

Introduction

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A Light that Shone in the Darkness

On February 21, 2022, a heart in Rwanda stopped beating and a gasp of grief rippled out around the world. Paul Farmer—physician, medical anthropologist, scholar, teacher, and visionary world leader who pioneered ground-breaking models for effectively delivering modern medicine to the poorest people in the world, on a large scale, with magnificent outcomes—had died, at what we now routinely consider the young age of 62. For his hundreds of colleagues, countless collaborators and partners across from every imaginable social and cultural background, thousands of patients and former patients, and the (literally) millions who had been touched and inspired by his work and witness across the forty years of his career, a light had gone out. Gone, unexpectedly and in an instant, was his indefatigable and peripatetic energy, his legendary generosity of spirit and his keen and radical moral compass that forged a social justice movement grounded in global health equity. News outlets the world over recorded the staggering loss of his life-long commitment to the lives of every poor person and noted his incisive ability to eviscerate conceptual and practical structures that work violence against the poor and endlessly diminish human life and flourishing. The loss of his physical presence, marked by his unusual ability to maintain deep relationships with a global network of colleagues and partners, while at the same time giving his full attention to the person in front of him, is searing and irreplaceable.

It was deeply fitting that Farmer died on a remote mountaintop in Butaro, in post-genocide Rwanda, where he spent his final days doing what he loved and knew he was called to do—first, serving as a physician to the poor in state-of-the-art medical facilities he had helped to build, and

second, teaching the next generation of health care professionals at the University of Global Health Equity he helped to found. Dr. Farmer loved the Rwandan people and was proud of all that Partners In Health, the NGO which he co-founded, had accomplishing working in partnership with the Rwandan government. There were many other places Dr. Farmer called home amongst the world's poorest people—Haiti, Peru, Lesotho, Liberia, and Russia, just to name a few—where he could have also been found working untiringly when God called him home.

Why a Book by Theologians on Paul Farmer's Witness and Theological Ethics?

Amidst their shock and grief, within days of his death, people from all over the globe—both those who knew Dr. Farmer and those who knew of him—began to ponder how to honor his legacy of light and hope. Many claimed that keeping his vision alive was a moral imperative, believing the only authentic way to honor who he was and what he stood for was through an active commitment to continue his good works. This book is one initiative to do just that—to articulate key aspects of his vision and to reflect on how they might be continued and extended. Our collective goal has been to bring this book to fruition on the first anniversary of his death.

The essays that comprise this book—commissioned from theologians from around the world—are guided by three purposes: First, to honor the extraordinary life and the prophetic Christian witness of Dr. Paul Farmer, and second, and perhaps most significantly, to acknowledge and describe the influence and impact that his scholarly work and on-the-ground praxis have had on the field of theological ethics in general and on each of the contributors individually. As will be evident, Dr. Farmer's life, witness, and work have influenced our thinking, sometimes called into question our long-held assumptions about the moral life and the role of the theologian, and in turn, impacted our scholarly production and teaching. Beyond this, we believe, thirdly, that it holds important insights for the work of theological ethics going forward.

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We have no doubt that there will be other books written about Dr. Farmer's life and work. Some will describe the health care systems and modern hospitals that Partners In Health (PIH) built in resource-poor settings guided by his vision and leadership. Others will analyze his scholarly contributions to social medicine and anthropology. Still others will study his advocacy on international health policy which has resulted in changes in protocols that saved millions of lives. His books and eyewitness accounts of historic events, including the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2014–2016 Ebola crisis in West Africa, will become classic reference books on these international events. His vision will surely live on through the thousands upon thousands of his students and colleagues working in the field around the globe. And, of course, in a world desperate for meaning, his selfless life of service and dedication to the common good will continue to inspire and console people the world over.

