

This book is the first ethnographic account of the global spiritual movement headed by John of God, a Brazilian faith healer. Renowned for performing surgeries using rudimentary tools such as kitchen knives and scissors, without anesthetics or asepsis, John of God is allegedly inhabited by entities, or spirits, and goes into a trance-like state in order to heal his visitors and afterwards, when he regains consciousness, does not remember the operations. Visited by thousands of the desperately ill; the wealthy; celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Ram Daas, Wayne Dyer, and Shirley MacLaine; and an increasing array of media, John of God has become an international faith healing superstar in just over a decade. Books about him have been translated into several languages, from Russian to Ukrainian to Japanese; ABC, the Discovery Channel, and the BBC have made documentaries on his healing center; tour guides advertise package trips; and John of God himself travels to conduct healing events in the US, New Zealand, Germany, Greece, Switzerland, Austria, and many other countries. More recently, a transnational spiritual community has developed around John of God, comprised of the ill, those who seek spiritual growth, healers, and tour guides, and according to followers, even spirits whose powers transcend national boundaries. Drawing on a decade of fieldwork in Brazil, the US, the UK, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand, Cristina Rocha examines the social and cultural forces that have made it possible for a healer from Brazil to become a global guru in the 21st century. Rocha explores what attracts foreigners to John of God's cosmology and healing practices, how they understand their own experiences, and how these radical experiences have transformed their lives.

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