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The utility of virtue: management spirituality and ethics for a secular business world

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Abstract Spirituality is an area of interest for management and business. But two issues confront it: (1) the struggle to be amidst a utilitarian framework where spirituality is reduced as a means to forward profit-oriented goals and (2) difficulty with spirituality's subjective and multifaceted nature in business management. Challenges abound in determining which spirituality is appropriate. Business scholarship is dominated by a utilitarian view, which some more philosophically oriented scholars have opined to be counterintuitive to the real purpose of workplace spirituality. But some recognize the significance of pragmatic and useful approaches, which this paper views as something integrated into the more philosophic approaches, particularly through virtue ethics. Thus, the authors offer the case for virtue, examined in the person of Corazon C. Aquino, Asia's first woman president, who successfully bridged the gap between the sacred and secular. To appease both utilitarian and more metaphysical orientations, this research stipulates that for every value-added service rendered to others, there is a corresponding virtue enhancement in the person.

Keywords Spirituality · Leadership · Virtue · Management · Ethics · Asian leader

The utility of virtue

Business organizations should consider that of all issues confronting leaders and corporations, unethical activity is the most significant in terms of potential negative impact (Schwartz 2013). At minimum, an ethical lapse can put a permanent asterisk on

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an otherwise solid record of accomplishments and even outweigh years of seemingly good work (Langvardt 2012). In tandem with this, scholars have found strong links between religion and more macrosocial phenomena (Weaver and Agle 2002). Lynn et al. (2010) suggested that religion is likely to affect ability and motivation to perform work. But tensions exist between the individual's personal experience of spirit and the demands of leadership in business (Brandt in Cash et al. 2000). First is its struggle to be amidst a business framework that is often utilitarian, where managers take advantage of the human being's natural desire for spirituality as a means to forward profit-oriented ends. Second is the difficulty in infusing spirituality in business because by its very nature, it is personal, subjective, and multifaceted, thus leading to evermore challenges and complications for managers in determining which spirituality is appropriate. Wordern (2005) recognized the hazards in applying religious content from a realm known to be personal into the public and secular context. Some managers fear that spirituality in the workplace can lead to divisiveness and accusations of discrimination (Cavanagh and Bandsuch 2002). Certainly, there is a need for a more inclusive approach to workplace spirituality (Gotsis and Kortezi 2007). Crucial to this is the leader. This paper argues the case for virtue as the benchmark for spirituality for organization leaders with Asia's first woman president and the only leader, in the postmodern secular world to successfully bridge the gap between the sacred and secular.

Corazon C. Aquino's life and leadership is empirical proof, based on qualitative observations by those who were privy to her decisions, struggles, and character as well as her staying power and iconic effect across time and space. More specifically, this paper discusses the values and virtues of a leader who happened to be religious and whose religiosity spilled over into her life, work, and character as person and leader of a recovering nation. As ordinary citizen and leader, Aquino faced insurmountable odds— (1) from being the wife of an imprisoned and later slain leader; (2) to leader of the opposition, which deposed a dictator; (3) to leader of a country recovering from a 20-year dictatorship through a transitional government plagued by almost a dozen military coups; (4) to a private citizen who chose to remain a rallying cry for wrong turns and issues in Philippine governance and politics; and (5) even unto her death as she struggled a difficult disease amidst political problems, which she did not choose to ignore in spite of her weakening condition. By choosing her as the model, and virtue as the underlying framework, this article challenges traditional secular business thinking that encourages a separation between work and more personal concerns, particularly that of religion. The study poses a unique contribution to literature by presenting a pathway for management spirituality in business through the life and work of a spiritually led leader while also taking into consideration the context of difficulty with spirituality and business's traditionally secular stance. Aquino's iconic stature should help direct business leaders towards the utilitarian value of spirituality without a utilitarian outlook—that for every value-added service rendered to others, there is a corresponding virtue enhancement that remains in the person.

Management spirituality: what is it?

This paper refers to organizational and workplace spirituality interchangeably. A universally accepted definition of spirituality in the workplace does not exist

(Ashforth & Pratt in Gotsis and Kortezi 2007). Hicks (in Gotsis and Kortezi 2007) traced the beginning of looking into the spiritual dimension of work in the late 1980s in the USA. Grant et al. (2004) identified the presence of spirituality in the workplace in the 1950s as a "spirituality of dwelling" centered around organized religion. This transformed in the 1960s with a "spirituality of seeking," which led people to look beyond established religious institutions for spiritual answers (Wuthnow in Grant et al. 2004). While workplace spirituality is a young area of inquiry (Sheep 2006), it is currently a salient issue in the scientific and empirical domains (Gotsis and Kortezi 2007). It is positively associated with desirable organizational outcomes both at the qualitative and the quantitative level, providing answers to organizational problems. Sheep (2006) discussed finding meaning in work. Workplace spirituality is an experience of transcendence, interconnectedness, personal completeness, and joy (Gotsis and Kortezi 2007)—all of which can be affected by the work environment and vice versa; and this is perhaps best influenced by the organization's leadership. Spirituality is generally treated in the literature as the missing attribute of organizational life. Fry (2003) explained the root of this lack of understanding. He declared that philosophy seeks wisdom and truth through argumentation and disputation. In science, where all major fields of inquiry on leading, managing, and organizing are placed, things relating to God and spirituality are rarely considered. He explained further that in their quest to be accepted, the social sciences eliminated God from their theories. According to Fry (2003), however, in theoretical physics, science has come full circle in its quest to find an explanation of a physical world without God. Thus, Fry recognized the significance of spiritual leadership in integrating all arenas of human existence that no longer views the humanistic, spiritual, and natural as separate and independent domains.