Farmer was a practicing Catholic who took his Christian faith seriously. Like many of us, his is the story of a questioning and sometimes irreverent young man who had to leave behind the faith of the childhood to engage the tradition as an adult so as to develop his own mature and tested faith. Within his disciplines and the largely secular world of his professional life, Farmer well understood that most of these fields tread lightly, at best, when it comes to faith, religion, and theology. It was only in the last years of his life that he began to speak a little more openly about his faith and allowed others to write about the role his faith played in his life and work. However, throughout his life, a key catalyst of Farmer's unique and powerful vision were the Scriptures related to social justice and the Catholic social tradition, particularly in its incarnation as liberation theology. By his own account, the assassination of San Oscar Romero was the birthplace of his first adult conversion experience and the witness of the lives of the likes of Gustavo Gutiérrez, who combined the scholarly life with his pastoral care for the poor that modeled for Farmer the kind of Christian life to which he aspired.

While Farmer was not trained as a theologian, he respected, studied, and engaged theological thought and read widely on many theological topics.

Liberation theology—in its intellectual and pastoral dimensions—were Farmer’s unfailing hermeneutic. Liberation theology provided an incisive theoretical lens by which he inverted standard assumptions within global health, medical anthropology, and international policy, and reimagined the practice of health care—both globally and in the US. He credits many of the extraordinary outcomes his work achieved to the insights and application of the principles of liberation theology and was proud to sow the seeds of liberation theology in new fields where they have produced a hundredfold.

These seeds have left a legacy which extends not only among practitioners of global health but far beyond them. His work also witnessed in critical and transformative ways to Catholic theological ethicists in the US. Farmer’s work brought new visibility to a vibrant engagement between liberation theology and health care that had been developing in Latin America since the 1950s, a tradition obscured from US view by ongoing colonialist structures of thought (including language barriers). Yet, like a prism, his work augmented this tradition. It was a demonstration project, in many ways, for key elements of Catholic social thought, helping to show *in situ* what the concrete practice of concepts like accompaniment, the preferential option for the poor, *caritas*, and kenosis looked like in a specific time and place. As praxis does, his work, voice, and witness opened up new aspects of theological concepts and provided a prophetic witness to what missionary discipleship might look like both for global health, theological ethics broadly, and for the church.

Yet, while many US scholars of Catholic theological ethics, and increasingly international scholars, have drawn on Farmer’s work for the past fifteen years, to our knowledge, no volume to date focuses specifically on his contributions to theological ethics. This volume proposes to fill that gap, distilling the implications, influences, and ramifications of Farmer’s witness for scholars of theology and theological ethics, in both its academic and practical modalities. To do this, we have drawn together an international roster of theological ethicists, physicians, and practitioners—hailing from Haiti, Nigeria, Ireland, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Italy,

and the US—to reflect on the legacy of a twenty-first century Catholic physician/scholar who has transformed the field of global health and had a significant impact on a number of theological scholars. Avoiding hagiography, these scholars and practitioners offer rigorous engagement from within their particular disciplinary locations—theological ethics, patristics, liberation theology, pastoral theology, medical practice, social medicine, global health—with the living tradition of liberation theology, the methodological contributions and implications of Farmer’s work for the further advancement not only of global health but of theology and theological ethics more broadly. As theologians, it is our hope that this book will articulate the critical—and indispensable—theological dimensions of his work and his practice of the moral life for those in the secular fields.

The intended audience of this book is broad and includes those in both theological and secular spheres who are familiar with Farmer’s work as well as those that might be introduced to his vision for the common good through this volume. Given the ways in which Farmer’s work intentionally and thoughtfully crossed disciplines, we believe this book also has application across disciplines and might be of interest in both religious and secular circles that include theologians, pastoral ministers, and people of faith as well as secular scholars working in health care, bioethics, public health, medical anthropology, social medicine, and international policy.

Paul Edward Farmer (1959–2022)

For those not familiar with the life and work of Paul Farmer, this brief biography is intended to give the reader a snapshot of his extraordinary life. For a more in-depth and comprehensive look at his life, please see his biography *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder (Random House, 2003), or Jennie Weiss Block’s *Paul Farmer: Servant to the Poor* (Liturgical Press, 2018).¹

¹ As two of the co-editors worked closely with Farmer, in telling this story of his life, we refer to him informally—as he preferred—as well as formally.

