

December 12

This year's advent devotionals will feature readings from publications by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary faculty members. Today's reading comes from the book *Pastoral Genetics: Theology and Care at the Beginning of Life* written by Ron Cole-Turner and Brent Waters. Cole-Turner is the H. Parker Sharp Professor of Theology and Ethics at PTS. The book is published by The Pilgrim Press and is available through Cokesbury.com.

The reading begins on page 102:

“...in the crucified healer we see how healing can flow from weakness. We are accustomed to seeing healing as a form of power, as action that overrides circumstances and directs outcomes, which we then measure and take to be the mark of success for physicians or hospitals. What the healer on the cross shows us is how healing flows finally from weakness and vulnerability and not from power. Although Christ did use power to heal, in the event of the cross it is not finally power but weakness that heals. The healing weakness of Christ on the cross is a weakness that is freely chosen for the sake of others, a weakness that comes *after power*. It is recognition of the essential limits of power, not merely the technological limits of our medicine but the inherent limits even of God's power to heal. Power heals but only in a limited or provisional way. For while power – our own or God's – can override circumstances and direct outcomes and thus can truly heal, power overrides or directs only at the risk of negating the selfhood or personhood of the other or at the risk of doing violence to the full circumstances in which the other suffers.

The essence of healing is in the weakness that is after power, and the cross shows us how this weakness can be mightier than power alone in bringing true healing. The weakness that comes after power is truly able to heal not because it gets rid of the pain, but because it is willing to transfer the pain from the one who is sick to the one who heals.”

Prayer

Loving God, in this advent season we remember and give thanks that you entered into our lives in seeming weakness, as a baby born in Bethlehem. In Christ's birth, life, and death on the cross your power was made perfect in weakness. Through Christ you take on our pain and sin and offer us healing and hope. It is more than we can comprehend, but even in our weakness we offer you our grateful praise. Alleluia. Amen.