

**TOPIC: THE CHURCH AND DEMOCRACY: A CASE STUDY OF REV.
FR. MOSES ADASU OF BENUE STATE NIGERIA**

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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

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REQUIREMENT PAGE

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

- (1) Emmanuel, Ephraim, Francis and Ambrose with their wives and children.**
- (2) Eunice, Virginia, and Monica with their husbands and children**

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I acknowledge a special divine assistance towards the completion of this work.. At a point it appears as if it is impossible to continue, but He who makes way where there is no way has seen me through

I am grateful to my Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. F.E Okobo Who ignited and put fire for academic studies in me by sending me to higher institution for my further studies.

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I earnestly own up errors and mistakes possibly to be found in this work as mistakes of the head and not of the heart.

PREFACE

The thesis is holistically set to investigate the roles of the church in the democratic governance in Nigeria with particular reference to the efforts and activities of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu in democratic realization in Benue State.

The work is divided into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the work by stating the background of the study, the problem the entire thesis is out to solve, the aim, scope and the methodology of the work.

Chapter two is the literature review on the subject matter of our discourse. Here we shall examine the church; its meaning and involvement in the furtherance of democracy in the nation's politics. We shall also probe into the meaning of democracy and the level of its application in the Nigerian political system. In this chapter, the practice and experience of politics will be put vis-à-vis with their results in Nigeria. The views of the authors, regarding the church's roles in Nigerian politics and democracy will be sought for.

Chapter three centers on Fr. Adasu and his contributions in the realization of democracy in Benue State of Nigeria. This will include the story of the humble beginnings of Fr. Adasu, his political ambitions, his political antecedents, political career, Lessons from Fr. Adasu's political intervention, his achievements and weaknesses. We shall establish whether Fr. Adasu's political contributions were seen as a break through in the church's understanding of her mission in search for democracy or not.

Chapter four treats the critical assessment of democracy and governance in Nigeria: the view of the Catholic Church. The Catholic notion of Democracy, the influence of Catholic

Bishops' Conference of Nigeria through Justice, Development and Peace Commission. Lastly the dividends of democracy will be ex-rayed .

Chapter five focuses on the local context of the study, the local evaluation of the activities of Fr. Adasu, field work investigations such as the questionnaires and its report, Oral Interview among the priests and the laity of Benue State: Catholics and non Catholics. Participant Observation, and finally the journey of Democracy in Benue State since 1960.

In chapter six we shall evaluate the work, make recommendations and draw our conclusions from the for-going arguments.

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ABSTRACT

On 2nd January 1992, there emerged a Catholic Priest in the person of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu as the Executive Governor of Benue State, Nigeria. This was the very first time such history was recorded in the life of Nigeria and her political democratic advancements. People were dismayed when the Catholic Church excommunicated the Reverend gentleman. It is the curiosity that surrounded the events that sharpened the researcher's interest to go into findings, because the Church as a major stakeholder in the spiritual, social, cultural, religious and even in the political life goals of man, would naturally uphold genuine efforts of a member to bring about the realization of democracy in more practical terms. Through the use of library, questionnaire, oral interview and participatory observation, we collected facts which we presented in this work. We have in the course of the study discovered the ugly experience the Church had with the Emperors during the nascent stage of the Church. From the study also it was clear that pagan emperors painted the concept and practice of politics black. Fr. Adasu, however, showed that the time was ripe for Catholics to understand that politics can be put to good use by introducing the light of Christ into it. Hitherto the Church had maintained, that priests ought to treat everybody with the greatest kindness, they should unite their efforts with those of the lay faithful and conduct themselves among the laity after the example of their master, who came amongst men not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many. Considering the fact that the church is not a perfect society, the canon law upon which the administration of the church revolves can be shortsighted according to the prevailing situations of a given time, we therefore recommended that, since political science deals with the study of the polity, its constitution, management and leadership, and since the Church encourages science, the Church should take part in partisan politics to purify it from all possible stains. Furthermore, Change is the only thing that is permanent and as such, the canonical and ecclesiastical laws affecting the involvement of clerics with the partisan politics should be reviewed to be more inclusive. Through this the Church will both select and monitor the activities of her personnel, just as it is easier for a Bishop to control his priest who is a governor or president than to control a Muslim president.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Church in Nigeria is older than the political independence of Nigeria. While the Nigeria's political independence dates only to 1960, the existence of the Church in Nigeria dates far back to 1472 and 1885 in Eastern Nigeria. Before these events, the people of Nigeria had existed with their own cultures and norms, and also had practiced politics peculiar to their own. With Nigeria as a nation in 1960, it had been a struggle to choose the best form of Government system to suit the Nigerian polity. Hitherto, in present day Nigeria, the different forms of political systems had been in practice. Since 1960 that democracy was introduced, it has been the general belief that it will protect the Nigerian citizens from "the despotic use of political power, whether it be by a monarch, the aristocracy or other groups" (Omeje 1995:11) It is intended that by democracy as state political system there will be equality in the distribution of the national resources, and equal representation in the centre.

However, in practice, democracy in Nigeria has left so much to be desired. Critics have said that democracy in Nigeria has lost its vitality and stability. The failure of democracy in Nigeria to bring about "lessening the unequal distribution of power," empowerment of subordinate classes through the vote, representation, dismantling of obnoxious social and economic barriers, increased participation in the collective political and economic concerns of society, has been a thing of major concern for any serious stakeholder in Nigeria. The church is a major stakeholder in the spiritual, social, cultural, religious and even political life goals of man just as the state is committed and dedicated to the social and political life of man. The fathers of the Second Vatican Council

succinctly specified the common roles of the state and the church to the well being of man when they wrote:

It is man himself that must be saved. It is mankind that must be reviewed. It is man therefore who is the key to this discussion, man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.(G\ S N053)

To salvage the democratic image in a nation's political system, the church has a commitment and must be involved. The background to this study is an investigative approach to assess the extent of involvement of the church in the realization of the democratic goals in Nigeria. Also the particular roles of Rev.Fr. Adasu, and the area of disagreement between the church and Fr. Adasu in their common pursuit will be examined. In the words of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu,

(Politics and Religion) are interwoven. They are integrated. Once you leave religion out there and go into politics, it can never work. That is why Nigeria is bad. That is why we are where we are....They cheat because they have no fear of God. Bring the light of Christ, the fear of God to bear on politics that you are doing, be guided by the light of Christ, then you can do a good politics.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The role of the church in the realization of democracy in Nigeria has been very pivotal, especially in recent times. The relationship between the church and the Government (State) has been a very long one, dating from the early years of the church's existence. Without any fear of contradiction one can

say that Nigeria is religious even when viewed traditionally. Before the advent of Islam and Christianity, there was an already existing traditional monotheistic structure of religion in practice. The plurality of the ethnic groups notwithstanding, there was a common belief in one Supreme Being, with belief in subsidiary deities and spirits as messengers of the Supreme Being. The Islamic and Christian religions succeeded in making in-roads to Nigerian belief systems because they pursued the course of the same monotheism. The Christian as well as Islamic religions introduced a kind of transition, a change in religious method of worship for many Nigerians and not the object of belief itself. The Church preaches belief in one God, the dignity of human person and the invaluable gift of the church and state to man in his endeavour to achieve heaven after enjoying the goods of the earth. The Islamic religion in the same vein believes that man has to enjoy the goods of the earth as a fore taste of the peace that Ala will give to those who are faithful. The traditional Religion on its own part enjoins her followers to approach the Supreme Being through the tributary gods out of respect not that the religion is oblivious of the God-head of the Supreme Being.