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Paul Farmer was born on October 26, 1959, in North Adams, Massachusetts. His parents, Ginny and Paul, Sr. had six children, three boys and three girls. His was an unusual childhood. In the early 70's, the family relocated to Brooksville, Florida, where, for many years, Paul lived with his family in an abandoned bus (once used to treat people with tuberculosis), or an old boat in a campground. His father was a school teacher and his mother worked as a cashier at Winn-Dixie. Although there was a marginal aspect to the family's living situation, which was without any of the trappings of middle-class life (such as running water and an indoor bathroom), Paul and his siblings had a stable childhood with a lot of attention and support from their parents. His father, Paul, Sr., was strict and could be gruff and demanding (the children's nickname for him was "the Warden"). His mother, Ginny, was loving and kind, and the children were tended to with great care, and both parents took interest in their children's intellectual development and moral formation.

Paul went to Hernando High School, the local public school, where one of his teachers recognized his intellectual gifts and was instrumental in supporting his college application process. He received a scholarship to Duke University, where he took full advantage of the opportunities offered for a world-class education both in the classroom and beyond. It was during these years as an undergraduate that he was formed intellectually in the classroom, and his social consciousness was awakened while working in a nearby migrant camp. Paul knew he wanted to go to medical school but took a gap year after graduation to do his med school applications and see a little of the world. His route to Haiti was circuitous; he had hoped to go to Africa on a Fulbright and was disappointed when he did not even get an interview. He knew "someone who knew someone" at the Schweitzer hospital in Haiti, and he made his way there in hopes of getting a job at the hospital. That did not pan out either, and again he was disappointed. But one of his great attributes, which remained for all of his life, was his resilience in handling setbacks. He ended up volunteering at a hospital in Léogâne, Haiti, for a short while and was horrified to witness a medical crisis where a young pregnant woman died because she did not

have the money to pay for the blood transfusion that would have saved her life. Filled with outrage, Paul made a promise to himself to find a way to make sure that good medical care would be available to poor people without charge.

After this both terrible and motivating experience, Paul ended up taking a job at a very modest eye clinic in Mirebalais in Haiti's Central Plateau, where he met seventeen-year-old Ophelia Dahl, who would become his life-long partner and one of the co-founders of Partners In Health. During this same year in Haiti, Paul and Ophelia met and formed a partnership with an Episcopal priest, Fr. Fritz Lafontant, and his wife, Yolande. The Lafontants lived in Cange, a small, rural, and very poor community in the Central Plateau that had been devastated by a development project that built a hydrologic dam with the unanticipated outcome of flooding the community's farmland, which effectively destroyed their livelihood. Paul's commitment to Haiti and the Haitian poor was born during this year and, in a very real sense, helped to chart the course for the rest of his life.

Farmer was accepted at Harvard Medical School and began his studies in the fall of 1984. He kept an unusual and demanding schedule, flying back and forth from Boston to Port-au-Prince and then making the long drive to Cange to continue his projects with the Lafontants, which included building a medical clinic and other support services for the community. In time, PIH would found Zanmi Lasante, its first sister organization which has grown to employ almost five thousand Haitians who staff a sprawling network of clinics and hospitals throughout the country. Over the coming years, PIH would continue to found sister organizations as part of their network in Peru, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Navajo Nation, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, and today the organization employs over eighteen thousand people, 99 percent of whom are from within country. As the organization grew, so too did its influence in the field of global health, where Paul and his colleagues often challenged conventional wisdom on the delivery of services in resource poor settings by developing new protocols and praxis.

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During his early years in Haiti, Paul began the lifelong practice of creating beautiful natural surroundings. In Cange, the trees had been denuded because the local community needed firewood for cooking. Paul soon initiated a replanting project and started planting hundreds of trees and landscaping the community. This would become one of his signatures, and today every hospital he has helped to found in sites around the world has trees, groves, shaded gardens, and fishponds for Paul believed that the poor deserved the same beauty in their surroundings to which the rich are accustomed and take for granted. Throughout his entire life, he was actively involved in the design of the gardens and landscaping at the PIH sites and was known to spend many happy hours outdoors doing the digging and planting himself—side by side with the local staff.

