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**Power and Responsibility:  
A Filipino Christian Perspective**  
VITALIANO R. GOROSPE, S.J.

Philippine People Power was born with the 1986 Philippine Revolution.<sup>1</sup> The success of the nonviolent struggle of the Filipino people for freedom and justice was due to many factors. First, although not everybody was at the EDSA revolution during those four days of February, the Filipino people as a whole gave popular support to Cory Aquino and thus put an end to the twenty-year old Marcos dictatorship. Secondly, people power behind the successful revolution was a human and Christian model of solidarity in justice and love. Thirdly, the success of the revolution was due in no small part to nonviolence. Finally, the power of this active nonviolence was due to the remarkable synthesis of the Christian faith and Filipino culture.

The main purpose of this note is, first, to investigate the *cultural* and *moral* aspects of people power in a *Filipino context*, both of which involve *responsibility*, and secondly, to examine what the *Christian faith* demands from the Philippine Church in its responsibility to exercise Church power in behalf of justice and the poor and powerless. The first part of this note then is the human and moral perspective of power in a Filipino context.. The second part will conclude with the Christian theological perspective on power, especially Church power or the power of the people of God.

1. For theological reflection on the 1986 Philippine revolution, see *The "Miracle" of the Philippine Revolution: Interdisciplinary Reflections*, A Symposium organized by Loyola School of Theology, *Loyola Papers* 15 (Quezon City: CBI, Ateneo de Manila University, 1986); Alfeo G. Nudas, S.J., *God With Us: The 1986 Philippine Revolution* (Quezon City: CBI, Ateneo de Manila University, 1986).

## POWER IN A FILIPINO CONTEXT: THE MORAL PERSPECTIVE

There are many meanings of power for the Filipino. By *lakas*, ordinary Filipinos usually mean power, strength, or influence. Traditional Philippine society is structured according to the "patron-client" (*malakas-mahina*) system of dependency and patronage. One's strength depends on one's dependence on some influential person. Thus the small people who are powerless depend on the big people who are powerful. In a democracy, people power is shown by the right of suffrage. But the voting power of the people can be frustrated as happened in the elections called by Marcos. In such a case local elections are not a good index of authentic people power. At the EDSA revolution it was the power of a people with a shared commitment that prevented bloodshed. The millions at EDSA gave expression to a new found *lakas ng bayan*, the power of the Filipino people.

The focus of this note is not individual but social PEOPLE POWER, used in two different but related contexts. People power in the *sociological* sense is the people with a shared commitment. People power in the *ecclesial* sense refers to the Church as an *institution* or as a *community*, or the power of the people of God. People power is a *commitment shared* by all the people or by the whole nation or institution.

Although the 1986 Filipino revolution had many faces, what is of special concern is that it was a *political* revolution which, though it toppled a dictator by people power, has remained an unfinished revolution. Under the Marcos regime Filipinos saw the many faces of individual or *personal* power.<sup>2</sup> But people power is *social* or collective power and the "signs of the times" in the Philippines point to its exercise under the Aquino government for a *social* and *moral* revolution, that is, a change of Filipino attitudes and values and a change of unjust structures. At the anniversary celebration of the February revolution, President Aquino called on the people to harness people power for economic goals — "the alleviation of mass poverty, generation of employment and equitable sharing of the fruits of development."<sup>3</sup>

2. Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1984) on adult Christian maturing, shed light on the meaning of *personal* and *social* power and on the relation of power and authority. They explain the various faces of personal power such as power "on," "over," "against," "for," and "with."

3. *The Manila Chronicle*, 27 February 1987.

What is the Filipino cultural understanding of people power — *lakas ng bayan*? *Lakas* has many meanings for the Filipino. *Lakas loob* or inner power or strength could mean *pagsasarili* or Filipino self confidence and reliance with a cultural, moral or religious basis. It could also stand for a Filipino who has courage, strength of character, moral and religious maturity. During the Philippine revolution against Spain the Filipinos found *lakas loob* or revolutionary courage from the *lakas loob* of Christ in the *Pasyon*.<sup>4</sup> Those who lacked *lakas loob* could not be relied upon to lead and continue the revolution.