The pre-colonial Nigeria was both political and religious. Their political institutions were well organized, as each ethnic group had a way of administering themselves, as well as organizing their religious worship. The Yoruba Benin/Bornu kingdoms practiced Monarchical system of government. The Fulani/Hausa Empires adopted Feudal system (that appeared monarchical in structure). The Igbo – Nigeria followed a quasi form of democracy but non-centralized system of government. It was democracy in the sense that major decisions were reached at by majority vote. The Tiv, the Nupe kingdoms practiced kingship system of government.

The colonial administrators not only recognized these systems but respected them, and used them effectively through indirect rule systems of government. With the amalgamation of the

Northern and Southern protectorates, however, the various ethnic groups with their religious and political systems were integrated into one political unit. There was an initial crisis as to which one of the systems had to be adopted because each system that was adopted was foreign to the other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, when no other forms of political systems were envisaged to satisfy the political, social as well as economic needs of the young country, Democracy as a system of government was introduced to ensure equal representation at the centre. Since the introduction of democracy, it had been a struggle to catch up with the watch- words of democracy, that is, genuine participation in the political process by the majority of the citizens. The intermittent military interventions in the Nigerian political systems were as a result of the failure of democracy at one time or the other. The military experiences made the matter worse, since it introduced dictatorship in place of democracy. According to Ebo, (2005:64) to talk of military democracy or dictatorial democracy is a contradiction in terms.

Rev. Fr Moses Adasu of Benue State Nigeria threw his weight into the political system in Nigeria with a view to sanitize democracy. In his efforts to do that, many misunderstood him and many plauded him. In this thesis we want to study the roles of Rev. Fr. M. Adasu in the realization of practical democracy in Benue State of Nigeria. Why his efforts were not recognized by the church as part of her contributions to the development of democracy in Nigeria, is a puzzle that will be addressed by this study.

1.2 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

It is the aim of this thesis to expose the roles of the Catholic Church in the democratic governance in Nigeria. We shall delve into specific roles of the church through her different organs in promoting or marring democracy in Nigeria. Of particular interest to the researcher are the roles

of Rev.Fr. Moses Adasu of Benue State of Nigeria in the realization of democracy in the State. Also of particular interest to the researcher is why his contributions are not seen as the contributions of the church. Hence, a critical delineation will be made of Rev. Fr. Adasu's ideas of democracy and the church's ideas of democracy. These will help to enforce the true practice of democracy in Nigeria.

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to explain systematically and coherently the roles of the church, not only in playing the custodianship of democracy, but also in enforcing its realization in the nation's political program.

The study is therefore an effort to investigate the authentic contributions of Rev. Fr. Adasu in the realization of democracy for his people. The point of disagreement between the church and Adsu that occasioned the church's denial of his contributions to democracy. The efforts of this research are geared towards identifying his positive achievements and eaknesses as legacies left in the annals of history. Hence this study is significant and will remain topical as long as the church and government share a common boundary of providing for the spiritual and material needs of man.

1.4 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study covers the story of Nigerian politics from 1960-1992, and her efforts to practice democracy in the midst of divergent ethnic groups and interests with their local political leanings and their religious influences and differences. The study will examine the political involvement of the Catholic Church especially in Benue State of Nigeria and the particular contributions of Rev.Fr. Adasu. It will be a broader work to delve into the treatment of the involvement of all churches in the politics of Nigeria. So whenever the church is mentioned in this work without qualification I mean

the Catholic Church in relation to realization of democracy in Nigeria. There will be a general lay out of the church's approach to politics vis- aviz the political developments of Fr. Adasu

1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Our method will be the use of library, where books will be consulted to see other authors' views about Nigerian politics, the church and democracy. There will be an application of field work research method which includes: oral interviews and questionnaires to be distributed across Benue State of Nigeria. This will enable the researcher come to grips with the peoples' views concerning the role of the reverend gentleman in the course of leading his people to the dividends of democracy.

1.6 EXPLICATION OF TERMS

1.6.1 THE CHURCH

According to Bouyer "Church" derives from the Anglo-Saxon word "Kirche" a root word common to all Germanic languages from the Greek word "Kyriake ekklesia" meaning "the lord's assembly".

The ekklesia was the regularly convoked assembly of the people found in the Septuagint as a translation of the Hebrew word "Qahal" which referred to the Assembly of God's people. On the basis of this fundamental concept of the people of God, we can date the origin of the use of the term "church" to the Old Testament as the prototype of the church of the New Testament. In the words of Bouyer (1965:64), "it is evident from the first words of the Old Testament that the people of God were constituted in its convocation by the divine word. Once this divine word had brought the Quahal together it made its voice heard by the people and set up a covenant between them and God." According to him, this Church (Quahal,Ekklesia) is revealed for the first time on mount Sinai

with Moses when the law was proclaimed.(Ex.20) The remnant from this group whom the suffering servant of God referred to in second book of Isaiah that will become that definitive people of God of the New Testament, coming not only from the Diaspora of Israel, but also from the elect gathered out of all nations. (Is 49:4-6) It is in the light of this that the church comes into existence as the people of God of the New Testament and an everlasting covenant. For St. Augustine, the church consists of the faithful (elect) dispersed throughout the world. An assembly in which through the activity of the Holy Spirit, the historical Jesus in his messianic role is re-enacted and becomes present in view of the eschatological future of the church. Schmaus (1975:30) gave a working definition of the church as: “the people of God of the New Testament established by Jesus Christ, hierarchically instituted, serving to promote the reign of God and the salvation of man, and this people exist as the mystical body of Christ.”

The basic Catholic Dictionary edited by O'Donnel, (1996:21) rendered the definition of the church as, “that visible religious society founded by Jesus Christ, under one head (St. Peter and successors) whose purpose is to preserve and proclaim his teaching and to make present his sacrifice and sacraments for the salvation of all until the end of the time” . It is the re-living of the sacrifice and the sacraments that motivated the Second Vatican Council to describe the church as consisting of the hierarchy and the laity working together in complementary nature. The laity often is charged with political powers and functions while the church moderates her subjects who are in politics through the administration of the church hierarchy. The church chooses to do this for some canonical and ecclesiastical reasons.

