

# **Teaching Justice and Living Peace: Body, Sexuality and Religious Education in Asian-American Communities**

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## **I. Introduction**

In Asian-American communities, religious education for justice and peace is often framed by the discussion of racial and ethnic identity. Since racism is a serious social problem in the United States, it is important for Asian-Americans to continue to participate in racial justice movements and discussions of identity politics. Upholding the important works that Asian-Americans have produced, this paper argues that Asian-American religious education should include discussion about sexuality and sexual identity, in connection with ethnic identity thus to squarely address social justice.

In most Asian-American cultures, sexuality is a taboo subject, one that cannot be discussed in public except for discussion about procreation. For example, although Asian-Americans have inseparable ethnic and sexual identities within themselves, they are forced to separate the two and to focus solely on their cultural Asianness (Leong, 3-5). Such invisibility of sexuality also contributes to the creation of homophobia in heterosexual-centered Asian-American communities, and marginalizes sexual minorities. Like heterosexual Asian-Americans, sexual minorities are discriminated against due to their Asian race in a racially hierarchical society, including those of LGBTQ communities; however and unlike their counterparts, they face homophobia too. Thus Asian-American sexual minorities are treated as the “other” by both the racial/ethnic Other and the sexual Other (Leong, 3). Therefore, without addressing the subject of sexuality, the discussion and movement of peace and justice is plainly incomplete.

This paper examines sexuality in Asian-American faith communities. Specifically, it studies the influence of Confucian notions of the body on sexuality and homophobia. I first describe the current discussion of sexuality in Asian-American communities by utilizing resources of Asian-American LGBTQ support groups, such as API Family Pride of San Francisco and other Asian-American studies literature. Then I critically analyze the Confucian notion of the body that has shaped the subject of Asian-American sexuality, including Christian views. I then focus on demystification of the body, arguing that demystification is fundamental to East Asian-American discussions about sexuality. Finally, I suggest pedagogical strategies for the teaching of sex, body, and sexuality in Asian-American contexts.

## **II. The Current Discourse of Sexuality in Asian-American Communities**

Sexuality is a taboo subject, one that is not publicly discussed in Asian-American cultures. This cultural disposition also shapes the research of Asian-American studies and theology on sexuality. According to Dana Takagi, an Asian-American sociologist, the topic of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular in the field of Asian-American studies are often treated

in whispers (27). In other words, the topic of sexuality is rarely studied and talked about explicitly, so scholars frequently frame the topic of sexuality in roundabout ways. Kwok Pui Lan, an Asian-American feminist theologian says that this characteristic is also found in Asian-American feminist theologians' work: "In feminist theological discourse, female sexuality is discussed, for example, in the context of institutional sex tourism and the exploitation of women's sexual labor.... When theologians speak about female sexuality, they usually highlight Asian women's victimization and their oppression as sexual objects" (2004a, 2-3). In sum, sexuality is an almost invisible and silent topic in the research of Asian-American studies and theology.

Such invisibility and silence ironically create certain attitudes among Asian-Americans toward sexuality, such as separation, shame, homophobia, and fixed gender roles. Here I now will comment on this with three cases.

#### Case 1: A story from a heterosexual Asian-American woman theologian

One day this past spring, I got a call from a friend who is closely working with a LGBT support group in the San Francisco area. She was wondering whether I could talk with a Korean-American Presbyterian minister who was having difficulty accepting his gay son. Since the father believes that homosexuality is sinful behavior, the support group was looking for a heterosexual Asian-American theologian who would feel comfortable talking about theology, the Bible and sexuality. However, despite my willingness and the efforts of the support group, the meeting between me and the father never happened. It turned out that the father, who belongs to a denomination that does not recognize women's leadership and ordination, flat-out refused to talk with a woman theologian whose authority he could not acknowledge. Later we learned that the father decreed that the family members must keep the son's coming out as a secret, as though it had never happened.

#### Case 2: A story from a mother of a lesbian daughter

"No matter who she is, how she is, I love her forever because she is my daughter. But whenever I think of her as being a lesbian, I feel sadness in my heart. I worry that she will be unable to live a normal life and that she always will be viewed as an oddity in our society. To get married, to give birth, and to raise your children with a father and a mother (because men and women are very different) should be the components that make a healthy family... I went to an all girl's high school. There were some female classmates who loved me during that time. I also loved someone in return. However, because I felt it was not the right thing to do, I managed to change it. We live in this world and so we still need to follow the laws of this world. Otherwise we will certainly experience ostracism. I still dream of the day when my loving daughter will change" (API Family Pride, 8-9).