Paradox in the empirical slant

Gotsis and Kortezi (2007) posited that business is partial to the quantitative trail because modern organizations are founded and function in accordance with the Cartesian-Newtonian orientation. Priority is given to the empirical, rational, objective, external, and material. Thus, everything is evaluated in terms of tangible and measurable outcomes with performance as a key consideration. Economic expediency has replaced morality as the standard of conduct (Feldman 1998). Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) opined that just like many other professions and disciplines, workplace spirituality has been infiltrated by the focus on technique. Fry and Kriger (2009) found that extant theories of leadership proposed over the past half-century have been based on behavior and interactions (i.e., doing) or traits, competencies, or styles (i.e., having). Thus, they wondered what leadership theory would look like if it was based on being rather than doing or having. They discovered that more recently, a number of authors have begun to recognize the more subtle and largely invisible inner feelings, thoughts, states, and intuitions in the study of leadership. King (2007) revealed that religion is based on faith; thus, it is not subject to the rigors of proof necessary for scientific study (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003). Thus, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (in King 2007) added that workplace spirituality based on religion is ill defined and un-testable and therefore cannot contribute to a scientific body of knowledge. If this is the case, then religion has no place in the positivistic scientific world (King 2007). Fry (2003) discussed a similar

reason as to why spirituality was dropped. It should be noted, however, that the very framework by which organizations are based and continue to function makes this tendency towards empiricism more likely. Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) opined that most researchers in the workplace spirituality field have either found or have hypothesized a relationship between spirituality and organizational performance. Gotsis and Kortezi (2007) concluded that there is a need for and tendency towards empirical research to provide scientific evidence in support of theoretical assumptions about the benefits of spirituality in the workplace. But a double paradox is revealed. First is the fact that any approach that is too "scientific" about spirituality may miss the point. While a business case, for instance, is unproblematic for the organizational scientist, it is nonsensical for those of a more metaphysical persuasion (Poole 2008). At the same time, it could intrude in the human person's search for meaning. In fact, even before the spiritual turn in management, elements of spirituality such as meaning, purpose, and sense of community were already endemic to management (Steingard 2005). Second is the need for precise measures for a business case to hold applied to a subject (i.e., spirituality) that is ephemeral. This, once again, militates against scientific clarity, robbing the concept of its meaning. Moreover, workplace spirituality is a complex and multifaceted construct (Milliman et al. in Gotsis and Kortezi 2007), making it difficult for a quantitative framework to breakdown, measure, and understand. What organizations and managers need is a moral framework superior to economic activity and capable of evaluating and restraining it (Feldman 1998). What is needed is a truly universal form of spirituality that is both experiential and intellectual (Steingard 2005). We are proposing a solution that will be perceived more positively by any religion and spirituality, as it focuses on the growth and development of the human person.

The virtue solution

Ultimately, the nonempirical method is better suited to understand the essence and utility of management spirituality. Sheep (2006) posited that, just as society has a legitimate interest in the cost-efficient production of firms, so too do they have at least as great an interest in their social responsibility to contribute toward rather than erode the social capital of organizational members as part of larger communities. Nurturing workplace spirituality is part of corporate social responsibility and good leadership, and fortunately, it too provides utilitarian and pragmatic benefits related to the bottom line. To appease the language of business and the concerns of those of a more metaphysical persuasion, there is a need to integrate characteristics of organizational science and spirituality. Poole (2008) recognized the attention paid to the qualitative and more analytical approaches, as well as logical argumentation and the marshaling of evidence. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) identified the attention now given to assessments of individual character, personality, and belief systems. What is needed is a concept that is tangible and concrete enough to appease the needs of logical empiricism and scientific inquiry while maintaining the essence of having a genuine concern for people and human relations. This is where virtue can serve as a solution.

Virtue is more concerned with underlying character than with specific decisions or actions (Poole 2008). For Arjoon (2000), virtues are qualities, which enable people to direct their behavior toward some goal. A crucial idea behind the formation of these

