

The Summarized Story of Paul Farmer

In nineteen eighty three, Paul Farmer goes to Haiti, a country in the Caribbean, to see someone named Ophelia Dahl. When Paul Farmer gets there he sees the structural violence that leads to the conditions that cause “accidents”. Paul Farmer proceeds to practice the art of seeing, raising several questions. Why is there a woman of African descent, speaking French, living off of trash in the Caribbean? How does this happen? There are a series of historical events that lead up to this happening.

France sets up slave colonies then two hundred years later the colonies win independence, but are not recognized by global powers due to racism. France then demands compensation for their “lost property”. The colonies now owe twenty one billion dollars to France, causing an environmental collapse. One of the most impoverished places in Haiti is Cange. There was a dam project in Cange that brought electricity to the elites but ruined the farmland of the poor.

Farmer thought about how they could fix it, and dreamt of building a clinic but did not have money or any degrees. He then went to Harvard and enrolled in a dual anthropology / medicine program, where he met Jim Kim. Then was the birth of Areas of Moral Clarity, or AMCs. Jim Kim wondered “What is the nature of our responsibility in the world? Is there something like an area of moral clarity?”, so AMC said all people have a right to good health and life.

Farmer writes an article and Tome White, a wealthy builder, reads the article and gives Farmer money to start Partners in Health. Drugs are too expensive to buy so they “borrow them” from Harvard. Eventually they get invited to Peru where they successfully treat MDR TB with a seventy percent cure rate.