

Option for the Poor

Journal for the Study of Christian Culture

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基督教文化学刊

(第16辑·2006秋)

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# 主编絮语：“穷人”何谓？

What Does It Mean by “the Poor”?

杨慧林

Yang Huilin, Renmin University of China

“选择穷人”(option for the poor)之谓,见于多纳·多尔(Donal Dorr)出版于1983年、又于1992年修订和扩充的一本同名书。从当时的角度看,“选择穷人”的概念似乎是“几年前刚刚出现的”;但是除去宗教改革时代的“唯信得救”(salvation through faith alone)之外,它已经成为一个“最富争议的宗教术语”。<sup>①</sup>

按照多纳·多尔的描述:“我们生活在一个分成阶层的社会中,某些经济、政治、文化和宗教结构,维持着……对于民众的统治。这些结构通过主要由中产阶级任职的机构和部门来运作,……无论他们个人的品德和价值如何,……他们都会由于自己的工作而助长社会结构的不公正。”如是观之,“不公正”几乎是必然的;而“选择穷人”则正是“对社会结构之不公正的回答”。

但是问题在于:如果“经济、政治、文化和宗教结构”都是由一定的“机构和部门”来“运作”的,如果“个人的品德和价值”并不能

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<sup>①</sup> Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, p. 1.

制止“社会结构的不公正”，那么究竟是由谁来“选择穷人”？此其一。

“穷”与“富”从来都是相对而言，何况“富不过三代”，“三十年河西、三十年河东”也未可知。如果“穷人”摆脱外力的制宰，自己“选择”自己、自己解放自己，那么一旦颠覆“不公正”的社会结构，一旦建构起新的“机构和部门”，一旦“穷人”成为“富人”，是否又注定要回到“社会结构的不公正”、乃至不得不再度“选择”呢？此其二。

神学家通常认为：“选择穷人”的观念来自解放神学与马克思主义的某种结合，却始终可以在基督教信仰和社会教义中找到依据。不过他们也意识到：“教会的教导虽然没有实质上的改变，但至少有着重心的转移”，因为它“并非一个现成的模式或者一套永恒不变的真理”，而只是“一个尚可发展的……有机传统”。与之相应，信仰所关注的已经不是其“管理社会的规则”是否真的有效，而在于“为一些基本的人性真理和价值作教导和见证”。<sup>①</sup>此其三。

在基督教的文献和历史中，虽然耶稣痛恨“在圣殿里兑换银钱的人”（太 21:12），虽然耶稣主张“把钱捐给穷人”（太 19:21），否则“财主要进天堂，比骆驼穿过针眼还要难”（太 19:23），但是从上帝给予约伯的丰厚回报（伯 42:8~15）到马克斯·韦伯的《新教伦理与资本主义精神》，“穷人”似乎并不是“拣选”的最终依据？此其四。

可见“选择”的前提，还是要首先界定“穷人何谓”。

基督教历史上有许多涉及“穷人”的重要文献，特别是天主教教廷颁布的种种“通谕”。比如利奥十三世（Leo XIII）在 1891 年发表“论工人阶级处境”的《“新事”通谕》（*Rerum Novarum*）。其中提

<sup>①</sup> Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, p. 1.

出：当时的社会病症的核心，在于“工人阶级中的大部分处于痛苦患难的境地”；“人类不能把劳动力简单地看成是一种商品，因为那是对人性尊严的否认”；“工人阶级由于别无选择或者畏惧更糟的后果，而接受了少于维持简朴生活所需的工资，……便沦为压力和不公正的受害者”。如果联想到马克思的《资本论》恰好是在 1867 ~ 1894 年之间陆续出版，那么我们可能会同意：“尽管这篇通谕强烈地否定社会主义，……它还是……沾染了社会主义的原则”。<sup>①</sup>

《“新事”通谕》发表 40 年之后，庇护十一世(Pius XI)在 1931 年发表“论恢复社会秩序”的《“四十年”通谕》(*Quadragesimo Anno*)，予以回应。他虽然坚称天主教“与社会主义者是相对立的”，但是也对教会自身有所检点。比如：教会有时“在外表上显得仿佛是站在富有者方面，并且常常被人埋怨，说她专帮富有者说话，而对于无产者的需要与痛苦漠然无动于衷”；这样的责难虽然“是不公道的”，不过庇护十一世也提到“有不少人……一方面表示信仰公教真理，另一方面却几乎完全不顾到那个公道和仁爱的崇高法则，……甚至还有一些人为贪欲所驱使，竟去做着压迫工人的事，而不以为耻辱。……有一些人甚至可以利用宗教本身，拿宗教的名义来做他们自己的不公道德行为的掩护”。

此外还有 1961 年“论社会问题的新近发展”的《“慈母与导师”通谕》(*Mater et Magistra*)，当时的教宗若望二十三世(John XXIII)特别强调：一味“叹息和抵抗”物质社会的发展、一味“怀念过去的简朴生活”，在现代社会“不仅毫无意义、而且甚至是错误的”；但是与此同时，“经济繁荣的标志不只是物质和财富的积累，还要看这些物质和财富被公正分配的程度”。

<sup>①</sup> Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, p. 9.

