Dr. Emilie M. Townes, an American Baptist clergywoman, is a native of Durham, North Carolina. She holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School and a Ph.D. in Religion in Society and Personality from Northwestern University. Dr. Townes is the Dean and Carpenter Professor of Womanist Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, becoming the first African American to serve as Dean of the Divinity School in 2013. She is the former Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology at Yale University Divinity School and in the fall of 2005, she was the first African American woman elected to the presidential line of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and served as president in 2008. She was the first African American and first woman to serve as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Yale Divinity School. She is the former Carolyn Williams Beaird Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Social Ethics at Saint Paul School of Theology.

Editor of two collection of essays, *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering* and *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation, and Transformation*; she has also authored *Womanist Ethics, Womanist Hope, In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness, Breaking the Fine Rain of Death: African American Health Issues and a Womanist Ethic of Care*, and her groundbreaking book, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*. She is co-editor with Stephanie Y. Mitchem of the *Faith, Health, and Healing in African American Life*. Her most recent co-editorship is *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader* done with Katie Geneva Cannon and Angela Sims was published in November 2011. She continues her research on women and health in the African diaspora in Brasil and the United States. Townes was elected a Fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2009. She served a four-year term as president of the Society for the Study of Black Religion from 2012 to 2016.