#### Case 3: A story about Truong Loc Minh

Truong Loc Minh, a Vietnamese immigrant, was savagely beaten by a group of young white straight men in Laguna Beach, California, on January 10, 1993. While mainstream media reported the incident as gay-basing, the Asian media plainly said that the victim was not gay and was beaten because of his race. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* headline announced, "A Shocking Hate Crime: In Orange County an Incident of Gay-Bashing at Its worst" (editorial, *Los*

*Angeles Times*, January 12, 1993), a Chinese newspaper reported the incident as “Asian Man Bashed at Laguna Beach” (*International Daily*, January 12, 1993).

These three cases show some of the most common Asian-American attitudes toward sexuality: separation of sexual identity from ethnic identity; shame; heterosexuality as normative, coupled with homophobia.

Since the topic of sexuality cannot be discussed in public realms, Asian-Americans have a strong tendency to separate sexual identity and ethnic identity. This separation, according to Kwok Pui Lan, sometimes leads to greater tolerance for LGBT behaviors as long as they are kept out of the public eyes (2004 b). However, it also makes it harder for LGBT members to come out to their Asian-American families and friends. For example, according to Connie Chan, who conducted ethnographical research on the coming out process and identity development of Asian-American gays and lesbians, only 5 out of 95 of her interviewees came out to their parents and families (19). Even when they come out, a general attitude of their parents is the separation of their gay/lesbian children’s heritage from their sexuality. That is, parents often accept their child as an Asian child, but pretend that they are not gay or lesbian (Hom, 37-49; Wat, 72-80). This is the attitude that the father in Case 1 exhibited; it also was suggested in the Chinese newspaper’s headline about Truong Loc Minh. In sum, parents typically pretend that their children have never come out, and they try hard to keep the “secret” from their extended families and communities (API Family Pride, 25).

If sexuality, especially homosexual identity, becomes a public topic, those who are involved in the issue, especially the family, feels shame because it has failed to live up to the norm of the community. Asian-American cultures frequently are communal cultures, so communal harmony is one of the highest virtues. Unlike individualistic societies which value each person’s independence, the value of the individual in Asian communal societies depends on how well a person adopts communal norms, those that promote social harmony (Hofstede, 1991, 51). In communal societies, attachments, relatedness, connectedness, oneness and dependency between people are more important than independence and individuality. For example, Koreans, as one of the most communal people in the world (Hofstede, 1980), find themselves adrift when they fail to adjust to the community to which they belong. Since everyone needs one another, this need makes people to be vulnerable when facing separation (Jae Un Kim, 115). Therefore, by not bringing up a taboo subject such as sexuality and by not making public a family member’s homosexuality, Asian-American parents and families try hard to meet perceived social expectations.

Moreover, in Asian-American communities, discussing sexuality in public and exposing one’s own homosexuality can be seen as a sign of westernization (Hom, 39). Although Asian-Americans embrace certain levels of Americanization as they assimilate to the dominant culture, extreme westernization or Americanization -- such as being openly gay, let alone being open about sexuality -- can result in a loss of one’s own cultural identity. This results in shame. Russell Leong talks about American popular media culture’s commercialism, and makes an ancillary point (Leong, 3):

Popular ideas around Asian American homosexuality have been confounded with broader notions of exotic Asian or “oriental” sexuality, especially in popular culture, film, and media. The pornography industry for instance, in producing homosexual or heterosexual

printed and film material on Asians and Asian Americans, configures our most visible racial features - skin, hair, complexion, and size -- in sexual terms for the primary consumption of the white male voyeur. Not surprisingly, some Asian Americans themselves view same sex sexuality as a sign of western decadence (Leong, 3).

In short, when Asian-Americans view themselves as sexual objects of the dominant culture,<sup>1</sup> they feel shame and associate sexuality and homosexuality with western decadence. Such a feeling of shame perpetuates already supra-homophobic beliefs and cultures of Asian-Americans (Takagi, 25).

This association of homosexuality with western decadence is also closely related to strict gender role expectations (Chan, 19). As the mother in Case 2 believes, the normal life for an Asian-American woman is “to get married, to give birth, and to raise children.” In other words, women belong to the domestic world, and men to the rest of the world. Since Asian-Americans separate the public and the private, they also make a clear demarcation between domestic and outside worlds: keeping the two separate and each world orderly is critical for universal harmony. Disturbing the harmony by crossing or erasing boundaries is perceived as another form of westernization. Hereto this role reversal is deemed a serious problem because patrilineal and patriarchal Asian traditions believe that female sexuality is dangerous, and that women’s bodies are inferior to those of men (Brock and Thistlethwaite, 38-39).