But why under the Marcos regime was the Filipino *pagsasarili* or the power of the people kept in a state of dependency and powerlessness? The negative elements of four traditional Filipino values brought about the people's apathy and lack of nationalism. These values are family centeredness, excessive seeking of approval from authority figures and Filipino society, desire for economic and social betterment, and patient, suffering endurance based on a fatalistic or irresponsible *bahala na* attitude.<sup>5</sup> "My family first and only" mentality leads to lack of concern for the nation and for the poor and powerless, to nepotism and cronyism, to lack of self reliance. Passive acceptance of authority and the ability to get along with others through *pakikisama*, *utang na loob*, *hiya* leads to conformism, to government graft and corruption. An excessive desire for economic and social betterment leads to unscrupulous and dishonest practices, status-consciousness, colonial mentality. If the Filipino is too patient, long suffering and enduring and leaves everything to a fatalistic and escapist *bahala na* mentality, then he easily becomes the victim of injustice and exploitation and is reduced to indifference or apathy.

Power is not the same as authority. One can have power without lawful authority. Although authority and power are not the same thing, power undergirds authority. Those who possess any authority enjoy some kind of power. A just and legitimate authority demands the obedience of its subjects. But the illusion of authority usurped by fraudulent means has no moral basis for the obedience of the citizens.

4. Reynaldo Clemena Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980). The Filipino peasants perceived the revolution in terms derived from the *Pasyon's* way of thinking.

5. These four main negative Filipino values (pp. 29-31) and their positive Christian counter values (pp. 34-35) are briefly explained in the *Supplementary Manual of Education for National Reconstruction*, compiled and prepared by Carmelo A. Caluag, S.J., Emmanuel M. Flores, S.J., Adriano R. Tapiador, S.J. (Quezon City: Loyola House of Studies, 1986), pp. 29-31. They are explained more at length in the *Trainer's Manual*, *ibid.*, pp. 26-35.

That is why the strong February 1986 post election statement of the Catholic bishops declared that the Marcos government had no moral basis and did not deserve the allegiance of the Filipino people. The bishops were equivalently justifying nonviolent revolution, and their statement led to Cory Aquino's call to civil disobedience and boycott.

#### THE ETHICS OF PEOPLE POWER

Traditional ethics provide the general moral principles for approaches to some contemporary Filipino ethical issues on the responsible use of people power. First, what is the moral basis of authentic people power? The ultimate ground and adequate moral basis and justification of people power is *God*, the source of all power and authority. Secondly, the purpose or goal of people power is the *common good* of the people — the growth of human freedom and human development of every Filipino. People power must be in the service of the Filipino people. Thirdly, the moral principles for judging the authenticity of people power are respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights, respect for the truth, and respect for the standards and requirements of human justice and love.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence there are moral limits to the use of people power. When power is usurped or it no longer serves the common good nor develops the human person and his freedom, but violates human rights, truth, justice and love, or resorts to violence and bloody revolution, then it ceases to be the moral and responsible exercise of people power. In short, the *moral* norms to measure whether authentic people is truly in the service of the people are the standards of human dignity and human rights, truth, justice and love, whereas the *religious* norm is the Christian faith and the Gospel.

6. Jaime L. Cardinal Sin at the annual meeting of the Bishops- Businessmen's Conference (12 March 1983) on "Church and State Commitment to Human Development," explains these four characteristics of a mature political society: 1) respect for the dignity of the human person and his fundamental rights especially to full human development; 2) capacity to form an organic unity in community which allows constructive pluralism; 3) promotion of social justice; and 4) respect for truth.

What is the best social structure or model for the power of the people? Sociologist John Carroll, S.J. studies three models in Philippine society.<sup>7</sup> After showing the harm of the stereotype *politico* or "old politicians" model based on the patron-client vertical relationship of dependency, and the class conflict model of the exploiter and exploited relationship, he proposes as an alternative model the *interest group* model of horizontal relationship based on equality and fraternity. Under this alternative model, people are grouped according to similar interests, e.g. students, urban poor, farmers, fishermen, artists and media people, doctors and nurses, youth, etc. But although the different sectors have equal human rights it does not necessarily follow that the groups are equal and fraternal unless their Christian faith inspires them to think and behave in relation to one another equally as brothers and sisters. The rise and growth of people power comes about from education and conscientization, organization, and the mobilization of the people towards not only group interests but the common good of the people or nation.