至1960年代梵蒂冈第二次大公会议期间,“论教会在现代世界”的《牧职宪章》(Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*)再度重申了“选择穷人”的原则:“人人都有权拥有为本人及家人所用的财富,……处于极端贫困的人,有权使用他人的财富来维持生活之需。”

此后又有1971年第二次全球主教会议(General Synod of Bishops)通过的《公义遍及全球》(Justice in the World),1986年的美国主教团牧函《全面经济公正》(*Economic Justice for All*),以及2004年梵蒂冈正式编订的《教会社会训导汇编》等等<sup>①</sup>。

所有这些教会文献的基础,都在于《圣经》关于“穷人”的描述。比如《圣经》当中有过种种缺乏社会地位和社会权力的孤儿、寡妇、外邦人,耶稣也同样被描述为普通的乡亲、或者“那个木匠的儿子”(太13:54~56)。但是“穷人”的涵义仅只于此吗?有论者简要归纳了几种相关的质疑。<sup>②</sup>

第一,“选择穷人”无论如何都是一种“专有之爱”,这未必符合《圣经》中的“普遍之爱”。而如果“普遍之爱”意味着“整一”却非“多样”,那么也许它恰好暗示着某一个群体对另一群体的优先性。

第二,“选择穷人”说到底仍然是“身份的主体”对于“主体的身份”之认定,其中的诠释空间是没有穷尽的。因此如果以为“穷人”的观点便是正确的观点,可能同样是对于某种特定身份或者价值立场的偏执而已。

第三,“选择穷人”很容易导向暴力的实践和文化对抗,很容易将贫困的处境归咎于社会制度的不公正,却无法公正地评判社会

① Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004.

② Patricia Lamoureux, *The Criterion of Option for the Poor and Moral Discernment*, *Louvain Studies*, 21 (3), Fall 1996, pp. 261~287.

可能蕴含的活力、善意和创造精神。

沿此追究，我们会发现《圣经》所谓的“贫穷”，最著名的例子当出自《路加福音》6:20，即：“贫穷的人有福了”。按照各种《圣经》版本的标注，这句经文可以同《马太福音》5:3“互见”。但是查考《马太福音》5:3，其中“贫穷”却已经被明确地表达为“灵性的贫穷”（the poor in spirit），亦即所谓的“虚心”。为了避免误解，后来也有译本作“承认自己灵性贫乏的人”（those who know they are spiritually poor）。<sup>①</sup>

一旦以“灵性的贫乏”为“贫穷”作解，物质的匮乏或者地位的卑微便都不足与论。上述两段经文的“互见”提醒我们：“贫穷”在《圣经》中最为基本、也最为独特的涵义，只能从精神的向度上予以读解。从而才有“贫穷”（the poor）、“灵性的贫穷”（the poor in spirit）到“承认自己灵性贫乏”（those who know they are spiritually poor）的释义轨迹。

不仅如此，上述轨迹的关节点既不在于财富的多寡、身份的高下，甚至也不在于精神的充盈或衰颓。其中真正被“选择”的“贫穷”，是在于我们承认和了解自己的有限性。缘此进一步追究，则必然通向“虚己”的概念。

“虚己”（kenosis）出自《腓立比书》2:7。它的意思是说：耶稣基督本来具有上帝的本质，却“道成肉身”、“自甘卑微”。所以《腓立比书》的现代译法，将“虚己”解释为“自愿放弃一切，取了奴仆的本质”，“成为人，以人的形体出现”，“自甘卑微，顺服至死”，“却没有滥用跟上帝同等的特权”。<sup>②</sup>

① 现代英文译本/现代中文译本《圣经》，联合圣经公会出版，《新约》部分，第7页。

② 同上，第398页。

有《圣经》研究者认为：“虚己”意味着“除去爱之外倾空自己的一切”(emptied himself of all but love);其中所包含的,是“彻底的自我否定”(utter self-denial)。这种“虚己理论”(kenosis theory)被视为“神圣属性的形而上的让渡”(metaphysical relinquishment of divine attributes),而无论“让渡”还是“自我倾空”(self-emptying),其实都不会削弱“神”原本具有的神性。<sup>①</sup>