### **III. Body Politics in Asian American Communities and Churches: A Root of Discrimination against Sexual Minorities and Women**

Since most of the patrilineal and patriarchal Asian traditions, especially Confucian traditions, associate homosexuality with the notion of female sexuality and body image, it is crucial to review how women’s bodies and sexuality are understood in Asian-American communities; what is the nature of body politics in Asian-American communities; how such body politics influence the Asian-American church’s teachings about sexuality. Looking at these issues segues to fundamental pedagogical guidelines for Asian-American churches.

#### **1. Female Sexuality and Body Politics**

On June 20 of 2003, under the title of “Like a Virgin, Young Women Undergo Surgery to ‘Restore’ Virginitly,” *20/20* of the ABC News network reported that every year, hundreds of young scared Asian-American women visit plastic surgeons for hymen restoration before their marriage (Sherr; ABC News). For instance, even today in Islamic cultures, women’s virginitly is critical for the honor of family. Some young brides -- those that fail to maintain family honor by remaining virgins until marriage -- are publicly humiliated or even killed by families. As an Asian, *20/20*’s report did not surprise me; however what shocked me was that among those young women seeking hymen reconstruction surgery, are great numbers of Korean and Chinese American women who grew up in the United States or Canada.

Both China and Korea are heavily influenced by patrilineal and patriarchal Confucian values. Thus women’s bodies are the property of male members of their household based on the principle called *namjonyobi*: “Men should be respected; women should be lowered.” As the

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<sup>1</sup> Gale Yee argues that such a portrait is motivated by dominant culture’s racist anxiety and the fear of foreigners. *Poor Banished Children of Eve* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 159.

owner of property, the male family members, especially the head of the family, should teach women and girls proper behaviors such as the purity of the body. Specifically, women in Confucian families are educated in the principles of *samjongjiui* (Women's Three Virtues of Obedience) and *chilchuchiach* (Seven Eligible Grounds for Divorce). According to the principle of *samjongjiui*, a woman must obey her father when she is young; her husband when she is married; her son when she is widowed. This rule requires absolute obedience of women to men throughout their lives. If a woman violates this rule, punishment is severe. For example, if a married woman violates one of the following rules, her husband can divorce her: 1. If she behaves disobediently to her parents-in-law; 2. if she fails to give birth to a son; 3. if she is talkative; 4. if she commits adultery; 5. if she is jealous of her husband's concubine; 6. if she carries a malignant disease; 7. if she commits theft (Young Jung Kim, 52-53).

Under this system, women's sexuality and chastity belong to her family, and women have to live under severe sexual suppression because losing one's virginity brings shame and humiliation to the the entire family, and thus hurts the social advancement of male members of one's family (Chung, 140). Accordingly, a young Confucian girl's expression of sexual desire and passion becomes the object of family's fear, so the family mandates restrictions on movement.

Moreover, families expect daughters to maintain sexual purity even after the marriage. For example, before the marriage ceremony, it is a Korean and Korean-American tradition that the mother of the bride gives a silver knife to the daughter. The silver knife symbolizes sexual purity. In the past Korean women used the knife to protect themselves from a rapist (by hurting the rapist or by killing themselves if they are raped) or to kill their sexual desire through mutilating their own body when they are widowed. Although such a practice is no longer expected, a Korean or Korean-American mother still will ask her daughter to maintain sexual purity. Since many young American women of Confucian heritage seek hymen restoration surgery, this arguably is a continuation of the patriarchal notion of women's bodies as patriarchal property.

On the other hand, nothing like this is expected of Asian and Asian-American men: "whereas a man is allowed more freedom to express his sexual passion, a woman's sexuality is narrowly defined by the familiar context" (Kwok, 2004 a). According to Rita Nakashima Brock (40-51), this patriarchal notion of women's bodies and sexuality explains why the sex-industry is thriving in Japan, a Confucian society. As a source of physical pleasure, sex shops and prostitutes give men greater pleasures since the experience is divorced from the rubrics of men's otherwise ordinary, formally-structured, and highly-restrictive relationships.