How does power and Christian responsibility apply to the exercise of people power in a Philippine context?<sup>8</sup> On the basis of Filipino moral and religious experience, what determines the morality of the rightful acquisition and responsible exercise of people power?<sup>9</sup> Power is not a neutral force nor is it morally indifferent. Power awaits human direction for service which is given through human decision-making. Decision-making then is effectively the exercise of power. The exercise of power assumes the acquisition of power whose moral foundation is God, the author of human nature and the source of all human rights. But today the exercise of human rights is not safeguarded or guaranteed except through social or people power.

7. John J. Carroll, S.J., *Looking Beyond Edsa (Part I)* in *Human Society* 42 (Manila: La Ignaciana Apostolic Center, 1986) illustrates the three social models with diagrams and gives concrete Filipino examples. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 April 1987) reviews the history of models of the Philippine Presidency and comes up with the following models: fugitive (Emilio Aguinaldo), imperial (Manuel Quezon), symbolic (1973 Constitution), dictatorial (Ferdinand Marcos), and tentative (Corazon Aquino). It remains to be seen how Cory Aquino will perform by the end of her term.

8. Romano Guardini, *Power and Responsibility* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961) defines the essence of power, presents a theological concept of power, and in the light of the new concept of responsible power, maps out a new course of action for modern times. The whole volume of *Concilium* 90 (1973) edited by Franz Bockle and Jacques-Marie Pohier contains a spectrum of theological articles on the topic.

9. Thomas McMahon, "The Moral Aspects of Power," in *Concilium* 90, p. 51-65.

Three contemporary ethical questions deserve our special attention and reflection: Who has the responsibility to share power; with or for whom is power to be shared; and how is this power to be shared?

First, in view of the gross maldistribution of income and power in the Philippines, who must share power with whom? Do the rich and powerful influentials have a moral responsibility to share their power with the poor and powerless? Is this moral responsibility out of an obligation of justice or an optional choice of charity? Secondly, do the poor and the powerless have the moral responsibility to acquire or share power? What is their responsibility for decision-making and participation? The greater the social power, the greater the responsibility.

To answer the first question, the rich sharing power with the powerless is a moral responsibility demanded by human justice and love. My neighbor deserves justice and love because he is a human person with basic human rights. To answer the second question, the powerless have the responsibility not to allow themselves to be manipulated or exploited and at the same time to seek moral power for human and Christian development. As long as the majority of the people remain ignorant of their dignity and rights and thus remain unorganized, they will always become victims of injustice.

Thirdly, how should the powerful share power with the powerless? How is the process of decision-making by the leaders shared with the people? How is the decision of the people reflected in the decision of their leaders? For participatory decision-making, knowledge and communication are necessary. Knowledge is power and is essential for the right decision of the people. This is the principle of power-delegation. In the social grouping of people according to varying interests, a higher person or group should not take the function of a lower person or group if the lower group can discharge the function. This is the principle of subsidiarity. Both these principles safeguard the people's participatory decision-making.

How can the education and conscientization of the Filipino poor and powerless at the grassroots level of society be effectively accomplished? How can grassroots leaders educate, organize, and mobilize the power of the Filipino people? In a democracy, authority or sovereign power resides in the people. However, in contemporary thought, authority is the cultural interpretation of power. It is what we make of power among us that determines the shape of authority. According to Steven Lukes,<sup>10</sup>

10. Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (London: MacMillan, 1974).

whereas power used to be a matter of getting someone else to do what you want him to do for your benefit and not for his, power today is more and more becoming a matter of getting others to think what you want them to think so as to legitimize your advantages and prevent them from becoming explicitly aware of their disadvantaged position. Increasingly in contemporary societies, the crucial issue in power relationships is control of the flow of information. Power today is roughly the shaping of the perceptions, cognitions, and preferences of underlings. Procuring allegiance to the status quo is generally achieved by convincing people that there are no alternatives, or that the present order is natural and unchangeable, or that the way things are is divinely ordained and beneficial.

#### POWER IN A FILIPINO CONTEXT: THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

How does power enter into the value system of the Filipino Christian? Power is not only ethically neutral; it can be a positive source for fulfilling Christian goals and for humanizing Philippine society by fortifying the exercise of justice and love. From the viewpoint of the Christian faith, why should people power serve justice and the poor? Filipinos are all made in the image of God and as co-creators have the moral responsibility to create new selves and a more just world in which to live.