1.6.2 DEMOCRACY

Etymologically the term “Democracy” is derived from the two Greek words “demos” which means people, and “Kratos” meaning to rule. History ascribed it to Aristotle who coined and used the term to mean, “rule or government of the people”. Like every dynamic concept, democracy, apart from being difficult to define, it does not enjoy one generally accepted definition. Abraham Lincoln, later, may be following the coinage of Aristotle defined democracy as a “government of the people by the people and for the people” (Ebo, 2005:64) This definition enjoyed a long period of acceptance . According to International Encyclopedia of Sociology the most commonly used definition of democracy is that by Joseph Schumpeter (1995: 330) who said that:

Democratic method is that international arrangement
for arriving at political decisions in which individuals
acquire the power to decide by means of comparative
struggle for people’s vote

This definition was however criticized for its narrowness as it talks only about methods and mechanism of electing leaders at election. A fairly more broad definition of democracy is that given by Larry Diamond et al (19995:330) published in international journal of Sociology. For them, Democracy is,

a system of Government that meets three essential
conditions: meaningful and extensive competition
among individuals and organized groups(especially
political parties) for all effective position of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the
use of force; a highly inclusive level of political

participation in the election of leaders and policies,
at least through regular and fair elections,
such that no major (adult),social group is excluded;
and a level of civil and political liberties- freedom to
form organizations- sufficient to ensure the
integrity of political competition and participation.

Democracy is one of the most elastic political concepts at least since world war 11. Therefore suffice it to work with these few definitions which in turn fall into two broad schools of thought: the natural law school and democratic liberalism. The former is that from which the inalienable rights of every citizen is derived. According to them,

Democracy is based on God –given law, which decrees
a universal citizenship for all, and universal code of right
and justice. By implication, all that is within the age of
reasoning are free and should participate in the government
of their land.

The protagonists of this school of thought among others are: Cicero (106-43B.C), John Lock (1634-1704),J.J.Rousseau (1712-1778) and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

The second school of thought is the democratic liberalism which is of recent appearance in 18th and 19th centuries. Their argument is on the principle of utility, on the advantages of enlarging democratic and superior results that only democratic forms could bring about. Following this school of thought, man must be free and equal, not because it had been pre-ordained (natural law) but

because only freedom and equality could lead to the kind of government... man considered ideal by all” (Ebo 2005:63-64)

All other definitions anchor on one of these two basic schools of thought for now.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The State from the point of view of secular ordering of the human society is a far older concept than the Church. The Church on the other hand is older than political independence in Nigeria. The state is an association of persons formed with a view of some good purpose, that is to say, for the societal good of man. But theologians have proved that the life of man on earth is lived with a vision for an end, which the state as an institution cannot provide for him. Religion therefore was invented by man to provide for the unknown. Christianity on the other hand was founded by

Christ to provide a surer way of attaining eternal life that is the spiritual goal of man. The church started in history. It developed and grew in an already established society called the state. In this write up therefore we shall trace the church state relation, discussing the Catholic notion of the relationship, the joint roles of both the church and the state to lead man to his teleological end. Education will be examined as a common tool for the church and the state. Democracy in Nigeria will also be looked into in this section to situate the eventual entrance of a Catholic clergyman into partisan politics.

2.1 THE CHURCH AND STATE: ANY RELATIONSHIP?

In this chapter we shall attempt through the review of previous literature on this subject matter to establish a common origin of the Church and the State, the proprietor of democracy, and the relationship between the duo, because following the wise diction of Oaks, a discussion on the relationship between the church and the state should be preceded by a realization of its existence, hence, this attempt at a historical survey of the relationship. According to Wash (1966:263) "...the church was born out of history, she lives and is formed in history, and will attain her final destiny only through history. She can only know herself in history just as Christ and Holy Spirit are only known to us in history." The relationship between the church and the state has a long history. The relation is not and must not always be the same. It is historically changing, because the world as a society of free beings is under the law of change. More so, the church in her official ministry and above all in her members is subject to faults and even succumbs to sin. This in turn can distort and falsely determine the relationship between the two realities through one over-stepping the domain of right and duties of the other. Or, through neglect and misinterpretation of the function which each in its own way can, and should perform for the other.

In the early years of the church, the question of this relationship did not arise because it was not only that the church was new and strange, but it was also hated by the civil authorities. This view was confirmed as Lanslot (1926:2) who asserted that: “for the first three years, there were no temporal rulers to whom the destinies of the church could have been entrusted; the Roman emperors were enemies of the Christian religion.”

However, as the years rolled by, the church attained certain degree of freedom when under Emperor Constantine she found favour with the king. During this period a healthy relationship between the rulers of the church and rulers of the state were established and nourished from the palace of the king. The church through this understanding was brought within the emperor’s direct domain. This time, even though the emperor was not worshiped as a god as was the practice of the pagan religion, the emperor remained the supreme ruler of both the civil and religious affairs. Numerous laws were enacted to regulate the internal activities of the ecclesiastical order, including the lives and the duties of the clerics. Also temporal domain regulated the acquisition and distribution of the church property. The influence of the emperor was felt in nearly all the sectors of human development, and there were free flow of interactions between the two. The State not only lorded power over the church but dominated her. To survive, the church stomached it.

Furthermore, with the passage of time, there were changes both in the church and the civil authorities. The church produced rulers more powerful than the leaders of the state and she started severing the relationship, asserting her independence with the claim that since the authority of the church derives from God as well as the authority of the state, then the state must of necessity be independent in its own temporal, social and political domain, pursuing natural end which is the defense and promotion of its citizens’ temporal orderliness. While the church on the other hand is

independent in performing its supernatural tasks of teaching faith and morals, administration of sacraments and all that concerned the internal structures and administration of the church. With this new development and understanding at this stage, the church and the state became distinct in their roles for man, and today we can talk of the relationship of two separate entities. “Membership of one does not necessarily mean the membership of the other. The chief of the state is a member of the church not because he is chief but because he has been baptized (Lanslot, 1983: 3). For instance, in 390 A.D the bishop of Milan; St. Ambrose excommunicated Emperor Theodosius for massacring the people of Thessalonica and re-admitted him to communion only after he had publicly repented of his sins. Furthermore this distinction of powers is made clearer in 494 A.D when Pope Gelasius wrote emperor Anastasius asserting that:

This world is chiefly ruled by two, the sacred authority
of the priesthood and the royal power.... Thus while Bishops
must obey the emperor in the sphere of public order, the
emperor ought to obey the Bishops in matters concerning
the reception and right administration of the heavenly sacraments.
(Leo XIII, 1936: 429)

This had been the notion and the attitude of the society towards the relationship between the church and the state over the years.