This notion of female sexuality and body also explains why most Asian-American communities are homophobic. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals challenge the harmony of a community that is based on hierarchal patriarchy. In a culture where men's bodies and sexuality are regarded as superior to those of women, any nontraditional form of sexuality is a danger to this well-established social system.

## 2. Ritualized Body Politics

If women's bodies and sexuality are inferior and dangerous, what is the nature of men's body politics in Confucian cultures? Since it is a taboo subject, there is not much literature. Notwithstanding that, men's bodies are discussed as a vehicle for the achievement of universal harmony.

The purpose of becoming human in Confucian societies is to participate in the achievement of universal harmony. Confucians try to achieve harmony through a community of educated moral men called *gentlemen*. A gentleman is expected to do two fundamental things: first, he is to cultivate himself at any cost, including that of his own life. The other is to live for the well-being of others so that he can bring peace and order to society (Mencius, VII.B.32). To become a true human, a gentleman should not only cultivate himself, but he should live for the well-being of others. Self-realization without social participation is regarded as egotistical (Confucius, I.14). Each person is obligated to recognize the existence of others and to serve the public good. In other words, a gentleman should cultivate to the utmost the principles of his nature. Wishing to better himself, he thereby better others (Confucius, VI.30). This communal endeavor of being human is clearly reflected in the Chinese letter *jen* (benevolence). *Jen* is composed of the character for person (人), next to the character for two (二). Here the “two” is crucial, for it symbolizes that each human is quintessentially social or more than one.

To develop social harmony, it is important for members of Confucian society to live according to socially approved rites. Confucians call this “ritualization of the body,” and consider it as the framework for development of the person (Tu 1985, 172). The body, despite its structural limitation, is the most fundamental instrument to be a human being because the self as a concrete living reality is inseparable from the body. It is the proper home for mind, soul, and spirit. Confucians believe that social solidarity and universal harmony begin from performing routine functions, such as learning to stand, sit, walk, and eat according to socially approved and accepted rites or the ritualization of the body (Confucius, XII.1). If people fail to live up to the expectations of the community, they cannot live in harmony with those around them. Through the ritualization of the body, all members of society learn proper and fitting deportment. So the ritualization of the body helps a person to be an active participant in the community.

A body conceived through ritualization is not a private possession; rather it is a major vehicle and tool to achieve and maintain social harmony. Tu Wei-Ming articulates this notion of non-private body as follows:

We do not own our bodies; we become our bodies and through that process of becoming we learn to fully realize ourselves as concrete living human beings. Three salient features should be noted here:

the body is a vehicle by which, we, as Heaven’s co-creators, participate in the great transformation as responsive and responsible agents;

the body is an attainment by which we, as beneficiaries of Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things, sustain and enrich nature as filial children and conscientious guardians;

the body is a conduit through which we communicate with all modalities of being in order to realize the ultimate meaning of life in ordinary human existence (Tu 1996).

So the main purpose of the human body is for communal service, not for private pleasure such as sexual activities. In this context, it can be understood why Confucian cultures emphasize sexuality as a taboo subject. Even though it talks about the body extensively, the only aspect of sex that is mentioned is that of procreation and women’s purity. In this ritualized body politics, there is no room for a homosexual body, one that is perceived as used for private pleasure instead of the maintenance of social order and harmony. Since the social harmony is achieved solely

through moral men or gentlemen, women's bodies can disrupt men's greater work; that is unless families maintain women's purity.

### 3. Spiritualized Body Politics of Asian-American Churches

One of the most difficult tasks about this essay was the lack of theological literature on Asian and Asian-American sexuality. Among over one hundred theologians working for ATS member schools, only a handful of scholars such as Kwok Pui Lan, Rita Nakashima Brock, and Jeffrey Kuan (all heterosexual Asian-American theologians), are currently researching sexuality. Moreover in the field of religious education, there has been no significant research on sexuality in Asian-American contexts, and hence this paper is one of the first of its kind. Although I originally intended to write an essay that critically analyzes the Asian-American theological discourse of sexuality from a pedagogical perspective, there simply were not enough resources for this. So this essay is written in a fashion to explore the issue of sexuality itself in the Asian-America context, heavily relying on Asian-American studies literature.