virtues is habit—that virtues are a result of repetition—of practice. At the same time, virtues have historically been defined as skills, and this is congruent with organizations since they are viewed as repositories of skills and capabilities (Heugens et al. 2008). Dawson and Bartholomew (2003) stressed that virtues give people the propensity to act in ways that promote human flourishing. Aranzadi (2013) opined that a market economy based on firms affords the possibility for excellence in human action toward virtue-based ethics. Social coordination improves if the process of creation of individual possibilities of action, which is carried out in the social institutions—in our case, the firm—is extended. Dyck and Schroeder (2005) believe their framework is similar to aspects of "virtue theory." They identified certain "creation mandates" (based on the biblical story of creation) as the basis for their overarching goals. But unlike Weber's Protestant Reformers, the Anabaptist-Mennonites do not consider work to be a calling and means to salvation. For them, it is important to follow the biblical account of creation—that God is a creator and, thus, craftsman, and that it is important to emulate God's character in one's work. Robinsons et al. (2013) found that it is the business person's self-interest to be virtuous. In fact, virtue is indeed of value to both business and those concerned with government policy (Flynn 2008) and that virtue is crucial in the Christian ethical heritage. Flynn believes that Ireland's economy testifies to the necessity of elevating the person and respect for human dignity. For Burton and Goldsby (2009), a person of good character will not commit an immoral act knowingly. Moreover, one who demonstrates a spirituality that results in virtuous attitudes is more likely to make ethical decisions; exhibit honesty, trustworthiness, and organizational citizenship behavior; and possess personal integrity (Cavanagh & Bandsuch in Gotsis and Kortezi 2007). At the same time, Kwong et al. (2015) found that in order to retain customer loyalty, corporations need to develop and acquire virtuous characters. Thus, we agree with Cavanagh and Bandsuch (2002) that the benchmark for management spirituality is for the manager to simply determine whether the particular spirituality helps to develop a virtuous person who practices good moral habits. With this, we define management spirituality as "the characteristics and qualities business leaders need to develop and acquire in order to motivate both themselves and others to grow and develop as persons of purpose and character in the organization or workplace." It maintains the moderately communitarian characteristic of virtue theory while recognizing the responsibilities of individual human beings. Virtue theory does not write the decision algorithm for the behaviorally perfect ethical robot, but it understands how the character of the individual or organization is shaped by its context (Heugens et al. 2008).

Corazon "Cory" C. Aquino

Cory Aquino was a leader well known for her Catholic brand of spirituality. She was particularly known for invoking the ideals of her religion in the struggle to lead and to maintain a democracy. A staunch critic of Aquino, Conrado De Quiros (in Juico 2010) opined that she simply turned to prayer in her hour of uncertainty and adversity. Many of those who worked closely with her admitted she never actually preached anything religious. She just lived out such a religious life in virtue, which people picked up on and grew in awe and respect. By demonstrating the significance of virtue through the

life of one who was religious and at the same time iconic, business leaders and managers will be given a kind of model supported by theory and operationalized in an event considered momentous in history (i.e., the Philippine People Power Revolution). Moreover, this study can illuminate and clarify the often controversial and problematic closeness and distance between the sacred and secular in a largely secular world. The stark difference between a manager and a leader is the latter's unique ability to motivate and inspire; Aquino's iconic stature was precisely due to her ability to move, motivate, and inspire. In Liu and Robertson's (2011) theoretical conceptualization of spirituality, they opined that spirituality is best captured by three correlated, yet distinct factors: interconnection with a higher power, interconnection with human beings, and interconnection with nature and all living things. With the exception of the third, which is beyond the scope of this study, Aquino was well known to have had a deep faith and supernatural outlook as well as a warm and approachable personality. Moreover, her persona and character can also help shed light on certain ironies in comparisons between Asians and Western Europeans. Thanetsunthorn (2015), for instance, found that European countries outperform East Asian countries in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR)—a finding the author has revealed to be consistent with numerous other studies. Thanetsunthorn provides an explanation—that Eastern Asians are less likely to value quality of life of employees and those of people in the community. This is odd, considering the dominant traditional premise of the collectivistic versus individualistic inclination of Asians. At the same time, one can argue that the attention to the collective might neglect the individual and thus make for less than ideal CSR.

Aquino's interest in people—as persons and not mere members of a collective—can provide insight into how and why Asians can and should better their CSR practice. At the same time, given Michaelson's (2012) finding that the values embodied by capitalism are dominantly Western, the Aquino persona and phenomenon would be a groundbreaking contribution. As Michaelson aptly recognized, the quest to create a capitalist canon would benefit from the analyses of government actors; and Aquino is a very unique government actor, touted for practically leading such a historical event that made the world stop to look and listen. All elements that make up this study (i.e., spirituality and virtue) play out in Aquino, and the fact that "positive change" was achieved in such gargantuan proportions to the point of becoming historic and iconic should make this model for leadership particularly interesting and useful for those in the business of doing things big—corporations. She may just be that which can and will make capitalism stop, look, and listen.

Methods

To understand and learn the utility of virtue from Aquino's life and leadership, we have to understand her path to greatness under the lens of key concepts from management spirituality literature. Given the qualitative nature of life, leadership, and spirituality, we adopted the qualitative research method, drawing primary data from in-depth interviews of 14 persons (see Table 1) who worked with the late female president. In order to collect a more balanced and wide range of opinions and experiences, interviewees included those who fell in and out of maintaining close relations with her.

