and Worship*, ed. I. Gjerding and K. Kinnamon. Ecumenical project of Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, World Student Christian Federation, and World Young Women's Christian Association, 1983.