2.2 CATHOLIC NOTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The Catholic view of the state/church relationship is based on her understanding: that all is planned and has a divine purpose. That all authority comes from God and nothing happens by chance. For her, the state is perfectly natural in its origin. God planned the state when He planned mankind. The state is modeled on the family structure, the father and mother being the rulers, the other members of the family being the citizens. In this manner, all authorities both of the church and of the state derive from God. “St. Ambrose accepted the state and civil government as ordained by God, and that Christians had a duty in conscience to obey the law: at the same time the rulers were subject to the church in spiritual and moral matters” (Rodger, C.1998:63) The classical notion of the church was stated by Pope Gelasius when he wrote, “Christ had separated the offices of king and priest, knowing the weakness of human nature and wanting to secure the well-being of the people. Hence there are two powers in the world, that of the church and the state; the first is concerned with attainment of eternal life, the second with temporal things.” (Rodger: 83) One can understand the plight of the church leaders at the early years of the church, that having been miraculously delivered from the claws of the cruel civil authorities she had to defend her frontiers with all available logic.

The interest of the church in democracy arises from the common boundary the church shares with the state. Whereas the state is the place democracy takes place, the church by way of suggestions and sermons provides the morality for the play of politics. This is rightly articulated by Skutch cited by Ngwoke, (2001:36)

For the present, it is enough to recognize three activities, or three attitudes, appropriate to our dealings with the three grades of being: art, for the exploitation of things that we deem inferior to our selves: morality, for regulating our relations with things on the same plane as ourselves, and religion to place us in the proper relationship with whatever we regard as higher than ourselves. Only when we achieve such a relationship do things most precious to us seem secure.

At the moral level the church injects the spirit of justice and fair play among the citizens playing politics. From the above citation politics belongs to the second category; the sphere of morality, and the church on the third level. It is therefore the onus of the church to direct her members who are fighting the course of democracy. It is true church and state are operating at different levels but both of them are in the service of man for material and spiritual actualizations.

2.3 THE CHURCH AND THE STATE IN THE SERVICE OF MAN.

The fathers of the Second Vatican council articulated the services of both the Church and the State in the public and social affairs of man and taught that, “It is man who must be saved. It is mankind that must be renewed. It is man therefore who is the key to this discussion, man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.”(G/S N0 53) Therefore, it is fully in consonance with:

human nature that there should be politico- juridical structures providing all citizens without distinction with ever improving and effective opportunities to play active part in the establishment of the juridical foundations of the political community, in determining the aims and the terms of reference of public leaders.(G/S N0.75)

Flowing from this thought, politics is natural to man and does not belong to the mundane world as erroneously held by the early Christians whose influence has not yet cleared in the church today regarding clerical participation in politics. Fr. Adasu shares the view of the Synod Fathers, that politics and religion are interwoven, and they are expected to give man ultimate services. In an interview with the National Concord Magazine, he further elucidated that,

They (Politics and Religion) are interwoven. They are integrated. Once you leave religion out there and go into politics, it can never work. That is why Nigeria is bad. That is why we are where we are.... They cheat because they have no fear of God. Bring the light of Christ, the fear of God to bear on politics that you are doing, be guided by the light of Christ, then you can do a good politics.(Adasu,M.1992 :Vol 6 N051)

In other words, the state in her political activities no less than the Church owe man an ordered society which is a stepping stone to heavenly glory. It is the efforts of the Church to work for the harmonization of her services and that of the in rendering to man this service in the fear of God. The difficulty of politics in Nigeria lies on the fact that there are various religious sects in the country, all striving to be at the headship of leadership. The Christians no less than the Muslims are called to the full participation in the affairs of the world. Hitherto some Christians shy away from politics thinking that it is too mundane to bring about salvation. This attitude is peculiar to the Catholic Church that was badly influenced by the Emperors' roles in the early life of the Church. The pagan emperors at the infancy stage of the Church used political powers to victimize the early Christians. No wonder the Christians from the beginning associated politics with paganism and mundane things of the world, and as such believed that political activities lead to damnation. This influence affected the clerical order to the point that it was enshrined in the revised 1983 Code of canon law. Canon

287 is clear about this: that any cleric involved in partisan politics was out – lawed (Anathema sit). To make sure that the clerics were forbidden from active participation in politics, it was enshrined in the Codes of Canon Law governing the lives and conducts of the clerics. Over the years the laws had become internalized that they act not only on the conscience but also on the psyche of the members.

Fr. Adasu like the early Catholic Scientists such as Galileo, Isaac Newton, Teilhard de Chardin and a host of others who made scientific discoveries and were excommunicated by the church was a victim of such rejection by the church. Fr. Adasu identified the error in thinking that everything politics was paganish, mundane and satanic, thus he wanted to correct it and faced what the early scientists faced. He took the bull by the horns. Consequently Adasu suffered in the hands of the church what pioneers of any movement suffer. Galileo made a scientific discovery that the world is spherical against the earlier proposition that the world is round and was excommunicated. Today the church not only accepts the reality but teaches it to her children. Pope John Paul II, nevertheless, on behalf of the whole Church apologized for the sins of the Church against those scientists when the church realized that it was her who was in error, and not the scientists. Perhaps the gallantry of Fr. Adasu will sooner or later come to the lime light: hence the relevance of this research. Pescke (1978:295) gives credence to the stand of Adasu and holds strongly that Catholics should not shy away and abandon politics for anybody under any guile whatever. According to him, “The Christian is called to fulfill his temporal duties responsibly and to cooperate in the progress of the world, as much as he is called to adore God and to worship Him.” This understanding motivated Fr. Adasu to change this position of the Church concerning the roles of clerics in politics.

The more we understand the nature of this service the more we must realize too that neither the Church nor the State can achieve satisfactorily this dual nature of man's destiny alone. The work of the church must be complemented by the work of the State. It is man who belongs to the Church that still works for the Church. Like Pope John XXIII who convened the Second Vatican Council to open the Church windows for fresh air to reduce too many bottle necks in Church's laws and practices, Adasu saw a need for the reversal of certain Church laws concerning politics. Some scholars hold the view that in as much as he (Adasu) may be criticized either for his approach or method, the Church authorities of today should revisit the positive changes in Adasu's political program. Today there are many clerics, all involved in the move to sanitize the society working either in the civil offices or strictly in Church establishments. Since both those who work in the Church no less than those working in civil offices need heaven, what the Church may successfully do is to monitor the activities of the clerics championing leadership roles in the society. It is my strong belief that the result will be more rapid than monitoring a Muslim or a Pagan President or governor. This will be a lesson to most politicians who carelessly tell priests that 'your work is to pray and preach'. But we know that both politicians and the clerics need heaven.

When differences in ideology and circumstantial influences on individual leader brings about tension in directing social, economic, political and religious needs of man, then the Church comes in with the light of Christ, as Groppi, (1968:71) rightly opines that:

The Church must re-fine and renew this suffering humanity,
for the needs of one's neighbour....If the church is to be relevant to the
needs of the suffering people, the cancer of racism (tribalism, religious

fanaticism, selfishness manifested in embezzlement in high and low places

etc) which quarantines brother from brother must be wiped out.”

As the church does this, the care of the human soul cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because its power consists only in the outward nature of man. But ordered society disposes man’s mind for the spontaneous and inward persuasion which is the domain of the true and saving religion, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. To illustrate this fact better let me use the education industry as an example of the church/state service to man.