Secondary data were also drawn from published testimonies on Aquino, both from friends and "hostile" acquaintances, to strengthen the validity of the research. Semistructured interview questions were developed with the aid of general management and leadership (Steingard 2005; Schwartz 2013; Michaelson 2012; Langvardt 2012; Karakas and Sarigollu 2012), management and workplace spirituality (Ashforth and Pratt 2003; Ashmos and Duchon 2000; Benefiel 2003; Brandt 1996; Cash et al. 2000; Driscoll and Wiebe 2007; Fry 2003; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003; Gotsis and Kortezi 2007; Grant et al. 2004; Hicks 2003; King 2007; Kolodinsky et al. 2007; Liu and Robertson 2011; Milliman et al. 2003; Pearce and Manz 2014; Poole 2008; Sheep 2006; Weaver and Agle 2002; Wuthnow 1999), business and politics (Aranzadi 2013; Haydu and Lee 2004; Thanetsunthorn 2015), and virtue ethics literature (Cavanagh and Bandsuch 2002; Flynn 2008; Kwong et al. 2015). As validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure (in this case, the questionnaire) adequately reflects the real meaning of a concept under consideration (in this case, management spirituality's significance in Aquino's leadership), the authors married leadership concepts from

Table 1 List of interviewees

Name	Position
Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas ("Bernie Villegas")	Appointed by President Cory Aquino as a member of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the Philippine Constitution in 1986; economic adviser to the government
Mrs. Maria Elena Aquino Cruz ("Ballsy Cruz")	Eldest child of President Cory Aquino; personal secretary of the President
Mr. Rafael Lopa ("Rapa Lopa")	Nephew of President Cory Aquino; executive assistant of Cory since 1993; Executive Director of the Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. Foundation
Mrs. Margie Penson Juico ("Margie Juico")	Appointments Secretary of President Cory Aquino
Mr. Philip Ella Juico ("Philip Juico")	Secretary of Agrarian Reform (DAR) during the term of Philippine President Cory Aquino
Atty. Franklin M. Drilon ("Frank Drilon")	Served President Cory Aquino as Secretary of the Department of Justice, as Executive Secretary, and lastly as Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment
Mrs. Teresita Ang See	Founding president of Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc., an NGO of Chinese Filipinos advocating the integration ethnic Chinese into Philippine society; crime fighter and journalist
Fr. Catalino Arevalo, SJ	Chaplain and friend of President Cory Aquino's family
Mrs. Deedee Siytangco	Spokesperson of President Cory Aquino
Mr. Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. ("Joey Cuisia")	Head of the Social Security System and eventually Head of the Central Bank of the Philippines during the term of President Cory Aquino
Mr. Teodoro Locsin Jr. ("Teddyboy Locsin")	Presidential spokesperson and speechwriter of President Cory Aquino
Mr. Oscar M. Orbos ("Oca Orbos")	Appointed by President Cory Aquino as Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications, and then as Executive Secretary
Mr. Vitaliano N. Nanagas II ("Lanny Nanagas")	President of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) from 1988 to 1993
Atty. Fulgencio S. Factoran Jr. ("Jun Factoran")	Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources during the term of Philippine President Cory Aquino

literature with manifestations of such culled from writings on Aquino. Questions were designed to elicit the interviewees' impressions and opinions about Aquino's person and character, leadership style and behavior, work relationships, and her influence on others. The respondents were also afforded the opportunity to discuss issues not addressed by the questions, but relevant to the research topic. Verbatim interview transcripts were analyzed, applying both manual and software-aided techniques (NVivo 7) for topic and analytical coding to enhance the reliability of the study. Coding served to organize the data according to categories following the pre-set questions. The categories were further analyzed, compared, regrouped, and refined to define the core themes and conceptual relationships. Findings were then analyzed in light of theoretical considerations on management spirituality and virtue ethics, and conclusions and theoretical formulations were drawn.

Findings and conclusion

Aquino was a rallying symbol for the struggle to regain the people's curtailed freedom. Garbed in her ubiquitous yellow attire, often in the company of Manila's Archbishop, priests, and nuns, clasping the rosary, and calling for prayer, she became the central figure people looked on to, which eventually led to revolutionary changes in the nation's history. But she lived through one of the most problematic and difficult episodes in Philippine history. The country was headed by an infamous ruthless dictator, Ferdinand Marcos. At first, people saw hope in a young senator, who began as a traditional politician and an ally and friend of the late strongman, but later on boldly questioned his regime. At the start of his career, Benigno ("Ninoy") Aquino was a traditional politician. But experiences with the dictatorship opened his eyes to the plight of the people, who were stripped of their freedom and plunged into poverty. Ninoy Aquino rallied and championed the opposition as a staunch freedom fighter. Eventually, Marcos arrested and exiled him to the US. Upon his return in 1983, he was assassinated at the airport. Millions marched at his funeral. Ninoy's death seemed to kill the only hope out of the ruins. But events that transpired from thereon thrust "Cory" into the consciousness of the public as the grieving wife of a murdered political leader. At the onset, it may seem her husband enhanced her role from a homemaker and spouse. But her character and person are particularly important because had she been anything less, the struggle from 1983 to the People Power Revolution of 1986 would not have gained the mass following required for ousting such an oppressive and decades-long dictator. Not only did she inspire such a mass following; she sustained it enough to have been labeled and revered an icon, with her trademark qualities— spirituality, selflessness, and others-centeredness and certain unique values and virtues, which proved great utility in her life and leadership, significant to those who want to lead and not just manage organizations and businesses. Table 2 identifies all the pros in Cory Aquino's leadership culled from the interview data.