In a country where 70 percent of the population is below the poverty threshold, all Filipinos must bear responsibility in the eyes of God for this situation. No Filipino who lives above the poverty line can claim he has no responsibility for the dehumanizing poverty of his less fortunate brothers and sisters. The upper 30 percent of the Filipino population has a serious obligation in justice and love to change the immoral and sinful situation of the poor majority which is an affront to human dignity and to the image of God in the poor. A preferential option for the poor does not mean that the poor are better than the rich, but that God chose to be with them. In the Old Testament, Yahweh was on the side of the poor and powerless (e.g. Exod. 22:21-28; Amos 5:10-15; Isaiah 1:11-18, 58:3-12). Jesus Christ in the New Testament identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked, those in prison; in short, with the least of our brothers and sisters (Mt. 25:31-46). Recent social teachings of the Church emphasize that God is only encountered on the path of justice and that our love of God is measured by our love of



neighbor. The 1971 Roman Synod of Catholic bishops in *Justice in the World* clearly stated that "love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated." For love requires the minimum of justice and justice reaches its inner fullness only in love.

Negatively, the Filipino Christian must not use any power without exercising justice and love or by violating human rights or resorting to violence. Positively, the Filipino Christian as co-creator has the responsibility of creating a new Filipino and a new Filipino nation. The kind of role and power one possesses in the Church determines the gravity of one's moral responsibility and accountability.

In the Christian view, the outside source of people power is God, through the Holy Spirit whose loving presence in us gives us a new way of being and acting (John 3:5-18). Through baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Christian becomes an image of God, a new creature, a child of God. The courage to be a true Christian also comes from the Holy Spirit. Christ shares God's life and power with us. This divine power, new to us, is called grace and is simply the self giving of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Without a change of attitudes and values inspired by this Spirit of Christ, no amount of social justice will effect radical social changes in our country.

#### CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF PEOPLE POWER

What are the theological foundations in Christian revelation of people power? Let us focus on three Christian truths or gifts of God: first, *creation*, second *adoptive sonship* and third, the person of *Jesus of Christ* who became man, suffered, died and rose again for the liberation or salvation of mankind. First, the Christian doctrine of creation provides a faith vision of human dignity and human work. Man is created to the image of God and is empowered to be like God. The biblical foundation of creative power, both divine and human, is found in Genesis Chapters 1 and 2. Man as God's image is the Christian basis of human dignity and human rights. Human work for the Christian is a participation in God's continuing creation, and Jesus Christ himself ennobled work by working as a carpenter. Thus man as steward, not as owner, has the moral right and responsibility to exercise dominion over the earth. Secondly, by faith in Jesus Christ and baptism, man becomes an adopted son of God. Adoptive sonship means God is our Father and Jesus Christ is our brother in the Holy Spirit. The brotherhood of all mankind makes more sense under the Fatherhood of God. As children of God we are all brothers and

sisters belonging to one human family. Thirdly, God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ whose eternal mission for the redemption of the world is union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Both from Christian revelation and universal human experience we know the story of man's Fall (Gen. 3) and the history of man's sinfulness (Gen. 4-11). The humanity that man lost by sin is restored by the power of the grace of Jesus Christ the Liberator whose person, teaching, incarnation and Paschal mystery provide a Christology which grounds a theology of justice and human liberation and development.

The New Testament is the story of the good news of Jesus Christ's whose Paschal mystery liberated man from original and personal sin and freed him from eternal death or separation from God forever. By his teaching and life, Jesus proclaimed himself as the revelation of God's justice and made present God's kingdom of justice and love. Our redemption was made possible only by God becoming man. Because of a history of sinfulness, mankind had forgotten how to be human. By the incarnation Jesus Christ by becoming flesh (John 1:14) restored our full humanity. God becomes incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ and enters our world in weakness and humility. The Christian paradox is that power is found in weakness and powerlessness. "He was crucified through weakness, and still he lives now through the power of God" (2 Cor. 13:4). That is why St. Paul could glory in his infirmity and weakness and sense God's response: "my power is at its best in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). He writes that the first to take the radical attitude of humility is God (Phil. 2:6-8).