2.4 EDUCATION: A COMMON TOOL IN THE HANDS OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT

J.S. Farrant (1964:369) believes that education pre-dates classical teacher student-learning method in school. According to him “education is not something different from life and society but is in fact the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of a community.” It is education that is the cooking pot where the services of the Church and State are harmonized to produce a man and woman balanced in social as well as moral conducts. Farrant (369) further holds that,

it is important ...to realize that formal education, as provided in schools, is the least permanent of the forces which influence boys and girls. Its effects are often quickly and permanently swallowed up by the other conflicting social pressures of the community.

In the past he continues, “the community accepted and supported traditional forms of education as provided by parents in the home and priests in religious ceremonies or initiation rites.... Today, unfortunately, there is often a rift between schools and the community, because what the school offers has often (been) very little in common with the standards and needs of the community. It is this that makes the young school leaver who cannot find a job such a problem to himself, his family and community. The whole position is further confused by the modern trends of urbanization and industrialization which bring together groups of people with differing ways of life, standards of conduct, interests and beliefs.” The problem is even more today than what Farrant could perceive some forty six years ago. The parents who are the supposed teachers at home have nothing to offer as many of them bribed their ways throughout their study periods instead of active participation in the school curriculum. Hence there is need for the services of our clerics in all sectors of human endeavour, politics and otherwise.

Still another fact to reckon with is the incident of schools taken over by the government. The history of mediocrity in the standard of education in Nigeria took its origin from the government taking over the schools from the church. Consequently there was a drop of religion and moral studies in the school curriculum. Then the Church parted ways with State and concentrated efforts in building another sets of schools. These equally encouraged private establishments of schools that today, both standard and sub-standard ones are everywhere. A cursory look at mission schools headed by clerics/religious gives a tip of an iceberg what the society will look like when clerics are given the freedom to occupy leadership positions in the society. Education is the rock upon which the church rests her tools of transformation and conversion exercises. On the other hand good schools are the strength of any society that wants to survive. All educational institutions that meet

up with federal standards promote religious freedom, balanced approach to life and civilization. Hence the services of the Church and State to man would be to improve education which is the starting point of civilization as a common tool in their services to man. The state runs the democracy in the society and the church monitors and guides the state to avoid falling into error. For the monitoring exercise to stand the test of time, it has to be integral. This agrees with two important ancient propositions, which bring to focus the nature of the services the church and state owe to humanity.

The politics we talk about here is such spoken by Aristotle and supported by St. Thomas Aquinas when they said that, 'man is a political animal'. James Groppi underscored this understanding in his view that people come together in politics to talk over problems affecting their society and protest against it. According to him: "When we protest, (in such cases) we are preaching justice, when we sing in the church, when we discuss issues existent in society, we are praying because we are making religion relevant." According to this understanding, Groppi sees a unity of purpose between the church and state in what they stand for man. Therefore there is need for pulling together resources by both the church and state towards the well being of man. There may be the need for autonomy in function but each should render to man the services, which the other cannot give. This is captured by Milkat (1975:227) when he wrote that: "the State's business is to defend and promote the natural good of its citizens on earth, whereas the church is called upon to continue the redemptive work of her founder on earth and lead men by word and sacraments to their salvation" A look at democracy in Nigeria will guide us in a right direction towards assessing and understanding the revolutionary roles of Fr. Adasu in the realization of democracy in Benue State of Nigeria.

2.5 DEMOCRACY AND NIGERIAN NATION

2.5.1 Democracy.

Democracy as a political concept is quite older than Nigeria as a nation. In this section, we shall describe democracy and what it pursues to achieve among the people who practice it. Under this spectrum we shall examine democracy in relation to Nigeria as a nation in her effort to adopt and practice democracy.

Historically, experts postulated that democracy as a political concept was used by Aristotle during the ancient civilization of his time. Still others traced the objective positive practice of democracy to the old city of Athens in Greece. According to Omeje (1995:11) the origin of democracy dates back to ancient Greece. The Athenian democracy, which flourished between 450 B.C and 322 B.C –a period of 128 years, reveals both the positive and ugly institutional aspects of democracy. Democracy is still relevant today primarily because it bestows to man the dignity of personhood. It respects the essentials of the dignity of human person. For the Athenians, democracy was built on the real planning of citizenship. The citizens or people (demos) were in equal subjects of political authority engaged directly in legislative and judicial functions. The reality of the close relationship existing between democracy and the objective realization of the dignity of human person propel some theologians to hold that, “the oldest forms of systematic democratic thought are those based upon the existence of a law of nature, from which the inalienable rights of every citizen are rooted. (Ebo, 2005: 64) Following their thoughts, democracy is understood as God-given law which confers a universal citizenship to all, and a universal code of rights and justice. This means that all human persons are not only free but should participate in the government of his/her state. This rightly explains the interest of the church in the government of our time and her insistence on the

realization of true democracy because its origin is from God. While the government projects the temporal needs of man, the church guides the government in her approach to democracy so that man can transcend from temporal to supernatural order.

In Nigeria like other nations of the world, democracy is in the lips of all and sundry. In the words of Omeje, (1995:11) “as a political concept, democracy is appreciated and applauded by nearly every one. It is a notion that has an immense propaganda value, frequently exploited for bestowing legitimacy to different political systems and regimes even by those who seem to oppose it in practice”. Before delving into the discussion on how democracy is practiced in Nigeria, a look at Nigeria as a nation will give us insight.

2.5.2 THE NIGERIAN NATION

Conceptually Nigeria was born in the year 1914 when Fredrick Lord Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates. Nigeria became a democratic nation with corporate and legal existence in 1960 when she gained her independence. The amalgamation, which gave rise to one “Nigeria”, was the brainchild of the British government. British Government operated parliamentary system of government where democracy was in full operation. The question which yearns for an answer is why should the British crown rule Nigeria for 46 years with direct and indirect rule systems of government where democracy had no place or form? For this reason colonization had been variously criticized by experts. Some alleged that British government came to Nigeria with selfish motives; targeted the wealth of Nigeria and came for it with a united front. In practice, the British government had for long left Nigeria, but the pangs of selfishness that formed the bed rock of their administration and leadership style has refused to go with them. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the Nigerian leaders who emerged to take over the mantle of leadership

from the colonial masters had the British blood running through their veins, and they were more colonial than the colonial masters. Little wonder then, democracy has not worked out successfully in Nigeria. Other critiques hold the view that Nigeria, as a nation is not homogenous both in culture, politics and religion. These are the factors that militate against the successful running of democracy in the nation. Still others believe that Nigeria was not prepared enough to be independent as at the time she was granted independence. The researcher however is of the opinion that Nigeria's independence was over delayed, as such the British government soaked Nigerian in their ticklish and selfish attitudes. With the selfishness at the background of the Nigerian administrative setting, each of the tribes or sects that produced a leader had tried to lord it over others. Duniya (1993:42) shares this understanding when he interpreted the leadership in the hands of the Northern tribe thus:

it was the projection of this policy of the 'North for the Northerners' and 'Northerners' for the centre' that translated into what was and still is called the Hausa-Fulani Hegemony. This policy of the North for the Northerners, and the Northerners for the center was likely a fulfillment of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa's prophecy, in which he pointed out that 'if the British quitted Nigeria now, at this stage, the Northern people would continue their uninterrupted conquest to the sea

This mentality had variously bred political imbalance manifested under religious riots in Nigeria. Nothing has vitiated the good intentions of democracy as such attitudes and, hence it has failed to produce dividends in Nigeria.