Cory Aquino: spirituality in action

Spirituality was the theme of Cory Aquino's presidency. When asked how she struggles and deals with challenges, she replied, "I pray with all my heart, I work with all my

Table 2 Interview data: pro-Cory

Spirituality in action	Selflessness and others-centeredness	Values and virtues
Her mantras	Decision-making process	Benevolence and respect
• "I pray with all my heart, I work with all my might." • "I'll do my best and God will do the rest."	• Based on cost to the people, Christ, freedom, and democracy	• Treated people with dignity and love, thus winning their honor and affection
Unity of life	Level of concern	Integrity and trust
• Saw her faith and the presidency as compatible • Bridged the gap between the sacred and the secular	• Both in public via her role as president, and in her private life • Sacrificed personal interest for the greater interest of the people	• Manifested in what was called "Cory Magic"—that unique mix of qualities that made her
Unique courage	Strength of concern	Receptivity and responsibility
• Toppled a dictator • Survived 9 military coups • Rallied against anyone who exhibited less than ethical characteristics as leader—her appointed successor, a popular president, and another president who assumed power because a previous president whom Cory had rallied against was embroiled in scandal	• Kept people significant even in the midst of trial and adversity	• Through the strategy of consultation

might" or "I'll do my best and God will do the rest." She was a practicing Catholic who saw her faith and the presidency as compatible dimensions of life. She had what many Catholic Christians refer to as unity of life. In other words, she practiced what she preached. And this was exactly what allowed her to, in a sense, "get away with" a "spiritual presidency" and spirituality—a concept, attitude, and practice that might otherwise offend other more secular individuals and those of a different religious or spiritual orientation. She was even respected and admired for her spiritual zeal, which many attributed to the fact that she practiced what she preached and lived it. While her deep religiosity and faith in God permeated both her public and private life, she did it in a way that did not intrude but instead bridged the gap between the sacred and secular. Finally, it must be said that it was precisely her spirituality which allowed her to maintain such unique courage. For a simple housewife to have toppled a 20-year dictatorship—and a dictatorship known to have abused human rights, which she experienced herself with the incarceration of her husband—and survive nine coups is no small feat. She was known to have always invoked God, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, during those instances when it seemed clear a rebellion might just topple her government. Many of those around her were in awe with her calm and composure, as she prayed in the midst of chaos (particularly during the numerous military coups) while the rest were fearful of what might happen. But they also admitted how her demeanor and attitude helped allay their fears, temper their panic, and moderate their emotions. Even after her tumultuous experiences, Aquino never wavered nor grew weary of the fight. After stepping down as president, she continued to speak out as a

private citizen, against the very injustices she fought whenever it seemed clear they were making a comeback. She rallied against her successor (a successor she endorsed and campaigned for) when he made moves to lengthen his term against the Freedom Constitution. She was once again at the helm, calling for a peaceful change in power when the next president was embroiled in charges of graft, corruption, and plunder. Finally, she joined popular calls for resignation of a president who allegedly rigged the 2004 national elections in her favor, bringing about a political scandal and electoral crisis in the country. While it was a popular movement, the administration's hold on the avenues of communication made it seem unpopular enough and thus difficult for those working for the change; and Aquino was one of them. Cory Aquino stood by them, marching with them in the dark nights in their frustration, as it often seemed it was a futile fight because of the administration's hold on power. Up until the end, her ability to trust and entrust to a higher power remained strong.

Selflessness and others-centeredness

Cory's decisions were always based on cost to the people, Christ, freedom, and democracy. Her others-centeredness was based on the ideals of Christian life. Senator Nene Pimentel (in Juico 2009) attested to her deep concern for people, which did not stop at those momentous issues and events that could have public relations and publicity effects and implications. Gina de Venecia (in Juico 2009) recalled that after her husband, Joe, lost his bid for the presidency to Fidel Ramos (a candidate, whom Cory endorsed), she was worried that only a few guests would arrive at her birthday party since many of them had already abandoned her. To her surprise, Cory Aquino was first to arrive. Aquino did not play partisan politics and attempted to make just and good decisions to benefit the country. In the midst of one of the coup attempts, she took one of her cabinet members' side against her own armed forces chief, General Fidel Ramos, on the issue that might seem properly requiring a military decision. But when her term was up in 1992, she chose to endorse that same General—someone who had once been a Marcos ally, in fact, in the late strongman's innermost circle, prior to the 1986 Revolution when he defected—over Ramon

"Monching" Mitra, one of her late husband's bosom buddies, had fought with them side by side during the martial law years and was himself imprisoned. This was the extent of Aquino's concern for people and the country. She sacrificed her personal interest for the greater interest of the people. Neither did she falter in the little things. Her couture, Auggie Cordero, recalled how he was sometimes invited for dinner after dress fittings, during which Aquino, the president, would personally serve both him and her children (Juico 2009). Even in times of trial and adversity, Aquino could not hide her natural concern for people. Billy Esposo, president of a TV network, recalled how Aquino visited her in the hospital where she was confined for a life-threatening infection on the same day an infamous coup plotter, Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, escaped from detention (Juico 2009).