如果“神”的“虚己”表现为“倾空神性”,那么在人的意义上说,“虚己”亦即“破执”。这正是本刊第14辑编辑絮语《在其位置上的不在场》所申说的话题。未经“破执”的任何言说者,都太容易执著于自己的文化身份、价值理想、信仰立场、话语传统等等,都以为必须坚守自己的主体角色才能进入对话、甚至才能“说话”。这可能是近代以来西方思想中的最大误区。在这种虚妄的前提下,不同的言说者永远不可能找到共同的确定性,对任何价值理想的描述也都会因人而异。

因此,价值和意义的消解未必在于“怀疑”、“虚无”或者自我否定,却很可能是从人们对某种价值、意义的过度自信和执著开始的。这一悖论不仅见之于“权力话语”,而且对任何“弱势”的群体也同样适用。由此可以说:在经济地位、社会身份等物质尺度上界定被“选择”的“穷人”,其实并不能成立。

这不仅是《圣经》释义、教会训导或者基督教神学的问题,对于任何有关“真理”、“正义”的言说,可能的质疑其实同样是无可回避的。我们今天能够回答这样的质疑吗?

被称为后殖民主义理论家的佳亚特里·斯皮瓦克(Gayatri Spivak),曾在1983年曾发表著名的论文《属下能说话吗?》(*Can the*

<sup>①</sup> F. F. Bruce edited, *New International Bible Commentary*, revised edition, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, p. 1444 ~ 1445.



*Subaltern Speak?*)。她所谓的“属下”(Subaltern)或者“属下性”(subalternity),正相当于基督教神学所谓的“穷人”。用斯皮瓦克的解释,那正是没有发言权、声音被“涂抹”、“不能代表自己”、甚至在“版图上的帝国主义”终结之后仍然不能真正说话的“穷人”。23年以后的“国际劳动妇女节”,她在北京的一次演讲中再度提起这一话题,而“属下”仍然是其中的焦点。

马克思《路易·波拿巴的雾月十八日》被斯皮瓦克一再提及,而马克思所说的“他们因此不能以他们自己的名义、通过议会或通过惯例来维护他们的阶级利益”,已通过英译本成为广泛流传的名句:“他们不能代表自己,一定要别人来代表他们。”<sup>①</sup> 这甚至被赛义德的《东方学》引为卷首语。在斯皮瓦克的行文中,应当“用马克思的全部观念”予以“描述”的“属下”或“穷人”,被特别突出地表达为“愿望被重新安排”。<sup>②</sup> 而值得注意的是,“愿望被重新安排”在她的同一篇文章中,恰好有两层完全不同的含义。

一方面,寡妇殉夫自焚的行为、当今的“自杀炸弹”等等,是对某种外在传统、秩序、权威或者经文的被迫服从,是“愿望不得被重新安排”,其中隐含着一种“愿望被重新安排了集体性”<sup>③</sup>。而另一方面,斯皮瓦克认为在马克思“鞭辟入里”的著作中,在马克思“使无产者成为主体”、“使他们把自己认作生产的主人”时,又正是“重新安排工人们的感觉”。<sup>④</sup> 不仅如此,斯皮瓦克相信自己所从事的工作、“一个教师的工作”也同样是“非强制性地重新安排人们

① 佳亚特里·斯皮瓦克,《批评与回应》,李秀立译,见《外国文学》2006年第6期,第72页,75页。

② 同上,第76页,74页,77页。

③ 同上,第74页,77页。

④ 同上,第76页。

的愿望”。<sup>①</sup>

这两种“重新安排愿望”，判然有别地启发着关于主体身份、价值理想、正义观念、真理论等一系列问题的理解。从根本上说，无论马克思的“他们不能代表自己，一定要别人来代表他们”，还是斯皮瓦克的“非强制性地重新安排人们的愿望”，其实都表达了对于“穷人”的“选择”。但是他们之所以不同于“强制性”、“集体性”地“重新安排”穷人的“愿望”，则可以借助德里达(Jacques Derrida)的“宗教行为”得到参照，即：甚至对于弱小、缺席或者沉默的群体，甚至在“选择穷人”的前提之下，唯一正当的作为也只能是“代替他们说话，而又不为他们说话”(speaking on behalf of them ... without speaking for them)。<sup>②</sup>因为“为他们”和“为我们”的逻辑是一样的，“选择者”的“身份”实际上已经成为“事先的信靠”(pre-assurance)。换言之，一旦“事先”确定了一定的“身份”，所能“选择”的就只有“我们的”价值或“他们的”价值、“穷人”的正义或“富人”的正义，“价值”和“正义”却永远与我们擦肩而过。

或许可以说，这是“穷人何谓”对于“选择穷人”的一种回答，也是神学的“他者”对于人文学“主体”的一种启发。

① 佳亚特里·斯皮瓦克，《批评与回应》，李秀立译，见《外国文学》2006年第6期，第73页。

② Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, edited by Derek Attridge, New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 45.