Farmer excelled in his studies, and by the time he graduated from Harvard with an MD and PhD in anthropology, he knew that he wanted to dedicate his life to accompanying the destitute sick on a journey away from premature suffering and death. During his years in medical school, as he continued to manage and build his Haiti-Harvard connection, he joined forces with Ophelia Dahl, Jim Kim (a friend from medical school), Todd McCormack (a friend from Duke), and Tom White, a successful Boston contractor, to found a non-profit organization to support their work in Haiti that they decided to call Partners In Health (PIH). Their fledgling organization was modest in every sense of the word, although their mission—to make a preferential option for the poor in health care—was expansive and ambitious. In the words of Ophelia Dahl, they “started small but dreamed big.” In retrospect, given the talent and drive of the co-founders and the financial backing of the extraordinarily generous Tom White, their success was all but assured. From the beginning, the founders were determined to forge a new model for the delivery of modern medicine in some of the poorest places on the earth.

Today, thirty years later, Partners In Health is an internationally recognized NGO that successfully brings the fruits of modern medicine to over thirty-four million people in twelve countries around the world. And through the work of PIH, Farmer kept the promise he made to himself

when, as a young man in Haiti, he watched a woman die because she did not have the funds for the treatment that would have saved her life: no PIH patient is ever charged for their medical care. The innovative PIH model has proven to even the most skeptical critics that it is possible to deliver high quality medical services in resource poor settings on a large scale. Since its founding in 1987, PIH has saved the lives of millions and millions of people with treatable diseases who otherwise would have died before their time.

The decade following Farmer's graduation from medical school was a time of professional growth and personal change. During this period, three seminal events occurred which would define his life and his career. On the professional front, he began a very productive and successful academic career. For thirty plus years, Farmer taught at both Harvard Medical School and Harvard College, and in 2010, Farmer received the highest honor and recognition Harvard offers when he was named the Kolokotronis University Professor. He was a prolific writer, authoring more than a dozen books and hundreds of scholarly papers. Several of his books have become classics in the field of global health, including *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame* (1992), *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues* (1999), and *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on Poverty* (2003). Two of his books, *Haiti After the Earthquake* (2011) and *Fevers Feuds and Diamonds*, his last book, published in 2020, are eyewitness accounts of the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010 and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014. The book of his speeches at various commencements and public forums, *To Repair the World* (2013), has been a big seller with the general reader, and *In the Company of the Poor* (2013), the book he co-authored with his dear friend, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, OP, is Orbis Books' best-selling book. His willingness to question the status quo on policies and practices that contribute to the oppression of the poor, and his innovative and creative thinking and proposals for meaningful change to improve the lives of the poor are captured in his writing, many of which are cited in this book.

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On the personal front, in 1996, he married Didi Bertrand, a lovely Haitian woman he met in Cange. Two years later, Paul and Didi welcomed their first child, Catherine. Didi, too, was committed to global health equity and worked side-by-side with Paul at Partners In Health. In 2005, PIH founded a sister organization in post-genocide Rwanda, and Paul, Didi, and Catherine set up housekeeping in Kigali. Didi helped to establish PIH's presence in Rwanda and Paul made the long commute between Kigali and Boston with frequent stops in other PIH sites around the world. The years in Rwanda were a happy time for the Bertrand-Farmer family as they welcomed Elisabeth Grace in 2007 and Charles Sebastien in 2008. Paul and Didi thought it best for the children to be educated in the US, and when the two younger children were in grade school, the family moved back to the States, settling in Miami. The proximity to Haiti was convenient for their work and frequent visits with Didi's family. Paul was pleased when Catherine matriculated to his alma mater, Duke University. Even with Paul's relentless travel schedule, he made every effort to spend as much time as possible with the family, although it was hard to be gone so much. And as fate would have it, he spent a year and a half at home with them during the pandemic—while he was busy on zoom teaching and working, there were family dinners every night, with movies and Scrabble games. He liked taking his daughter to her swim lessons, going to the grocery, and sitting quietly by his fishpond. And he expanded his already lush gardens with hundreds of red bromeliads.