The values and virtues of Aquino for managers who want to become leaders

Benevolence and respect

Benevolence is a concept that can often be misunderstood and misrepresented. Karakas and Sarigollu (2012, p. 537) defined benevolence as "the process of creating a virtuous cycle of encouraging and initiating positive change." Aquino not only inspired her countrymen into toppling down a dictator peacefully; she and the effect of her peaceful calls for change also moved other nations (e.g., Taiwan and South Korea) to seek more democratic systems. She gave people a narrative that inspired and motivated—something only leaders beyond managers can do. She treated others with dignity, esteem, and value through the virtues of benevolence and respect and through genuine love for people, which probably helped her win their honor and affection. She dealt with co-workers as equals, often cooking for them whenever they visited—something respondents believe no other world leader ever did. Humility was one of her most unique and dominant aspects. This probably enabled her to struggle against the trappings of power and to manifest and demonstrate authentic benevolence and respect—virtues, which can guard against the tendency towards cultism. While she may have made some arguably bad decisions, Aquino was never accused of acting in bad faith. It is this general tendency to believe in her goodness that gave her a staying power, which inspired and motivated. Ironically, it is also this general tendency to believe and even wonder in amazement at her goodness that catapulted her to fame, even as she tried hard to pass unnoticed. The lesson for leadership is to maintain your integrity to gain people's confidence and trust, and they will certainly respect and see you as benevolent. Corporations and business leaders can learn from the spiritual—that faith exhibited as virtue can have that tremendous positive effect any big business needs and wishes to achieve.

Integrity and trust

People trusted Aquino and depended on her. The symbol she represented and the personality she exuded came to be called, "Cory Magic." As long as an order came from Aquino, people never doubted the integrity of the task. Many confessed that she never gave special instructions to favor anyone or to bend rules to accommodate certain business interests. For instance, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) did not exempt Hacienda Luisita, a big parcel of land that belonged to her family. Even when inciting people to have a more spiritual outlook, Aquino chose to set the example rather than directly telling people to go to Church or to pray the rosary. According to many of the respondents, the Philippines was so highly regarded because of her, because, they believed, the Aquino image was not just an image but a real reflection of the person within. She led as she lived and she lived as an ordinary person attempting to do ordinary things extraordinarily well. All respondents agreed that while Cory could be criticized and ridiculed for many things, nobody ever questioned her integrity. People trusted her; and this is why in spite of all the criticism and ridicule, in times of political crises (e.g., Fidel Ramos' posturing for term extension; Joseph Estrada's scandals; and Gloria Arroyo's dubious acts pertaining to corruption), Filipinos looked on to Cory for advice and to help lead them out of chaos.

Receptivity and responsibility

Aquino was well known for her strategy of consultation. She relied on experts to do their job and give her sound advice and tried to ensure that everyone would have a part in her government. This did not always yield positive results and often led to division within her administration. Nonetheless, because she believed in people and respected them, she gave them their due in exercising their right to represent their interests in government. This is actually very similar to the essence of Christianity, particularly one of the basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)—the principle of freedom and human dignity, where human beings are given that free range to determine what they must do and how they should do it. Aquino wanted to first give people a chance to truly participate in government, no matter where one's inclinations and ideologies lie.

To summarize, findings reveal that Cory Aquino was spirituality in action, as she walked the talk and simply exuded the message and idea of her faith through her ordinary words and actions versus direct proclamations and directives to adopt her faith.

Addressing arguments against Aquino

Some might consider Aquino an unusual, weak, and perhaps even questionable leadership model for business. Reasons are as follows (see Table 3):

That she was a political versus business leader How can a political leader shed light on business management? In their study on the comparison of models of good employers in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Haydu and Lee (2004, p. 178) discovered, "The model employer portrayed in the general business press turns out to have much in common with standards of 'good government' advocated by political reformers." In particular, they stressed the parallels between model employers and fashions in political discourse. The argument for Aquino is further strengthened by her spirituality as spirituality itself is often used as part of organizational politics (Gotsis and Kortezi 2007). More specifically, Aquino was a political reformer—and a political reformer who invoked God and religion in every facet of her life. She moved and inspired multitudes to hope and fight for their freedom and democracy, infused with that spirituality.

That she is not unique enough to become a model for leadership While many have done similar and perhaps far more before her (i.e., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa), one can at least claim that she is probably the first Catholic (and perhaps even Christian) political leader to bridge the gap between Church and state. Mandela was a Methodist who was not known for invoking or referring to anything spiritual, had been married three times, and is not without controversy as he was, for a time, a known "terrorist," leading violent movements against an apartheid state. While Mother Teresa was Catholic, she was quite clearly and almost entirely a religious icon. Gandhi was indeed a political figure, but he was Hindu. Then of course, there is Martin Luther King—Christian, disciple of nonviolence, forgiveness, and prayer. As an icon

Table 3 Arguments against Aquino and resolutions

Con-Cory					
Political vs. business leader		Not unique enough		Troubled presidency	
−	+	−	+	−	+
How can a political leader shed light on business management?	Model employer = standards of good government by political reformers	Many have achieved similar and far more (e.g., Gandhi, Mandela, Mother Teresa)	First Catholic political leader	Inexperienced and lack of skill in management	Ethics trumps strategy and skill. People hung on to her character and persona.
	Spirituality is useful in organizational politics		Bridged the gap between church and state; married the sacred and secular	Criticized and ridiculed throughout her presidency	"Cory Magic": People looked to her in times of crises.
	She inspired multitudes for freedom.		Strong in her faith but subtle in her proclamations and practice		But she remained relevant across generations and geographic boundaries.
			A combination of virtues cemented her as a larger-than-life and iconic heroine.	Made poor decisions	Transition government that brought back democracy

of leadership steeped in spirituality and virtue, Aquino is perhaps most similar to Gandhi—where political and spiritual life were clearly in unity; and unlike King, both Aquino and Gandhi's charisma seemed unexpected—silent, humble, simple, and unassuming, without any flair for the dramatics. Aquino went on to offer her life to fighting for democracy. She was widowed at a very early age but chose to remain single and was never linked with anyone. But what made her uniquely different was the combination of her supernatural outlook and God-centeredness with the way she led and lived her everyday life, without the often zealous and almost cult-like tone organized religion is practiced and received. Aquino was strong in her faith but subtle in her proclamations and practice—a unique quality for both spiritual and religious leaders and political and business leadership that have been dominated by more charismatic principles and practice. Moreover, Cory was able to integrate the spiritual into the secular without creating a dichotomy between her faith and practice.