## What Does It Mean by “the Poor”?

Yang Huilin, Renmin University of China

“Option for the poor” appeared in Donal Dorr’s book by the same name in 1983 and in its revised and expanded edition of 1992. At the time, “option for the poor” was a new concept. By now, it has become “one of the most hotly debated theological issues”<sup>①</sup> since “salvation through faith alone” of the Reformation era.

According to Dorr, we live in a society which is segregated, and many structures of economy, politics, culture and religion maintain the governing of the broad masses. These structures are mainly operated by organizations of the middle class, no matter what kind of personal virtue or value system they adhere to, by their work they will always increase the injustice within social structures. From this vantage point, “injustice” is practically a given, while “option for the poor” is “an answer to the injustice within the structures of society”.

However, if the structures of economy, politics, culture and religion are operated by specific institutions and associations and if personal virtues and value system cannot stop the injustice within social structures, who

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① Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, p. 1.

then should determine “option for the poor”? This is my first point.

Secondly, “rich” and “poor” are relative terms. We have heard of the adage “wealth does not carry beyond three generations”, wealth and success are temporary, they can shift from east to west, and from west to east. If “the poor” were to successfully overcome oppression, choose their own destiny, and liberate themselves by removing unjust social structures and establishing new infrastructures to become “the rich”, would they in time degenerate unjust social structures, which would necessitate new options all over again?

Thirdly, theologians generally agree that the concept of “option for the poor” grew out of liberation theology and Marxism. But its roots are to be found in the Christian faith and its social doctrine. Theologians also realize that the doctrine of the Church will not be altered essentially, but at least there can be a shift of emphasis, because it is surely not a prearranged fix model or an eternally unchangeable truth. Rather, it is “an organic tradition” which has room for development. Related to this is the fact that faith is less concerned with the effectiveness of the principle of social administration. Its primary concern is to “provide guidance and witness for some basic human truths and values”.<sup>①</sup>

Fourthly, according to biblical text and history, Jesus was angered by “all who were buying and selling” in the temple (Matthew 21:12), and taught that one should “give to the poor” (Matthew 19:21) for it would be “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). However, from

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① Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, p. 1.

God's rich rewards to Job (Job 42: 8 ~ 15) to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, "the poor" does not appear to be the ultimate basis of "election".

Therefore, the premise of "option for the poor" should begin with defining "what does it mean by the poor"?

There are many important documents in Christian church history related to "the poor", especially the numerous papal edicts issued in the Catholic Church. For example, Pope Leo XIII issued the *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 to discuss the condition of the working class. It pointed out that the heart of society's malaise lay in the fact that "the most part of the workers class live in pain and suffering", "we cannot simply see labour as a kind of ware, since this is a denial of human dignity", "the working class accepts a wage which is just above existence level because it has no other choice or is afraid of even worse consequences, but in this way the workers become victims of suppression and injustice". With Marx's *Das Kapital* published between 1867 ~ 1894, it is conceivable that "even if this encyclic vigorously denies socialism, ... it is colored by the principle of socialism itself."<sup>①</sup>

Forty years after the *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Pius XI responded by issuing the *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931 on the recovery of social order. Despite its assertion that Catholicism was "opposed to socialism", the edict was an exercise in self-examination by the church. For instance, it mentioned that at times, the church "seems to stand on the side of the rich and is often criticized for only speaking for the wealthy, while

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① Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, revised and expanded edition, p. 9.

neglecting the needs of the proletariat in an aloof manner". Such criticism might not be fair, but Pope Pius XI admitted that "quite many people... proclaim to believe in the truth of the Catholic faith, but on the other hand they almost totally neglect the noble rules of justice and love..., and there are even some people who are impelled by greed and exploit workers without feeling shame. ... some others even use the name of religion itself to cover up their unjust behavior.

In the 1961 *Mater et Magistra*, which discussed new developments in social issues, Pope John XXIII stressed that the church's continued "outcry and protest" against the growth of materialism in society, and her nostalgic memory of the frugal life of the past "is not only meaningless but even wrong." Meanwhile, "the beacon of economic success is not only the amassing of resources and money, but also must pay attention to the just distribution of wealth".

