

"The Challenge of a 'Preferential Option' to Faith in a Context of Privilege"
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Abstract

We come to the present time in the life of the church understanding that the phrase "a preferential option" - for culture, for the poor, for the margins, for the migrant, for youth, for the environment - is a key doctrinal insight from the 20th century that instructs the life of discipleship and the following of Christ. However, in the context of societies with privilege, in the United States for example, real historical, philosophical, ideological, and even religious obstacles exist to a proper understanding and practice of this insight. The preferential option inherently orients discipleship toward the marginalized and victimized other and her or his life experiences, and yet a culture of privilege turns the person inordinately toward the self. This presentation hopes to look at some of the background and characteristics of a culture of privilege as experienced in the United States and describe the role that a "preferential option" could play in interrupting a culture of privilege."

Bio

MT Dávila is assistant professor of Christian ethics at Andover Newton Theological School. Her teaching and publications focus on the areas of race and immigration, the use of force, the option for the poor, the role of the social sciences in ethical reflection, and the church and civil society in the United States. She is currently conducting research with leaders of communities of faith and activists with respect to moral motivation and discipleship in activism, as well as completing a volume on the preferential option for the poor in the United States (2016).