Through this paper, Aquino's uniqueness is made even more significant because this Catholic spirituality is given a universal and practical appeal by relating it to virtues that any spirituality will understand. Moreover, as these virtues—benevolence, respect,

integrity, trust, justice, receptivity, and responsibility—have been clearly identified in a specific leadership case, they illustrate something tangible and somehow measurable for a pragmatic business industry. It was the combination of all these virtues and not merely the 1986 bloodless People Power Revolution that cemented Aquino as a larger-than-life and iconic heroine; and it was her spirituality that helped her acquire and maintain such virtues. Thus, Cory Aquino, through the virtues she exhibited, is a case in point to illustrate how virtue can stand as a benchmark for spirituality in business. Her rise to power, leadership, and life as a private citizen remained spiritual, laden with virtues. Thus, her iconic and larger-than-life stature can lend credence to the reliability of virtue as a benchmark for spirituality, even in business. At the same time, her case can better strengthen the argument for the significance of spirituality as her virtues emanated from this and her effect on people has been tremendous.

That her presidency was troubled and she committed many mistakes, problematic to Philippine progress and development When the euphoria of the 1986 People Power Revolution began to dissipate and the reality of what needed to be done in order to get the country out of the ruins emerged, Aquino's inexperience and lack of skill in management and governance began to show. She was criticized and ridiculed almost all throughout her presidency, and certainly, she did not always quite make the best decisions. But implicit leadership theory argues that individuals believe certain outcomes follow from leadership behavior (Campbell et al. 1993). Whether Aquino did not always quite make the best decisions needs to be more carefully examined due to the very fact that, as Campbell et al. (1993) explained, individuals believe certain outcomes follow from leadership behavior—that if something succeeds or fails, it is because of the leader. Whether or not Aquino truly lacked the skills for management and governance becomes almost insignificant because ultimately, people believe certain outcomes follow from leadership. This is perhaps why, in spite of Aquino's inexperience and all the problems that besieged her presidency, people hung on to her character and persona as manifest in her most endearing virtues. It seems ethics can trump strategy and skill, and Aquino is proof. Her greatest weapon was her supernatural outlook and faith in God. As a consequence, many were inspired to celebrate Christian ideals such as contemplation and prayer and working for the good of others. Like a true Christian, she courageously set out to finish her mission, and she patiently faced and endured the challenges that came along. Ironically, her rise to such a larger-than-life symbol is based on her simplicity and "ordinariness." Philip Juico expressed what other people learned from Cory as lodestar in leadership and ordinary life, achieving a lot without even trying; and this is evidenced by the multitudes that attended her funeral. So while she indeed committed many mistakes and was constantly troubled during her term, Aquino remained an important voice people looked to in times of crises, and so effective was she that her effect was dubbed Cory Magic. Authentic leaders are hard to come by, and the tremendous effect she had both in time and space, as she has remained relevant across generations and geographic boundaries, is too phenomenal to ignore. Those who have such an effect are indeed quite rare, and a spiritual Christian doing the impossible within a secular framework and background is even more difficult to come by. Like a good strategic leader who provides the infrastructure that enables learning to flow throughout the organization, Aquino's presidency served as a transition government that paved the way for other leaders in a democracy to thrive and flourish.

Leaders who have had such gargantuan and long-lasting effects are difficult to come by. In modern times, religious leaders, meaning those who just happen to be religious (versus those working to gain apostleship to a religious cause) and are successfully able to affect multitudes both in the business and political realm, are just almost nonexistent. Martin Luther King is one; Cory Aquino is the other. In fact, Cory Aquino could well be the first truly Catholic Christian leader who lived the faith and married it with her political life—a person in the middle of the world who was able to live her spirituality in consonance with and as a guiding principle to her role as leader—and that she succeeded in inspiring people to make God relevant to what is normally regarded as separate from religion is an added bonus. The cause of this inspiration cannot be neglected as history has shown how great and even pragmatic things can come off something as seemingly insignificant and impractical as a religious ideal.

Application for business leaders and managers

The issue of considering the utilitarian benefits of spirituality while preserving its essence is right at the heart of management spirituality's success. Case studies can fill this void and bridge the gap. Thus, looking more closely at Aquino's life and character, the authors have three specific points for both managers and business leaders to ponder, adopt, and implement.

The utility of authenticity

Authenticity is key to management spirituality's utility and success. In fact, it can often reveal the essence of data. A case in point is a study conducted by Indartono and Wulandari (2014), which revealed that workplace spirituality had a greater effect on commitment with males rather than females. But upon closer inspection of the findings, one discovers that female employees only perceived workplace spirituality less when applied at work, while males more likely demonstrated higher commitment precisely because it was applied at work.