I say this because it shows where Asian-American theology and churches stand in their discourse of sexuality. As in Asian-American communities, sexuality is a taboo subject in Asian-American theologies and churches. Hereto Kwok Pui Lan opines that the lack of interest and research on sexuality is because of the long-lived influence of 19th century mores and Western missionary theology: "Many of these churches were established by Western missionaries, steeped in the Victorian sexual codes and the cult of female domesticity" (2004 a). Arguably when Asian cultural values and Victorian sexual codes met in Asian churches and Asian-American churches, it created a more rigid atmosphere of sexuality, an attitude strongly present in Asian-American churches. For example, in the United Methodist Church in which I have clergy membership, the largest ethnic group besides Caucasians is Korean (about 400 congregations). However, none of these churches participates in Reconciling Ministries Network, "a national grassroots organization that exists to enable full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of the United Methodist Church" (RMN Mission Statement). In fact, out of over 200 reconciling congregations and campus ministry groups, there is only one Asian-American congregation, which is located in San Francisco. This is an instance where culture and Christianity become mutual malformers (Lee, 20). This also might be the reason why even liberal Asian-American theologians seldom discuss sexuality or they limit discussion largely to body politics, Mary's virginity or sex tourism (Kwok 2004 a). Regarding body politics, Asian-American churches pretty much focus solely on Paul's Body of Christ. Ironically, this Pauline-Asian Body of Christ is very distant from that of Paul in two senses: first, although Paul specifically addresses issues related to body, sex, and sexuality (e.g., 1 Corinthians 7), most Asian-American churches avoid discussion of sexuality itself and focus on the morality of Paul's writings. The fact that Paul talked about homosexuality, for example, conceivably would force Asian church to discuss sexuality; however, it still is hard to find Asian-American churches talking about sexuality and homosexuality, largely because the first topic is embarrassing and the latter brings shame.

Second, when Paul used the analogy of the Body of Christ as an ideal image of Christian existence, he presented a radical and countercultural notion of the body to Hellenistic society and that of the faithful (Martin, 68). According to Dale Martin, the conflict between the strong and the weak in the early church was rooted in the Hellenistic view of the body, a pinion of social harmony based on hierarchy (163). The Hellenistic body ideology consists of two fundamental

beliefs: 1) there is hierarchy in the human body; 2) there is cardinal continuity between human body and social body, and therefore, hierarchy is part of the natural social order (Martin, 21). Some Greeks believed that parts of human bodies like the head were more important than other parts, and that the social body, a macrocosm of the human body, evidences similar qualities. Hence inequality and hierarchy are necessary elements of the social order. Tampering with this system could bring disaster to cosmic harmony, so the hierarchical boundaries between free and slave, between male and female, and between Greeks and non-Greeks, should be maintained.

Martin argues that this conception of the body is exactly what those upper-class members brought to the Corinthian church (70). On the other hand, the lower-class members, the weak at Corinth's church, those who were attracted to a Christian gospel that proclaimed God's love for all and one that challenged the existing social order, refused the continuation of social hierarchy by the upper-class members within the church (Martin 86). Consequently, conflicts between the two groups were inevitable.

Paul envisioned a new community and opposed the hierarchical worldview of the upper-class members: He clearly and unambiguously took the side of the weak. He urged the higher-status Christians to change their attitudes in ways to support the position of the lower-status Christians. In other words, Paul advocated what upper-class ideology fears the most: Disruption of the hierarchical social order/body. He explicitly and implicitly emphasized that the Christian community is a new community in which no one seeks one's own honor, but, rather, one associates with the lowly and gives honor to others: "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are" (Romans 12:16 NRSV). It is an alternative, counterculture community in which all existing social cultural, religious, gender divisions and differences should be overcome (Schüssler-Fiorenza, 218).

Despite the fact that Paul's notion of Body of Christ was a radical and countercultural one that challenged the existing hierarchical social order, most Asian-American churches interpret the Body of Christ as a desirable fellowship *between* Christians or in-group members in the same community. Social accountability for non-Christians and outside members is rarely emphasized. As a result, a lack of interest in social justice typifies many Asian-American churches (Lee 2004 b, 109). This also explains why an Asian-American presence is almost invisible in most LGBT ministries.

In sum, the body politics discussed in Asian-American churches are, unlike Paul's writings and intentions, highly spiritualized. The actual physical and sexual bodies of people sitting in the pews are rarely talked about. Instead focus is on the spiritualized body of Christ, a theological nebulosity that ignores the world in which it is situated.