After independence in 1960, there was a formal liberation from all allegiance to British crown. But in principle the filaments of the British government were still being felt after several years of Nigerian independence. In 1963, Nigerian government wanted to operate democracy which they did not learn anywhere, except as they read it on paper. There was a big jump from direct and indirect rule system to democratic system of government. In the former the administrator dishes out the wishes and the intentions of the queen, while the later invites the citizens for participation in the government of their land while at the same time dishing orders as if he is a king/queen. Of course, the result was abysmal failure and emergence of political problems owing to the fact that the formation of government functionaries did not satisfy the tribal interests. Hence the first attempt on democratic practice in Nigeria failed. The military came with the force of the barrels of the gun and plunged the nation into dictatorship. The military leadership was a sour recipe for anybody to bear. In January 15th 1966 the nation degenerated into 'coup d'etat' that claimed the lives of numerous illustrious sons and daughters of Nigeria together with the clamping down of the country's economy. May 1967 witnessed the division of Nigeria into twelve states. The division of Nigeria into twelve states was meant for a greater participation of Nigerians in their governance, but the snag was the military rule which can never be democratic. This crisis arose from agitations occasioned by the feeling of marginalization. The then East central state of Nigeria seceded on this accusation of being marginalized, and July 6th 1967 saw Nigeria into a mess of a civil war. For some people the civil war was a confirmation of the argument, that Nigeria is but a conglomeration of tribes of people that lacked homogeneity'. For others, the civil war ensued because people expected the dividends of

democracy, which the military could not give. For the researcher, the war was a clear index that what our premier leaders learnt from the British government was mainly greed, and it affected the system from generation to generation down the years. Yet the quest for democracy in Nigeria has loomed high till date. This quest however, has not been without challenges occasioned by political, cultural and religious upheavals, that show-case the operation of selfishness and greed in the system.. According to Duniya, (39) “Religious riots have become a recurring decimal in the nation leading some important Nigerians to raise their voices against this ugly trend. It had created a chasm in the unity of the nation in general,” and a positive dream for a healthy democracy hard to be realized. The seriousness of this matter was articulated by Anugwom and Orji (2004:144) when they opined that:

throughout the recorded history in West African and indeed black Africa in general, Nigeria seems to rank top among the list of nation states that have witnessed the most perturbing and unprecedented upsurge of ethnic and religious disturbances in the contemporary times....It has remained a constant threat to peace (and democracy) in Nigeria”.

Assessing Nigeria’s failure in her march towards Democracy from the post independence political and religious accounts, one can deduce that Nigeria’s political problems which have often exploded in religious riots have a full dose of selfishness, arising from tribal cum cultural coloration. The question still stares us on the face, whether Nigeria can achieve democracy in life or not? Let us examine democracy in practice in Nigerian nation.

2.6 DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE IN NIGERIAN NATION

Democracy as it is practiced in Nigeria is the major focus of this section. In Nigeria, unfortunately politicians play ‘majoritarian’ democracy and not democracy in the true sense of the word. The majority in Nigeria is born not out of conviction, but by coercion. That is to say that the electorate may be forced to accept an opinion of the majority by the force of gun, power, and gift of materials or money. The majority wins and takes it all, the majority wins the vote, the majority is always right (Ebo, S: 65).

In present day Nigeria, democracy is in the hands of the powerful, who give democracy a twisted shape, denying the populace the dividends which democracy should offer the citizens. Ebo describes it as “the right of all individuals to participate meaningfully in the production and distribution of resources, and in the formulation and execution of state policy”. (65) Democracy entails, regular, free and fair elections of representatives with universal and equal suffrage, the responsibility of state apparatus to the elected parliament (possibly completed by direct election of the head of the executive), the freedom of expression and political association as well as the protection of human rights (individuals, groups etc) against arbitrary state action, and fourthly: a deliberate reconstruction of prevailing structures of social and economic inequality, (Omeje;13) Democracy is the government of “onye kwue uche ya”, a government that makes it possible for one to say his / her mind. The fundamental meaning of democracy is government by consent devoid of all forms of coercion, where the government has popular support, its policies and actions meet popular acceptance or reflect the nation’s feelings and sentiments. A good democracy is generally characterized by the following qualities, universal adult suffrage, representation in a legislative body of a fair proportion of the electorate, decision through referenda by majority vote of the electorate in the determination of major

questions of policy, equality before the law, equality of opportunity, freedoms of speech, of press, assembly, freedom in the exercise of religion, free and fair elections. (Ebo : 67).

Given the positive characteristics of democracy, nearly all the independent nation states have opted for democracy at the end of 1991. America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Russia went democratic. Two years later there were more than one hundred and ten states (out of a total number of 180 sovereign independent states) committed to certain basic democratic principles, such as open multi – party, secret ballot elections with universal franchise. These independent nation states have taken to democracy because of the dividends that accrue from it. Most worrisome to the researcher is the flow of events. For instance, the Countries colonized by France are quickly developing like France. The governance of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire to mention but these speak for itself, it holds also for those countries colonized by America, they are all doing well like America. Countries colonized by the British government such as Ghana, Zimbabwe, Gambia, Kenya and others in West Africa, and Canada, Australia, Jamaica, India to mention but a few wide spread across other continents of the world are doing well. But Nigeria is not. Why? The difference clearly comes to mind that by dint of personal efforts of their leaders, they are doing well. The inability of Nigerian leaders to play true democracy is responsible for the difference

The current day Nigerian democratic process witnesses a democratic model that is being convulsed by a series of perceived tensions. The whole electoral processes ever practiced in Nigeria since independence had faced entirely different political principles away from what true democracy offers. This has generated increased thorny problems. It appears there is a total boycott of all the positive values of democracy, and few individuals in power resolutely have high – jacked electoral power for life, by the use of force. Ngwoke buttressed this view:

In the past two years and four months, Enugu State has been subjected to the most brazen, systematic form of discrimination ever witnessed in its history.... Quite early in the life of this administration, the Governor signaled his utter insensitivity and political arrogance in the appointment of the key officers of his administration. For the office of the Secretary, he chose his very uncle, Barr. Onyemuche Nnamani, an absolutely inexperienced young man, not just from his zone but also from his very family. The State Chief Judge, Hon. Justice J.C.Ugwu, head of the Judiciary, is from Nkanu- the governor's clan.... The first head of the Legislature, Hon. Enebe, comes from Awgu. (The present Speaker, Hon. Abel Chukwu and the present Secretary to Government, Barr. Ike Ekweremadu are both from Aninri). The import is that people from old Enugu zone are heading all three arms of government.”