The third life-defining event during this decade for Paul and his family was the publication of Tracy Kidder's *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* (2003). The stunning success of this book, which has sold over a million and a half copies and been translated into nine languages, changed Paul's life in many ways, including turning him into what many refer to as a "non-profit celebrity" and a popular iconic model of a leader oriented toward the good. In the years following the publication of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Paul became very much in demand for speaking engagements and received significant publicity and acclaim, all of which gave him widespread

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exposure that helped to build his reputation as a global leader and visionary in the field of global health. He was also brilliant and articulate, with gracious and kind ways. These qualities, combined with his affable and friendly persona, were very appealing to others. Many found his hopeful outlook and his deep desire to serve as an “antidote to despair” inspiring and worth emulating.

An unusual aspect of Farmer’s career path is that he was both a highly respected academic and a hands-on practitioner. He was a careful scholar who made pioneering academic contributions in his disciplines of medicine and anthropology while at the same time being fully engaged in the hard work of implementation. He was just as comfortable and adept in the classroom as he was in the field, proving himself a leader in very different circumstances. When Farmer was offered a top post in the Obama administration, he seriously considered the offer but, in the end, he just could not see himself giving up the two activities he most loved and valued: seeing patients and teaching students. Instead, he accepted a volunteer job as former President Bill Clinton’s Deputy in the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti—this part-time job allowed him to keep his teaching schedule and see his beloved patients along with the opportunity to work on the international stage where he focused on addressing more just policy issues around foreign aid.

The list of the honors, honorary degrees, prizes, and awards Paul Farmer received runs for multiple pages on his illustrious CV. These awards range from a Service Award from a Haitian Beauty Salon (he was given a plaque which he proudly hung in his home office) to the million-dollar Berggruen prize (all of which he promptly gave away after quipping, “I was a millionaire for a week!”). Both awards—and the many, many others too numerous to list—were received by Farmer with humility and gratitude and always on behalf of the people living in dire poverty that he so faithfully served.

As mentioned earlier in this Introduction, his death is a loss for the world. His was a life well-lived, albeit, far too short. In the months since his untimely death, he has been described as a visionary, a global health

giant, a genius, a statesman, a prophet as the title of this book suggests, and even a saint in some quarters. While all these complimentary descriptors are, in large measure, accurate, Paul Farmer was much more, for his goals and his reach were way beyond the world of achievement. He possessed a humility not often found in people of his stature and had an intangible quality, which is hard to name, although many have referred to it as holiness. He will be remembered for many things; certainly, his innovative thinking on how to create durable health care systems in poor countries, and his grit for staying with the work during the arduous implementation phases. He will be known as a disciplined academic, a prolific writer, and an effective clinician who made meaningful contributions to his chosen fields and effectively built a global health equity movement. He will be revered by the students he mentored, and his grateful patients will never forget the care and attention they received. Those fortunate to be in his personal orbit—colleagues and partners—will remember him as a loyal and devoted friend, and a loving husband and father. However, in the end, it is likely he would want the narrative of his life to be told in a way that makes it clear he was a sincere man who is remembered for his faithfulness to his vocation as a physician and a healer, a flawed man who, despite his failings and shortcomings, loved God and neighbor with an open and generous heart, and finally, as a hopeful man who believed in the power of love and God's grace and tried to do good and bring hope to all those he encountered. For sure, generations to come will continue to recall and be inspired by his presence that graced the world for sixty-two short years.

Overview of the Book

This book is organized into four sections, each focused on a theme relevant to different aspects of Farmer's prophetic witness, his engagement with liberation theology, and the various ways his life and work have impacted the field of theological ethics. But first, it opens with a moving and pointed Foreword by Roberto Goizueta—one of Farmer's own theological teachers but who, as so many of Farmer's friends, equally learned from him. Goizueta presses us scholars, theologians, and readers with a central

challenge of Farmer's work and witness: that if our work is not accountable to "*el pueblo*, to those communities which the Gospel proclaims are the privileged bearers of God's Word in the world," then our work really is simply a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal, or "little more than idolatrous wordsmithing." Such accountability looks like listening, accompanying, collaborating, loving, learning, centering, privileging, healing, and prophetically translating their realities back to the religious and political structures (civil and academic) that keep them poor and sick in order to "effectively confront the global structures of injustice." Undergirding all this for Farmer was a spirituality and deep appreciation for theology as an intellectual and lived praxis.