#### **IV, Toward Demystification of Sexuality and Body: Pedagogical Strategies for the Teaching of Sex, Body, and Sexuality in Asian-American Contexts.**

Based on above analysis, I define the Asian-American approach to sexuality and body as a mystified one. It separates human sexuality from racial and ethnic identities, as though the two can actually be separate in people. Moreover, humans by definition are tremendously sexual or else humankind would have stopped existing long ago. Homosexuality has been part of this sexual landscape from get go. Thus it is an intellectual oddity that Asian Americans pretend as though sexuality and homosexuality are foreign to their communal self-understanding.



So too, the uncritical Christian acceptance or tolerance of antiquated views about women's bodies and sexuality is startling and embarrassing since many women otherwise are leaders in business, academia and politics. Portraying only men's bodies positively hurts both men and women's development, socially, psychologically, and spiritually; it makes it appear as though there is something wrong with over half of the world's population, when there straightforwardly is not, thus effectively encouraging men to be oafish and women to be demur.

People need to form their identity, taking seriously the broad spectrum of human experience as mediated by women, men, gays, straights, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. Moreover, Asian-American churches -- those that spiritualize body politics disregarding real people and the sexuality that Paul talked about and that people in the pews struggle with -- hereby present a smallish view of the cosmos that God loves (John 3:16). All these features that are based on mystified assumptions and pretension need to be demystified through religious education. Hereto I suggest the following:

First, a new definition of religious education is necessary. In most Asian-American churches, religious education is identified with Sunday school for children that study explicitly Christian contents and the Bible. The problem is that a fluency is seldom developed between the black and white of the Bible and the modern world. To broaden the scope of their understanding of religious education is necessary if we need to address sexuality as a part of religious education. For this, Thomas Groome's outline of religious education's spiritual chemistry is on the mark (11-14). Groome defines Christian religious education as an ontological and political activity, as well as a transcendental one. As we deal with the whole being of the people living in a real life context with sexual desires, understanding religious education in this way is crucial. With a broad definition of Christian religious education, people can see that who they are, what they are, where and how they live are all part of religious education.

Second, the meaning and scope of curriculum also need to be redefined. If we want to address identity formation which is crucial for ethnic minorities in the United States as a part of religious education, it is necessary for Asian-American churches to redefine the concept of curriculum. In most Asian-American churches, curriculum has been understood as what Maria Harris calls explicit curriculum that basically teaches information in the Bible. However, as real people struggling with real life issues such as racism, sexism, and sexuality, it is important for Asian-American Christians to have critical perspectives on them to live justly in this racially and sexually hierarchical American society. Especially, since sexuality is an uncomfortable subject for most Asian-Americans, addressing the topic in many different ways beyond the Bible study text books is important. As Harris says, the church does not have a curriculum but is a curriculum itself (63). Fellowship meetings, informal gatherings, small group meetings, and so on need to be understood as curricula.

Third, I suggest that different interpretations of Paul's Body of Christ should be introduced to Asian-American churches. As mentioned above, Paul's phraseology is understood in an extremely spiritualized way by Asian-American Christians. Hereto the context, real life struggles, views of sexuality and sexual activities, and other conflicts of the early church should be introduced to Asian-American churches. Since Asian-American churches use the Body of Christ as an ideal image of the church, studying this notion from a different perspective is particularly important. The study also can bring the topic of sexuality and homosexuality to the surface more naturally since Paul's letters explicitly mention them.

Fourth, to bring the subject of sexuality and sexual identity (i.e., sexual personhood as not separate from ethnic identity) to Asian-Americans, Asian-American churches need to be more creative in terms of teaching materials. I personally find that using popular media is very helpful because of its explicit use of sexual themes. Particularly, Margaret Cho's stand-up comedy show, *I am the One that I Want* is excellent for Asian-American contexts. Cho, a Korean American woman was a star in "All American Girl," a sitcom that featured TV's first Asian American family. In her film, Cho addresses sexuality as a part of who she is, and she also talks about why her TV show lasted only one season (ABC 1994-1995 season): she was not Asian enough by ABC TV's standard. Some popular media are already dealing with ethnic and sexual identity issues in a more integrated ways. Such texts may give new insights to Asian-American religious education.

Separation of sexual identity from Asian-American identity and mystifying real people's issues with religious language add another form of subordination to the heap of inequalities that Asian-Americans already experience, so to pay explicit attention to sexuality and homosexuality in the church is long past due and a matter of justice. If Asian religious education talks about justice and peace while it ignores sexual minorities and that women have been decreed to be inferior objects, the justice becomes more mystification. For the record plainly states that we all are sexual beings, whether we admit it or not.

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