In the 1960s, Vatican II discussed the Church in the modern world. *Gaudium et Spes* reiterated the "option for the poor" principle: "all people have the right to possess property for themselves and their family ..., and those in extreme poverty have the right to use other people's goods in order to satisfy the basic needs to survive."

In 1971, the second worldwide General Synod of Bishops published *Justice in the World*. In 1986, the American Synod of Bishops in turn published *Economic Justice for All*. In 2004, the Vatican published the revised edition of *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.<sup>①</sup>

All these documents are based on the biblical description of "the

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① Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004.

poor”. For example, the Bible spoke of the disenfranchised and powerless in society—orphans, widows, and Gentiles. Jesus himself was portrayed as a commoner from the countryside, “the carpenter’s son” (Matthew 13 :54 ~ 16). But is the definition of “the poor” merely confined to these descriptions? Subsequent discussions on the topic can be summarized into the following challenges.<sup>①</sup>

First, no matter how you present it, “option for the poor” involves a “preferential love”, which may not agree with the Bible’s notion of “universal love”. If “universal love” had a “singular rather than “pluralistic” connotation, then it would give priority to one group of people over another.

Secondly, “option for the poor” is ultimately a subject of identity, confirming the identity of the subject, which allows for limitless interpretations. So if one absolutizes the perspective of “the poor”, this too may be conferring undue preference to a particular identity group or value stance.

Thirdly, “option for the poor” could easily lead to violence and cultural conflict as it attributes the plight of the poor to an unjust social system, and fails to fairly acknowledge the vigor, goodness and creativity present in other forces within society.

Following this line of reasoning, we have in Luke 6:20—“blessed are the poor”—the most notable biblical example of “the poor”. Matthew 5:3 is its synoptic equivalent. But Matthew 5:3 conveys the meaning of “the poor” as “the poor in spirit”, i. e. “the humble - hearted”. To

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① Patricia Lamoureux, *The Criterion of Option for the Poor and Moral Discernment*, Louvain Studies, 21 (3), Fall 1996, pp. 261 ~ 287.

avoid misinterpretation, some later versions translate the verse as “those who know they are spiritually poor”.<sup>①</sup> Furthermore, this line of thinking suggests that the crux of the matter is not wealth, social status, or even spirituality. The actual “option” of “poverty” lies in our acknowledging and understanding our own finite nature, bringing us naturally to the concept of *kenosis*.

*Kenosis* appears in Philippians 2:7, which speaks of Jesus Christ's divinity, incarnation and self-emptying. For although he is “in very nature God, (he) did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death”.<sup>②</sup>

Some biblical scholars believe that *kenosis* meant Jesus emptied himself of all but love, which included utter self-denial. This is the *kenosis* theory of the metaphysical relinquishment of divine attributes. Be it “relinquishing” or self-emptying, Jesus' original divinity is not compromised.<sup>③</sup>

If God's *kenosis* is expressed as the relinquishment of divine attributes, then man's *kenosis* should be expressed in “relinquishment of self-insistence” (*pozhi*, “破执”). This echoes the notion of “being absent in place”, the very theme of the editor's foreword in our 14th issue. Without self-relinquishment, we are all susceptible to bias due to

① The Bible, Contemporary English Version.

② The Bible, New International Version, Philippians 2:6-8.

③ F. F. Bruce edited, *New International Bible Commentary*, revised edition, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, p. 1444-1445.



our particular cultural identity, value system, religious conviction and language tradition, etc. We feel we must insist upon our subjective role in order to enter into dialogue, or even simply to be able to express ourselves. This could be the greatest misconception in modern western thought. Under this premise, we could never find common ground, and the description of any set of values or ideal, would always vary according to the vantage point of its presenter.

Therefore, the disintegration of value and meaning may not be the result of “doubt”, or the philosophy of “nothingness” or self – negation. Rather, it could well be the result of undue self – confidence and insistence upon a particular value system and basis of meaning. This theory applies not only to the language of the powerful, but also to that of the powerless. Based on this point of view, we cannot establish “the poor” merely by socio – economic status or other materialistic measurement.

Our discussion here is not just about biblical interpretation, or the teaching of the church, or Christian theology. Whenever we discuss “truth” or “justice”, we cannot avoid these same challenges. How then could we respond?

Post – colonial theorist, Gayatri Spivak, came out with her famous paper “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in the 1983. Her “subaltern” or “subalternity” is similar to “the poor” in Christian thought. The “subaltern” is “the poor” who are without the right of speech or a voice, and therefore unable to represent themselves even in the post – colonial era. Twenty – three years later, Spivak spoke at the United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing, where she raised the same issue to