

*Mountains Beyond Mountains* Study Guide: Summer 2009

To prepare you for the discussion, test, and paper topic, please read the book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. As you read, please focus your note taking on the following considerations:

Important characters:

- 1) Paul Farmer
- 2) Ophelia Dahl
- 3) Tom White
- 4) George Soros
- 5) Jim Kim

Places/concepts:

- 6) Zamni Lastane
- 7) *Socios en Salud*
- 8) Describe Farmer's religious background. How does it affect his choices in life?
- 9) Describe Farmer's gifts and talents? How does he choose these God-given gifts? How do other characters use their gifts?

Themes:

- 1) Farmer is dissatisfied with the current distribution of money and medicine in the world. What is your opinion of these forms of wealth? What would you change, if you could?
- 2) Paul Farmer has a way of connecting with people from diverse backgrounds. How does he manage to do this? Are his methods something that we all can aspire to? How?
- 3) Farmer believes that "if you are making sacrifices...you're trying to lesson some psychic discomfort" (24). Do you agree with the way that Farmer makes personal sacrifices? For what kind of things do you make sacrifices, and when do you expect others to make sacrifices?
- 4) How has Catholicism inspired Farmer's vocational efforts?
- 5) The title of the book comes from the Haitian proverb "Beyond mountains, there are mountains." What does the saying mean in the context of the culture it comes from, and what does it mean in relation to Farmer's work? Can you think of other situations—personal or societal—for which this proverb might be apt?
- 6) Is medicine a problem that is reserved to the health care sector? What lessons does Farmer learn throughout his time in Haiti and the developing world about solving the problems of disease?
- 7) Should health care be a universal human right? The current administration has stated that health care reform must be a national priority. Based on Farmer's insights and your own knowledge, evaluate how the United States is currently fairing on this important issue. What does Catholic teaching have to offer to this discussion?