There is power in the Cross and in the empty tomb. Only through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the salvation of the world wrought and new eternal life is gained. Jesus Christ's *kenosis*, self emptying or total self donation, his taking the form of a servant is the Christian meaning of power in weakness or powerlessness. In the Church today to be of service to my neighbor means to take the form of a servant in serving his needs. This requires great humility and total self donation. When this individual humble service becomes collective conversion of a people, then the Christian faith has given birth to a new people with a new power.

Experts will continue to analyze the Philippine revolution of 1986 from historical, sociological, political and cultural perspectives. But one cannot escape the conclusion that amidst the interplay of all these forces, God's providential power was behind people power. It was their Christian faith as people of God that made the Philippine revolution a

Christian miracle. Filipino theologian Antonio Lambino, S.J. called the EDSA revolution a biblical "Filipino Exodus," the liberation of the Filipino people by an incarnate God whose suffering, death and resurrection symbolizes the Filipino Paschal mystery.<sup>11</sup> Where did people power which was dormant for almost twenty years come from? It came from the Christian faith of the Filipino people, a people's living faith and persevering prayer which contributed much in bringing out the rich symbolism and meanings of the February revolution.<sup>12</sup>

Both the Communists and extreme Leftists claimed that the only way to end the Marcos tyranny and begin radical social reform was through violence or armed revolution. But Ninoy Aquino, Evelio Javier, and other Filipinos stood for nonviolence and national reconciliation and for that very reason became victims of violence. Both the Catholic Bishops and Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his visit to the Philippines exhorted the Filipino people to nonviolence. The EDSA revolution repudiated violence as an instrument of peace and affirmed that nonviolence is not just a tactic or strategy but a way of life. Nonviolence was the main reason for the success of the revolution.<sup>13</sup> Filipinos are a gentle people (*mahinahon, hindi basagulero*). The nonviolent character of the Filipino is based on the innate value of *awa* or compassion and mercy for the powerless who cry for help. Filipinos are a patient (*mapagpasensiya*), long suffering (*mapagtiis*) people. At EDSA nothing was planned ahead of time. Improvisation through intuitive feeling (*pakiramdam*) in emergency and crisis situations is a Filipino cultural style. The peaceful negotiations between the soldiers and civilians was on the basis of *ayaw ng gulo* but *puedeng pagusapan*.

11. Fr. Lambino who first called the EDSA revolution the "Filipino Exodus" in both the Supplementary (pp. 7-13) and Trainer's Manual (pp. 8-15) of *Education for National Reconstruction* (See footnote 5 above) explains the following divine fingerprints: 1) a concatenation of events not totally explainable by human causes; 2) the mystery of Christ's cross and resurrection at work in the death of countless martyrs of the revolution; 3) God working through people, the rise of the middle groups and a much more militant Church; 4) God's Spirit present in the hearts of the people as shown by their love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faith, gentleness and self control (Gal. 5:22).

12. Francisco J. Araneta, "God Was the Hero," in Trainer's Manual of *Education for National Reconstruction*, *ibid.*, pp. 16-20. See also Sr. Luz Emmanuel Soriano, R.A. "The Faith and Revolution," *Ministry Today* 2, No. 3, pp. 48-50.

13. "Violence or Non-Violence: Option or Imperative, of Reason or Christianity?" *Pulso* 1, No. 2, 1985. The second part of Douglas J. Elwood, *Faith Encounters Ideology: Christian Discernment and Social Change* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985) is concerned with the Christian dilemma of violence or nonviolence.

The nonviolent revolution drew its inspiration and strength from the Christian faith. This was evident from the use of numerous religious symbols, and frequent prayer, manifesting the faith and trust of the people in Divine Providence. There can be no doubt that the Philippine Church played a major role in the 1986 revolution. During Martial Law a significant number of Church leaders took the side of the poor and oppressed and came to the defense of countless victims of injustice. In the last two decades before the revolution, the social teaching of the Philippine Catholic bishops highlighted the Church's preferential option for the poor. Many of the clergy and religious made a choice to live and work with the poor. After the revolution, in his letter to the Philippine Catholic Bishops (28 June 1986), Pope John Paul II reminded them of the Philippine Church's commitment to the Filipino people with a "preferential love for the poor" and gave guidelines for the political activity of the Church. Throughout all the events of the EDSA revolution, the one thing that stands out before, during, and after the Four Days of February is that the Church stood on the side of the people. What is significant historically and theologically is not that the Church was in opposition to Marcos and on the side of Cory Aquino, but biased in favor of the Filipino people of God.<sup>14</sup>

