

STEPHON C. VOID

A Healing Journey

Poems of Faith, Healing,
Recovery, and Coping with Grief



Praise for *A Healing Journey*

“Stephon Void has penned the poems that we all need in our time of collective grief and anxiety. He approaches grief with a reverence and sensitivity that reminds us that grief is an unavoidable part of life on planet earth. Especially now. Thank you, Stephon. This is the book that we have needed.”

—Dr. Safiyah Fosua, DMin Track Professor of Black Theology
& Womanist Theology, Nazarene Theological Seminary

“Through the artistic writings of poetry, Stephon Void stirs our emotions. He remembers his father’s journey through the last days and months of his life. But there’s more. His father’s journeying becomes part of his family’s journey, Stephon’s personal journey. We are invited to know God as a healer of broken hearts and lives. Further, the journey of life is a miracle because we do not walk this way alone. God is with us. We therefore come to understand that in all circumstances of life, God’s love and grace abound. A beautiful work!”

—Rev. Janice L. Frederick-Watts, ordained elder,
South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church

“Mr. Stephon C. Void has done it again. *A Healing Journey* does not disappoint. This thought-provoking memoir of poems depicting daily occurrences in one’s life has me rethinking how I approach life’s difficult moments, those life-altering decisions, and the simple joys I find in my own life. The subtle ways he causes you to always refer to the love of God through grace is a blessed reminder of his strength and faith in the Lord. To know Stephon Void is to love him. Reading his work opens you up to a re-examination of how we approach life’s difficult moments and joys. Job well done, my friend. Job well done.”

—Rev. Sheri Yvette-Base White, ordained elder and pastor
of New Covenant United Methodist Church, Bowman

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and Coping with Grief

Stephon C. Void

South Carolina United Methodist Advocate Press



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This book is dedicated to my dad, Carlisle Void. This book was supposed to be a gift for you once you were cancer-free. Now it's to honor your journey and transition to your heavenly rest.

It's also dedicated to my mom, Shirlene Void.

Your dedication to Dad and myself has not been forgotten.

Aunt Queen Ester, your support during this past year has been a blessing. Last and certainly not least, it is dedicated to all health-care professionals who sacrifice their lives for the sake of others.

*Without your God-given gifts,
we cannot reach our fullest potential.*

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A Letter to My Readers

To those of you who read my first book, welcome back. To my new readers, welcome to the journey. I thank all of you for supporting this new project. I hope it touches and inspires you in a special way.

Some of you may ask, “Why did I want to publish so soon after writing the first book?” Well, the first book only told a portion of my story. For the past thirty-nine years of my life, I have suffered from complications of a rare disorder called Kartagener’s syndrome. It’s a form of another disorder called primary ciliary dyskinesia. It occurs in one out of every thirty thousand births in the world. It’s so rare I know of only one other person in South Carolina who has it. My cilia don’t work properly, and that has led to many setbacks. I have had five sinus surgeries, countless ear tube placements, and I constantly fight to have healthy lungs. I have had infections that have been so severe I had to have intravenous antibiotics twice.

The one constant throughout all of it was my unwavering faith in God. He has kept me through it all. This illness inspired my faith to be strong, and it also influenced my professional career to be in the sciences. I’ve used it as a testimony and a stepping stone. I have written about my struggles with all the tests and clinical trials and placed them in this body of work. Also included are some writings that shine light on issues important to me. Some are issues of faith and how we express it; others are race and, once

again, social justice.

The second catalyst for this book is the journey of my dad, Carlisle, and his eventual passing because of complications from cancer. Two months prior to my first book's release, he was told he had Stage Four head and neck cancer. He needed surgery and, following that, six weeks of chemotherapy with radiation. Some of the writings are like a journey—from his first surgery to his second surgery and, sadly, his passing. The first poem, "The Fist Bump," was from his first surgery, which was October 26, 2021.

My dad went on life support on May 25, 2022, after fighting sepsis and pneumonia. I told him this book was for him and gave him our last fist bump. On May 26, 2022, he transitioned to the Church Triumphant.

Toward the end, you will find "The Fist Bump Part II" in his honor. It's like a bookend to his seven-month battle with cancer.

My last book was a personal challenge. This one was a personal journey. I hope it gives you some insight on me as a patient, caregiver, son, and follower of Christ. I also hope my words cause you to do a little soul-searching and self-reflection.

Thank you for taking this journey with me.

—Stephon Void
March 2023

The Fist Bump

When we think of a simple gesture
like a first bump
a few things come to mind.
It could be the famous double-fist that the Obamas did.
To them it meant, “Yeah, baby, we did it. We made it to the
White House.”
Maybe you see ballplayers on the court or field bump fists after a
big play.
Friends do it to say “hi” or “what’s up.”
It’s endearing.
It’s powerful.
It’s encouraging.

Moments ago, a fist bump between me and my dad was more
than that.
It was a confirmation that we will see each other on the other side
of his surgery.
That meeting of hands meant
I love you.
I got you.
God’s got you.
It meant I’ll take care of you.
I’ll take care of Mom.
Everything is going to be fine.

With a tap of our hands, the angels took over your care
And God set his plan in motion.

Dad, the next time we bump fists
it will be in the celebration of your healing.
It will mean it is time to take you home.
You get to sit in your favorite spot.
It will mean we beat this thing.

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I Pray That I'll Be Ready

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready for the blessings
Ready for the calling
Ready for what lies ahead

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready for the long days
Ready for the sleepless nights
Ready for the hard work

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready for doubters
Ready for the plotters
Ready for the evil the lurks at every turn

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready for that new opportunity
Ready for that new relationship
Ready to navigate unknown horizons

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready for when my dreams become reality
Ready to lead
Ready to follow

Lord, I pray that I'll be ready
Ready to be patient

Ready to listen

Read to learn

Lord, help me to be ready

Ready to live

Ready for the everlasting

Ready for it all

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About the Author

Stephon Carlisle Void is a native of Bowman, South Carolina. An honors graduate of Bowman High School, he holds a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Master of Science in biotechnology from Claflin University of Orangeburg, South Carolina. He is the nuclear magnetic resonance technician in the Department of Chemistry at Claflin University and has been at Claflin for fourteen years.

Void is currently a certified lay servant in the South Carolina United Methodist Church at New Covenant UMC. He has served in this role for twenty years. He loves to serve his church and community in any way God needs him. He enjoys singing in the choir, community outreach, teaching Sunday school, and teaching the children and youth moment on Sundays.

Void developed a passion for writing when he was selected to participate as a contributing author for the latest African series for Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church. His work appeared periodically throughout the 2020-2021 calendar year. His first book, *From My Heart to Your Eyes: Poems of Faith and Social Justice*, was published by the Advocate Press in 2021.

In his spare time, he writes a blog, "Stephon's Thoughts," at StephonCVoid.com, and enjoys spending time with family and friends. He resides with his mother, Shirlene Void, in Bowman.

A journey of self-reflection

In his second collection of faith-based poetry, Stephan Void reflects on his journey of healing as he navigates life as a patient, caregiver, son, and follower of Christ. Many of the poems reflect the pain he wrestled with as his father battled terminal cancer, as well as the peace he ultimately achieved as a child of the risen Christ.

"This is the book that we have needed."

Dr. Safiyah Fosua

"A beautiful work!"

Rev. Janice L. Frederick-Watts

"Thought-provoking."

Rev. Sheri Yvette-Base White



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