It means that Nsukka, one of the Senatorial zones, both in the old and new was completely marginalized for the simple reason that an Nsukka man contested for gubernatorial seat. The same government constructed Oji River Road and stopped at the boundary between Achi and Orji River because Achi people did not vote for the governor reasonably in his own judgment. This experience is common with Nigerian politicians. One is forced to ask whether Nigeria is one of the democratic nations of the world. In the next section, we shall discuss the church's various influences in the realization and practice of democracy in Nigeria.

2.7 THE NIGERIAN CHURCH AND DEMOCRACY

The church and democracy especially in Nigeria is the focus of this section. What can the Church offer in a troubled and confused nation like Nigeria that has clothed democracy with a

borrowed garment that makes it impossible for recognition? “The word church” (ecclesia) from our earlier exposition means: “a calling forth”. But generally writers later used the term to signify a meeting or assembly of believers.” (Omegoha 2008: 9)

In common scriptural applications, “the word ‘church’ is constantly used to signify the Christian society, those who are called by faith to the light of truth and the knowledge of God that having forsaken the darkness of ignorance (selfishness) and error, they may worship the living and true God....” (Catechism of the council of Trent, 1982: 77) In St. Augustine’s description, the church consists of the faithful dispersed throughout the world. It is the assembly through the action of the Holy Spirit; the historical Jesus Christ in his Passover of salvation becomes real in view of the eschatological future of the world. For Michael Schmaus (1975:48) the church is for the promotion of man and satisfaction of his needs in the world. According to him, the church is “The people of God of the new testament established by Jesus Christ, hierarchically constituted, serving to promote man, and this people exist as the mystical body of Christ. The church so described is a concrete and tangible reality, a perfect society in its own sphere whose meaning St Paul says, can only be revealed to the eyes of faith, and thus derives intelligibility from its end, which is the entry of all men into the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:19) The church properly situates democracy, though a political concept, as originating from God. Because democracy takes its origin from God and bestows upon man lots of freedom, the church as the people of God sees it as her own duty and obligation to foster democracy to the grass root. The missionary mandate of Christ, the founder of the church clearly emphasized this freedom. “He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind: to set free the oppressed (Lk 4:18) According to Omegoha, (9) “when St Paul used the term church, he was referring to a group of people who believed in Jesus Christ and who met for worship and practical Christian ministry. The actual word he used simply means an assembly of people who are called by God. Because the church is out to carry on the missionary mandate of Christ, and fulfilling his prophecy, she takes it upon herself

to do the same sort of things such as freeing people from bondage and slavery thus bestowing dignity to man, the church is endlessly concerned with the way man govern himself to achieve earthly and heavenly rewards. When the church is enforcing democracy she is fulfilling her destiny, her duty. This understanding forms the nexus between the church and the democracy. At the dawn of time, Fr. Moses Oshio Adasu chosen by the mandate of his people came to marry what the church teaches about democracy and governance in practical terms. Next chapter discusses the emergence of Fr. Adasu to realize democracy in Benue State of Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 FR. MOSES ADASU IN THE REALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BENUE STATE – NIGERIA.

3.1.1 BENUE STATE IN PURSUIT OF DEMOCRACY BEFORE THE EMERGENCE OF FR. ADASU.

Benue State in particular, like any other State in Nigeria had the problem of leadership. Chinua Achebe (1983) appreciated this reality when in his book, “The Trouble with Nigeria,” he argued, “that these problems are still with us up till today is an indication that the generations of leadership in both colonial and post – independent Nigeria have not performed well.” (Akperashi 2000:1) Benue State, perhaps, because of its minority background had suffered a purposeful and dynamic neglect in the appointment of their own members in the government of their people. A little historical excursus will x-ray Benue State in her pursuit of democracy.

3.1.2 BENUE FROM PROVINCE TO STATE

The political problems of Benue State obviously dated back to their history from the time they were a province to the times when their status had been raised to State. According to Akperashi: “This glaring pursuit for autonomy was however, not easy to come by chiefly because of the lack of personalities at the helm of affairs to clamour and pressurize in their favours”.(Akperashi) Not minding their deficiencies, they never folded their hands in their minority.

They had continued to cry out that the people from their area did not feel adequately represented in the house of chiefs where most crucial decisions affecting their welfare were taken.

During the political era in post independence Nigeria, considering what they had suffered as a minority group, they joined with other minority groups and regions to form various associations for expedient canvassing, pursuit and attainment of their ambitions. The historical documentations of Akperashi recorded that, “Under the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBS) a political party led by the late sage, Senator J.S. Tarka, the Tiv and other minority groups in the North had long clamoured for a middle belt State.” These ambitions were crippled by the opposition of the Northern Peoples’ Congress (N.P.C.) who felt there was no need whatsoever for performing such obligation for the minorities of the Northern region. According to Akperashi, “...such calculated lukewarm attitudes coupled with other inhumanities perpetuated against the people with no remorse, sparked off the famous Tiv riots in the early sixties....” Consequently, such frequent riots in Tivland were said to have spread along the western region that fueled the crisis in Nigeria till it culminated into the January 15th coup of 1966 which also resulted to the death of the Northern Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello; the Sarduna of Sokoto.

For the people of Benue, the first republic years were years of alienation. In the words of Akperashi, “in as much as they formed part of the Northern Region, their land was deliberately and conspicuously neglected whenever it came to the distribution of infrastructures and appointments into key offices in the government.” The most annoying thing is the open confrontation to remind them that they were of the minority stock and as such should not expect to enjoy the privileges their counterparts in the majority ethnic groups were getting. Not only that they were minority, but they were also not blessed with vocal leaders to speak in their favour. The constant struggle for

recognition and integration into ‘the comity of tribes saw Benue People through two experimental but distinct historical stages of the political development of Nigeria. The first, which was... when the Benue People were merged with the then Northern region with its headquarters at Kaduna. Next came the military creation of states, and Benue Plateau was born under which the Benue People belonged’. The people of Benue felt a little relief. Nevertheless their ambition of self governance had not materialized.

At the creation of the 12 states, out of the four existing regions by rtd General Gowon, Benue Plateau was among. But in spite of that, the continuous neglect and oppression of the people of the area remained a striking point to ponder upon. The Plateau people dominated the Benue people in the appointments into government offices; hence development in that part of the state was of a snail speed to the disgust of every meaningful person in the state. However, lack of personalities forced them to accept their dislike. With the exit of General Gowon, Brigadier Murtala Mohamed finally granted the long fought for, and the heart desire of the Benue People. On third February 1976, the birth of Benue State came, to the satisfaction of all. Now a new political history of democracy began.