The responsible use of Church power can be considered from a sociological and theological viewpoint. While the sociological question asks what is the role of the Philippine Church in relation to the Aquino government, the theological question asks what the Christian Gospel and the Christian faith can contribute to the creation of a more just and fraternal Philippine society. Sociologist John Carroll, S.J. holds that in the Philippine context, besides its prophetic role of carrying the social message of the Christian gospel to the people and of protesting against injustice and the violation of human rights, the Catholic Church can assume a greater role in building a more just Philippine society through a specific strategy and structure for nonviolent revolutionary social change.<sup>15</sup>

14. See the theological reflection of V.R. Gorospe, S.J., "Remembering Edsa: A Filipino Christian Reflection," to be published in *Ministry Today* 3.

15. John J. Carroll, S.J., "The Church: A Political Force?" and "The Church and the Dilemma of Social Change: A View from the Third World," in *Human Society* (Manila: La Ignaciana Apostolic Center, February and April 1984). See also Marites Sison, "The Church Gropes for a New Role," *The Manila Chronicle Focus*, 12 April 1987, pp. 2-3. In this connection a word of caution has been issued by the Archdiocese of Manila for priests not to get involved with "partisan politics" (*Cor Manila* XI, No. 25, 22 March 1987, pp. 2-3, 11).

With regard to the theological question, granted the rich contribution of the Christian faith vision to the creation of a more just Philippine society, what is of interest and concern are the principles on the responsible use of Church power in the post-election statement of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. These principles can be summarized as follows:

1. Church power must be power for good, at the service of the people, for their well being, development and growth as Filipino Christians;
2. The authority and power of Christ was moral and religious in nature and exercised in a suasive, not coercive, manner; therefore the pastoral accompaniment of people power means that authority and leadership must be exercised in the suasive manner of Christ;
3. The temptation for the Church is to prostitute power for sheerly political purposes, the power of the Word of God is for evangelization and politicization;
4. The moral power of the Church is evangelical and pastoral and yet has a political dimension which must always be subordinate to the Church's evangelical-pastoral power;
5. The Church must continue to play a prophetic role;
6. The key to the birth and growth of Christian people power is the fostering of Basic Christian Communities (BCC's).<sup>16</sup>

Concretely, in the Philippine context it remains to be seen in which specific areas the power of the people of God can be of great influence. This is the task of collective discernment by the local Churches in the Philippines.

In short, whatever power the Church possesses both as an institution and as a community must be at the service of God's people. Of all the Philippine institutions, the Catholic Church is the most powerful social and moral force. No matter what kind of government exists — Marcos, Communist, Aquino — the Church should always be a Church on the side of the people, a Church of the poor. Leonardo Boff in his book

16. "Episcopal Reflections on Church Power and the Revolution," *Ministry Today* 2, No. 3 (1986): 42-47. Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, the auxiliary bishops and the Presbyterium of the Archdiocese of Manila issued "A Catechism on the Involvement of Priests in Political Activity," *Cor Manila*, 22 March 1987, pp. 2-3 & 11.

*Church: Charism and Power*, has a very telling chapter on converting the institutional dominating power of the Church to power for service of God's people and, like Sarah in the Old Testament, the conversion from sterility to birth of a new Church or a new people of God power.<sup>17</sup>

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There is, no doubt, need for further cultural study of Filipino *lakas*. From a *moral* perspective social power is for service of the people, and its authenticity and responsible exercise is based on respect for the dignity of the human person, basic human rights and the standards of truth, human justice and love. From a *Christian* perspective, Filipino Christians have a rich biblical and doctrinal heritage to draw from — the truths of creation, adoptive sonship, the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ — in creating a more just and fraternal Philippine society.

In conclusion, people power in a Philippine context demands moral responsibility and Christian commitment to justice and to the poor. As President Corazon Aquino puts it: "Now and in the forthcoming days, we should turn people power into a force behind a second revolution: a revolution to bring about development and recovery."

17. Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism & Power* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1985) especially Chapter 5 where the author asks whether the power of the institutional Church can be converted?