SUMMARY

Csaba Müllner believes that he can heal the sick through the power of God, promising all who will listen that his childhood friend, Becca Chapman, will not die of the leukemia that has ravished her body. Csaba fasts and prays for twenty-one days, following the example of 20th century faith healer Smith Wigglesworth, but Becca dies. This begins Csaba’s crisis of faith, search for a father and a journey to understand true healing.

After the death of Becca, Csaba and friend Justin begin a search for “the Gentle Giant” an anonymous faith healer who has gone into hiding. Along the way, the two encounter a number of Csaba’s childhood friends from a group called the United Nations of Brooklyn. Csaba in his religious zeal has abandoned many relationships, but during his search for the Gentle Giant, he begins to restore those same relationships, learning that godliness is found in the expression of love toward others.

Justin and Csaba encounter a fake faith healer, and a humble but only semi-successful one. The later discloses the location and identity of the Gentle Giant: Becca’s father, Jonathan.

*How to Heal the Sick in Three Easy Steps* is a 72,000 word literary fiction novel set in present day Waterbury, Connecticut that explores the loss in disease, religion that unites instead of divides and an understanding that power without love destroys.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
David Joshua Hayes is a preacher, writer, insurance law specialist and a master’s candidate at Western Connecticut State University. He also studied theology at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He has published non-fiction in the Connecticut Review, fiction in Miranda Magazine and theological writings in Elder’s Shop Notes.

SYNOPSIS:
Csaba (pronounced Chaba), a Hungarian man in his early twenties, seeks the power to heal the sick. He is called to this destiny by surviving an early childhood accident, a prophecy affirming that calling, and the example of early 20th century faith healer, Smith Wigglesworth.

Such desire reaches fever peak when church community leader, Jonathan Chapman, announces that his daughter’s battle with Leukemia is about to end in her death at age 22. Csaba pledges to fast and pray until Becca Chapman is well, promising to Chapman and the church community that Becca will not die. For 21 days, Csaba deals with the effects of no food, doubts of his own abilities, and the distractions of Soledad De Jesus. Soledad is a 19 year old cashier at Save-A-Lot, who hunts her father to expose his affairs to his current spouse. She seeks to protect other young women in abusive situations, but falls into many such situations herself. The fast ends as Csaba utilizes the methods of Wigglesworth to try to heal Becca, but fails. As Csaba
grows more zealous in his faith, he ceases relationships with neighborhood posse, the United Nations of Brooklyn and eventually, Soledad.

Csaba meets another zealot Justin Pight, a former coke addict and strip club devotee, who was trained to “hear the Lord.” Justin believes that God speaks to him directly and trains Csaba to hear. They hope to use this ability to find, the Gentle Giant, a true faith healer that held meetings in Waterbury one summer in 1997. In their first night of hearing, they find only cows at the Jefferson Farm and Feed until the middle of the night. The next night, they encounter a young policy officer, Wen Hong, beating another childhood friend, Khalid. Both were part of the United Nations of Brooklyn. Khalid calls out to Csaba saying that he is innocent and that the beating is due to his Muslim faith. Csaba does nothing to stop Wen Hong. Justin insists they follow the officer to discover that he is about to take his own life. Justin mentions the farm which triggers memories of abuse for Wen Hong and the suicide is halted. Csaba goes to Saint Mary’s hospital to pray for Khalid to be healed from his injuries. It appears that nothing happens, but Khalid is healed. Khalid calls Csaba later, “When you lifted your hands from me. I felt the hand of Allah, himself on me.”

In a break from hearing the Lord, Justin and Csaba attend a meeting with Bengali Singh, a fake healer, using theatrical devices to make the audience believe that God is healing yet with enough legitimate elements that make Justin and Csaba doubt their understanding of God’s works. Csaba is called to drag Justin out from a strip club and encounters Joey Sacchetti, a member of the UN, and local porn trader, seller. Joey sends Csaba pictures of Soledad. Csaba pays Joey to have the pictures destroyed.

In one of their times out hearing the Lord, Justin and Csaba come upon a wealthy, religiously casual member of Csaba’s church, Eric. Despite wandering back to the strip club
from time to time, Justin is used to heal Eric from chronic migraines. Csaba is extremely jealous and confused as minor ailments are often those which the fakes claim to validate their powers.

The tour to find a real faith healer ends with a man trying to recreate the healing rooms of another early 20th century healer, John G. Lake. The man merely prays for God to work in each ill person that visits and tells stories of previous ones that God has used in the healing process including the Gentle Giant. The Gentle Giant is an anonymous healer that worked many miracles in summer of 1997. Csaba learns that the Gentle Giant is Jonathan Chapman.

Csaba visits Save-A-Lot and the cashier offers him to purchase a wrist band to raise funds for a former employee who is dying of cancer. It is Soledad. Csaba fasts again. He lasts several days, but confronts Jonathan about why he didn’t heal Becca, and if he would be willing to lay hands on Csaba to receive the gift of healing. Jonathan experienced the power, but it turned him into a monster, hating and demeaning those that came to him. Becca forbid him from praying for her as she witnessed Jonathan beat his wife during the period of his healing ministry. Jonathan does not pray for Csaba.

In frustration, Csaba seeks destruction. He totals Joey’s Mercedes on the way to Holy Land U.S.A. in Waterbury. Holy Land is a Christian theme park popular in the 60’s and 70’s ruined by decay and haunted by crimes committed there in the past. Csaba destroys some of what remains with his bare hands, crushing cement buildings representing villages in Jerusalem, icons of the disciples and Stations of the Cross. His hands are bleeding from damage; he is unable to remove the large wooden cross on the hill, but in the process, covers it with his own blood. In a sense, he dies to the dream of healing. Later, he reconciles with Joey and binge eats on snack foods until he is broken and sick.
Finally, Csaba convinces Soledad’s father to meet with her to make amends for all that he has done to her through his affairs and his lack of care in her life before she dies. True healing occurs through restored relationships which becomes greater than the power to heal a physical sickness.

Bibliography