That spirituality is captured in the beautiful original cover image prepared for the book by Dominican friar Cristóbal Torres Iglesias, OP. Fr. Cristóbal was a friend of Paul's and has worked on several art projects in Haiti.² As his Artist's Statement notes, in creating the image, Fr. Cristóbal drew on one of Farmer's central spiritual images—the Good Samaritan—in conversation with the tradition of the *anargyroi* or "unmercenary saints," with whom he became acquainted through his own theological research. His resulting image crystalizes the thick theological meanings captured in the Gospel passage—picturing Paul as the one assaulted and left for dead, and Christ, Black like the poor of the world, as the Samaritan who first ministers to our wounds, heals us, and calls us to love him—and then to go minister to those on the peripheries. Fr. Cristóbal had not read the chapters before creating the image. The fact that it resonates so deeply with so many of the book's chapters—specifically with Jennie Weiss Block's and Susan's Holman's—is, we agree, "clear evidence of the presence and activity of grace."

Generative for Fr. Cristóbal and central to the discipline of theology and theological ethics are classic texts—from the scriptures to Doctors of the Church—as well as the rich panoply of Christian practices that have sustained the church across geography and history. Equally important for

² For more about Fr. Torres and his work, visit www.cristobaltorresart.com.

theological scholarship are the concrete lives of particular people—some of whom have been named saints. Identified by their communities as exemplars of Christian practice, figures from Augustine, Perpetua, and Felicity to Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhart, Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Merton, Simone Weil, Oscar Romero, and more, theology increasingly turns to the specifics of their witness as an important theological source.

Although he probably would have eschewed the idea, our opening section adds Farmer to this list. In Part I, we explore his “Life as Theological Text.” Jennie Weiss Block opens the section with Chapter One, “Toward a Realized Eschatology: Paul Farmer as Good Samaritan.” In this chapter, she reflects on Farmer as one who sought to embody the figure of the Good Samaritan. His performance of this scriptural paradigm in the face of the enormity of the suffering of the poor provides a critical source for wrestling with the challenges of theodicy and for understanding the deep, eschatological interface between the Cross and hope. In Chapter Two, “Paul the *Anargyros*: History, God-talk, and Ecumenism in the Healing Praxis of Dr. Paul Farmer,” patristic scholar Susan Holman finds resonance between Farmer’s life and a classic but little-known historic form of Christian discipleship—the *anargyros*, those “unmercenary” Christ-formed physicians who cared for the sick for free (captured as well in Fr. Torres’s cover image). Where Block and Holman draw theological insight from Farmer’s life and practice, Jorge Jose Ferrer asks in Chapter Three: “Paul Farmer: A Model for the Theologian”? Identifying him as an exemplar of Antonio Gramsci’s figure of the organic intellectual, Ferrer argues that Farmer’s commitment to a methodology that was at once analytical and praxical stands as a challenge and aspiration for theologians and theological ethicists. Yet for Western scholars who enter into such praxis, a danger remains: that we will unwittingly reproduce those very hierarchies of identity, knowledge, and power that have always exposed the poor to damage and death. Alison Lutz explores this challenge in Chapter Four, “Living Witnesses and Moral Agency.” She finds in Farmer’s decades-long practice a remedy to this danger: “Moral praxis that

transforms iniquitous power circuits must also include—as moral agents who cross lines of power to relieve suffering—people from communities that have been historically and systematically dispossessed.”

As has been mentioned, liberation theology infused Farmer’s thought, work, methodology, actions, rhetoric, and writing. He drank deeply from its wells, forming friendships with Gustavo Gutiérrez, Fr. Fritz Lafontant, Fr. Gerard Jean Juste, Roberto Goizueta, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and many other religious figures and liberation theologians. For many in the US, he was one of the first people they had seen embody a liberationist vision in health care. Indeed, the power of his witness lies in part with the fact that he was a white, American, Harvard professor who both proclaimed and thoroughly embody liberation theology, and freely and intentionally made common cause with the poor.

