

Everybody is somebody

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August 18, 2014

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The church is still uncomfortable with human bodies. It does little to promote the rich connection between bodies and Christian spirituality.

Paul uses "body" as a metaphor, and contemporary Christians do the same when we say "the body of Christ." This metaphorical usage generally takes precedence in the church's practice. In [Embodiment and the New Shape of Black Theological Thought](#), theologian Anthony Pinn demonstrates how many writers focus on metaphorical meaning when writing about bodies, rather than real material bodies.

When we hear Paul talk about presenting bodies as living sacrifices, do we deem all physical bodies acceptable to do so in our ecclesial practice? Is our social acceptance of certain bodies revealed by who is in congregational leadership? Are particular bodies invisible in our congregations?

I have an older cousin who has always looked up to me—literally. Since birth, she could never walk nor talk in ways we consider "normal." Her gaze always comes from below, never eye to eye, unless someone picks her up and places her on a couch. Her legs are twisted at the kneecaps— so if she does move, it is more like a crawl.

We may say my cousin is differently abled. She has a different (deformed?) body. Many in society may look at her and believe that because of this body, she is disposable. What kind of living sacrifice can she make? some may ask.

But my aunt, her mother, who birthed her into the world, never thought more highly of herself in relation to her child. She believed her daughter was *somebody*, a

member of the body of Christ. She baptized my cousin's body every time she gave her a warm bath. She served her communion every time she fed her a piece of bread. She clothed her in love every time she dressed her and combed her hair. She affirmed the humanity of my cousin and revealed to her that her life was not a waste.

My cousin is somebody—because in the body of Christ, every material body matters.