At the same time, it is that which maintains spirituality's essence which piqued business's interest in the first place. It is key in order that management spirituality is not transformed into something utilitarian. Aquino illustrates the significance and power of authenticity. While both experts and ordinary people constantly criticized her, these were relegated to the sidelines, because her authenticity was such an endearing and significant quality that people were just willing to forgive and forget. Even brand managers can learn from the Aquino phenomenon. Aquino is empirical proof of the staying power and effect of authenticity not just in management spirituality but in any leadership style, but especially so in the area of spirituality as it is a discipline that is viewed with much suspicion, given its very personal and oft subjective nature.

Recognizing the real bottom line

The business of business is the human person (Sandelands 2008). With the Aquino phenomenon, managers are given a real example of recognizing people as the true bottom line. Besides focusing on accomplishing tasks through people, managers need

to build healthy relationships—a task that has generally been perceived to be of greater interest to women. Liu (2013) identified this as the reason why some women are more likely to be false people versus climbing career ladders, achievement, and power that come with high-level management positions. This poses as a kind of glass ceiling to the advancement of women in the workplace. But Liu proposed that it was more beneficial and important that feminine strengths shine in the very effort to break and eliminate this glass ceiling. Aquino's character and success is also very much rooted in her woman-hood, particularly with her interest in people as opposed to power. Lastly, Aquino can give leaders both pause and comfort as she is proof of the possibility of maintaining and sustaining that leadership role and stature even after one's immediate and obvious tasks are done. This can also help enhance the very little that scholarship has produced on the integral component of leadership of self. Crossan and Mazutis (2008) opined that leadership of self requires the development of personal strengths such as self-awareness and self-regulation—something Aquino demonstrated well during and after her term as she consistently remained firm in her beliefs and values while maintaining that hallmark humility, in consulting others as well as admitting mistakes. Langvardt (2012) recognized the significance of leaders becoming students in order to learn from others—something Aquino demonstrated all throughout her presidency well unto her time as private citizen. Pearce and Manz (2014) opined that leadership development and education has focused on higher-level individual leaders influencing lower-level followers, which is consistent with the idea of the charismatic and heroic visionary leader, where power has been centralized. They identified the problem of the leadership disease—the "simplistic, formulaic portrayal, encourage-ment, and development of a centralized, hierarchical model of leadership" (p. 215); and to eliminate this disease, organizations should designate everyone as a leader of themselves through shared leadership. But people who tend to be attracted to leadership roles are precisely those who desire power in order to lord it over others. This makes the Aquino phenomenon particularly unique, interesting, and useful, because she was precisely reluctant in accepting the role and continued to have and live the hallmark humility even unto the end. Management spirituality exercised in and through virtue, as Aquino did, will not only afford whole person development for the subjects of managers and leaders, but for the very leaders that create the conditions under which whole person development can thrive, and they would have also gained a real loving following just as she has.

Directions for future study

As the authors stressed earlier, application and implementation can reveal the detail theories and concepts fail to illustrate; thus, more case studies are needed to further the concept of virtue's utility in management practice. At the same time, given the power empirical studies have on management and business, it would be beneficial to encour-age studies that can measure the utility of virtue on management practice. An example is empirical studies on the prevalence and strength of virtue in business—specifically, what virtues are most often utilized or practiced and which ones have been most effective or have received enough positive response. While some might say that empirical studies might precisely encourage the field to once again lose sight of why

virtue and more qualitative studies were sought, it should also be noted that tackling the former does not necessarily mean that the more logical empiricist slant has to prevail.

Of course, one cannot discount the fact that Aquino's presidency was troubled and plagued by conflict and criticism as she did not always make the best decision; and yet her popularity and iconic stature illustrate just how the less skillful can be considered and actually become a great leader. It would be interesting and helpful to explore the possible relationship between Aquino's lack of skill and moving power to inspire. How much do skills matter versus more qualitative and difficult to measure facets of character in the move to get people to pay attention, listen, and follow? One could consider that Aquino might not actually have been less skillful, but the skills she did have might not have been obvious or perceptible to traditional management and leadership thinkers. For instance, it takes great skill to learn how to endure. Aquino had a lot of training in this area given her experiences with her husband's incarceration, the fight to bring down the 20-year dictatorship, and the multiple coups that plagued her presidency. Managers might look at this as something they are familiar and concerned with—stress tolerance. It would be interesting to look further into the relationship between skill and virtue. For instance, listening, something Aquino was quite adept with, is both a skill and virtue, and so are confidence and integrity—once again, qualities that a "less skillful" leader, such as Aquino, had. Where do skills end and virtues begin and vice versa? At what points do they meet? This is research that goes right at the heart of that line between skill and virtue and the measurable versus difficult to measure.

Conclusion

This paper made the case for virtue as the benchmark for managerial ethics and spirituality. It did so by looking into the unique life and leadership of Asia's first woman president, who also happened to be a devout Catholic Christian. The study was able to illustrate a connection between a leader's success and the values and virtues from the leader's spirituality. By relating Aquino's exemplary life with her spirituality through virtue, the authors were able to preserve the humanistic essence of spirituality, as well as satisfy the more utilitarian needs of business-seeking alternative and more unique ways of doing things.

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