As such, his life and work became, as we explore in Part II, “A Prism for Liberation Theology.” In this section, we explore how Farmer received and refracted the gospel light of liberation theology. In Chapter Five, “Liberation Theology and Public Health Ethics,” Alexandre A. Martins details the historical tradition of liberationist health care that preceded Farmer in Latin America, as well as Farmer’s own development of and contributions to that tradition. In Chapter Six, Leo Guardado’s essay “Theologians in the Field: ‘Dices que eres un teólogo, ¿cuál es tu practica?,’” lifts up two theological loci at the heart of the liberationist method Farmer learned from Gustavo Gutiérrez—friendship and *lo pastoral* (fieldwork as a theological practice)—to show how these ground the pedagogical and research methodology of participatory action research—a method that has only recently made headway within US academic theology. In Chapter Seven, “Liberating Theological Ethics from the Invisible Hand: Paul Farmer, the World’s Poor, and the Quandaries of the Fortunate,” M. Therese Lysaught focuses on Farmer’s liberationist attention to economics, following his critique of the economization of the conceptual frameworks of global health care delivery to propose that neoliberalism has similarly misshapen the conceptual frameworks of medicine, bioethics, and—possibly—theology. And

Suzanne Mulligan closes the section with Chapter Eight, “Confronting ‘Structures of Violence’: Women’s Empowerment and the Legacy of Paul Farmer.” Here she foregrounds his notion of structural violence, using Farmer’s early and constant attention to the ways that structural violence particularly impacts women’s health as a lens for examining theological discourse around women.

To this point in the volume, a number of essays lift up a subtle but crucial point: that solidarity and true moral praxis—be it in health care or theology—does not consist simply in the powerful entering the space of the poor. Confounding received assumptions, the vector does not simply point one way. Rather, in relentlessly foregrounding the voices of real people from dispossessed communities—from Anita and Manno in *AIDS and Accusation* (1992) to Ibrahim and Yabom in *Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds* (2020) and the cloud of witnesses in between—a hallmark of Farmer’s work has been to position the poor as equal partners in his work, to invite them across the invisible lines of power as moral and intellectual agents. A first step in his work in Cange, as Kidder narrates in *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, was to conduct a health census—asking residents what, exactly, they needed, listening to their stories.³ Early in its work, Zanmi Lasante, designated Haitian community health workers as *accompagnateurs*, a term that was replicated in local languages as PIH expanded around the world.⁴ These partners, residents of the local communities where PIH worked, proved critical both epistemologically—providing crucial knowledge for developing effective treatment modalities—and practically—indispensable for the care of millions of poor people in their communities. But both steps were more than simply instrumental—both were also practices that recognized and affirmed the dignity of each person in the local community, implemented the practice

³ Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, 82.

⁴ P. Farmer, S. Robin, S.L. Ramilus, J.Y. Kim, “Tuberculosis, Poverty, and “Compliance”: Lessons from Rural Haiti,” *Seminars in Respiratory Infections* 6 (1991): 254–60.

of participation, and in so doing, built community and advanced the common good in a myriad of intangible, immeasurable ways.

A product partly of his own innate instincts, this pivotal move in Farmer's witness again drew on the liberationist tradition. We explore this further in Part III, "Accompaniment." James Keenan, SJ, opens the section in Chapter Nine, "From *Amoris Laetitia* to Ebola: Accompaniment as a Model for Medical and Pastoral Care." Here he details Farmer's theoretical account of accompaniment and practice thereof and linking it to Pope Francis's advocacy for accompaniment as a key practice for both theology and ecclesial ministry. A canard lobbed against the praxis of accompaniment—be it in health care, theology, or policy—is that it is inefficient. It violates that central dogma of neoliberal economics (efficiency). It cannot be measured. It takes time. And time is, as we know, money. Brian Volck takes on these assumptions in Chapter Ten, "Wasting Time with the World's Poor: Theological and Scriptural Foundations for Paul Farmer's Praxis of Accompaniment." And in Chapter Eleven, "Practicing Local Listening with Village Midwives in Sudan: A Case Study for Theological Ethics," Meghan Clark offers an extended exemplar of a crucial component of accompaniment, the practice of local listening, drawing on her experience with the Helping Babies Breathe initiative in Sudan.

We imagine that for many readers, this volume may be an introduction to Farmer and his work, especially in the theological disciplines. In our experience, familiarity with Paul Farmer and Partners In Health is quite binary: theologians seem to either know all about them or they have never heard of either. One reason for this, we surmise, is that Farmer and his colleagues toiled in the fields of global health—a field largely unknown to many due to the deep siloes that continue to isolate our disciplines. Thus, becoming familiar with Farmer's legacy entails becoming familiar with the larger field of global health. At the same time, he makes clear for theologians that "global health," is an important locus for theological reflection, learning, analysis, and action. While the field and term "global health" is not without its own problems, Farmer's interpretation is a model

focused on a well-developed concept of *equity* and thus, his preferred term for the field was “global health equity.”

For that reason, we turn in Part IV to a set of chapters exploring “Global Health as a Theological Locus.” Stan Chu Ilo opens this conversation in Chapter Twelve, “Ebola and the Ravages of History in Paul Farmer: A Catholic Theological Ethical Response to Global Health Inequity in Africa.” Naming Farmer as “an African ancestor,” Ilo focuses on Farmer’s final book *Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds: Ebola and the Ravages of History*, to not only highlight Farmer’s work in Africa but also to raise pointed questions for Western scholars and theologians. Where Ilo helpfully zeros in on Africa, in Chapter Thirteen, “The Legacy of Paul Farmer for Theological Ethics,” Andrea Vicini pulls the lens back to look at the global landscape more broadly. Synthesizing many of the themes articulated in the volume, he highlights how Farmer’s theological lens helped him challenge givens and assumptions and to begin to reimagine, theoretically and practically, the field of global health. Maura Ryan ends this section with her reflections in Chapter Fourteen on moving “From Compassion to Pragmatic Solidarity: Considering the Right to Health from the Margins.” Examining how Catholic social thought informs the content of a “right to health,” she asks how its understanding of the relationship between health and human rights is enriched by Paul Farmer’s construction of “pragmatic solidarity.”

The book closes with Chapter Fifteen, entitled, “‘Doctor’ of the Church: Mapping the Religious Threads in Paul Farmer’s Writings.” Here Brendan Johnson provides an overview of Farmer’s extensive body of work and highlights the specifically religious or theological aspects of his thought and rhetoric. Finally, a volume like this would not be complete without at least one voice from Haiti. Père Eddy Eustache, a Haitian priest, Director of Mental Health and Psychological Services for Zanmi Lasante, and longtime co-worker of Farmer, provides a closing reflection.

In the end, we offer this book as a starting point. One book certainly cannot capture every relevant aspect of the life, thought, and theology of a person like Paul Farmer—whose canvas was so geographically broad,

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intellectually deep, and practically radical. Our modest hope is that it will introduce Farmer and his work to scholars of theological ethics more broadly and invite those in the secular, scientific disciplines (medicine, anthropology, global health) and practitioners in the global health world to gain a better understanding of the constitutive importance of theology and Christian practice in his life, work, and innovations in global health. Farmer's work brought different people, disciplines, and realities together to dialogue and collaborate towards the common good in health care equity and justice for the poor. A charismatic leader, Farmer fostered long-term collaboration, making himself a partner who was always open to listen and learn from his patients and colleagues. The theologians who have contributed to this book have engaged with Farmer's work and offer their reflections on Farmer's contribution to theological ethics, and in turn, his legacy, which will surely expand in this and other fields in the coming years. We hope this book will serve as a starting point for the ongoing work of learning from his witness that will be carried out by other scholars and practitioners—work that starts with dialogue, critique, and response to the analyses presented here. Farmer's thought was always dynamic, growing and deepening over time through his immersion in different local cultures and realities and active engagement and accompaniment of real people, many of whom lived in dire poverty. He never turned away from the emergent questions presented in these situations, real people facing different emergent questions. His efforts were not abstract. They always led back to concrete efforts to bring real change to real communities. We hope that in a small way, this book points a way forward—showing via the witness of a concrete life how the light of the gospel can transform theory, and praxis and continue to repair the world.