3.1 .3 THE DEMOCRATIC STATE OF BENUE

The creation of Benue State was described by Akperashi (23) as follows: “While many went agog in the realization of their dreams, it was lamentable that at the inception, the Benue People inherited nothing apart from their garnered efforts and determination to build and to succeed with their own destiny....” “Nevertheless, the first civilian administration in Benue State (1979- 1983) under the leadership of the late Mr. Aper Aku worked hard to create additional local governments in

the state and raised the structures in the state to an admirable extent” but the military intervention did not allow that for so long.

After the first four year term of the civilian administration came again the military government in Nigerian political history. Once again Benue State was the worst hit as the military governors were changed rampantly that the State never knew further development until another civilian government.

At the dawn of the second republic, the Benue people like anybody starved of good governance for several years were eager to have an indigenous son to run the race. Incidentally the formation of political parties coincided with the eruption of the religious riots in the country. The Muslims fueled heinous destruction of the Christians and their places of worship. It was also rumored that Nigeria had been detailed for inclusion into Organization of Islamic Countries (O.I.C.). These crises united the Christians in the country into one forceful front. In Akperashi’s description, “In truth, never in the history of this nation had the name of (CAN) (Christian Association of Nigeria) been a household name in the nation vis a viz Benue State than at that particular period.” It is spectacular that a catholic clergyman indicated interest to run the race. Paul Unongo: a political stalwart in the area quickly read the hand writing on the wall of the on going religious affiliations. He rightly envisaged that the presence of a clergyman will achieve success for at the polls.

“Unongo at this material time, unknown to the rest of his contemporaries and rivals in the state was yet on another move of experimenting a political strategy which had immediate and remote advantages. His principal interest however was the total success at the

polls in the whole state, the idea of dangling an “ornament”- {a clergyman}.

For Unongo a Catholic clergyman was a strategy for the party given his training and popularity in the area. Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu will be the best option they had. Hereafter Fr. Moses Adasu was chosen to run the race under the plat form of Social Democratic Party.

3.2 THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF FR.M.ADASU

Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu was born on June 12th 1945 at Tse Adasu in the rural community of Mbaamena in present Konshisha Local Government Area. Born into the family of late Mr. Peter Tie and Monica Amar Adasu, he spent his early years in the family under the strict disciplinary attention of his parents. Moses Adasu had earlier call to follow Christ as a minister. After his primary educational career in St Pius Primary School Mbaamena, he joined St. James Junior Seminary Keffi in 1962, after all oppositions from the family, and kits and kin. He had his Major Seminary formation in St. Augustine’s Seminary Jos, an affiliate of Propaganda Fidei University Rome from 1967 to 1972. He was ordained a catholic priest on Dec. 19th 1971. Further search for more academic laurel took him to St. John’s University Jamaica, New York in the United States of America where he obtained the Masters of Art Degree. Fr. Adasu again enrolled and bagged another Master of Religious Education (MRE) in Catholic University of America, Washington D.C. from 1974 to 1978. Since his ordination as a catholic priest, he has torched the lives of many, working both in the church and civil society, both over seas and in the country. Back home, he served as the Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi from 1983 to 1990. He also worked as a parish priest simultaneously. Beside his church assignments, Fr. Adasu worked as a career teacher and educationist. His teaching career had taken him to such schools as:

1. Teachers Training College Jos in 1972.
2. St. Francis Secondary School, Adikpo in 1973.
3. St. .Andrew's Secondary School Adikpo in 1976.
4. Advanced Teachers College Akwanga 1978 to 1983.
5. College of Education Katsina Ala where he rose to the high academic rank of senior principal lecturer.
6. He was Head of Religious Studies 1985 to 1989
7. Dean of School of Arts 1985 to 1989.
8. Member, Academic Board 1985 to 1989

Fr. Adasu was author of many books, such as: The role of Indegnization of Missionary Cathechezes" (sic), "Understanding African Traditional Religion" and Mobilizing for Political Awareness published in 1990. From all these life encounters, Fr Adasu is depicted to have permeated the Church and State services. One will not wonder what informed his aspiration to join politics to lead his people to a true democracy. He researched deeply in political matters and wrote a piece on Politics and mobilization both of people and of political awareness. His studies in religion made him next to none in integrating religion and politics to achieve the all desired democracy. In the next section, we shall examine the political career of the Reverend gentleman and see his impacts on the political lives of his people.

3.3 FR. M. ADASU AND HIS POLITICAL AMBITION

The political ambition of Fr. Moses will be examined under the following headings viz: His Political Antecedents and his Political career.

3.3.1 Fr. Moses Adasu's Political Antecedents

Fr. Moses, like the Biblical Moses of old who, through long apprenticeship in Jethro's house was prepared for the art of Shepherding flock of God. Adasu in the same vein was prepared through long life career to become the new Moses of Benue State of Nigeria. Fr. Moses believed

that politics and religion can be integrated and put to right use provided that one goes into politics with the spirit of Christ. He once during a press interview affirmed that the moment one leaves religion out and joins politics that the person will never do well. On the other hand, it is a deeply religious person with the fear of God who can achieve the height of democratic principles as he did, because as Ngwoke (2001:37) opined that “politics belongs to the second category of relationships, namely our relationship with beings which are our equals and which make demands of consideration from us which we cannot ignore. That is the field of morality- the arena of human action, the sphere of right and wrong. This is where religion and politics meet.” Adasu also believed that the church and her ministers are experts in matters of faith and morals and as such must also be expert in issues of politics insofar as politics belong to the field of morality. He had championed active participation of the staff union in all the places he had worked in Secondary and tertiary institutions. Nobody was therefore surprised at the news of his declaration of interest to join active partisan politics.

Further more, the long history of the political, social and economic marginalization of his people in Benue State brought him in close association with other philanthropists of his area. Such people like Paul Unongo of his tribe, late Aper Aku; the first civilian governor of Benue State, King Abu Shuluwa; the (S.D.P) activist in Benue State, Madam Esther Acka, late Engineer Joseph Igbetar whom Adasu defeated at the primaries and a host of others to plan for the political emancipation of their people. From here he resolutely removed the fears of the ecclesiastical laws that hitherto beclouded his mind. He reasoned that it was better for him to be sacrificed to bring about the political freedom for his people.

As a priest he had been in leadership positions. In the Diocese he was the Vicar General; the second in command in the presbyterium of Makurdi Diocese. As a teacher he rose to the enviable

positions of Head of Department, Head of Religious Studies, member Academic Board of a University and above all Dean of School of Arts. His successes in all these gave him confidence that he was born to rule. A reliable source that pleaded for anonymity disclosed that Adasu had an eye for the Bishopric and as he failed to be appointed the Bishop of his Diocese, he then fulfilled his ambition to become number one person in the Church of Makurdi, by vying and becoming the Governor; the number one person of his State.

All these notwithstanding, Adasu was still criticized as a non-professional in politics. According to Akperashi, (163) “so many are also of the view that the extent to which Adasu keeps malice has quarantined him from being a professional politician”. Nevertheless, “when the ban on partisan politics was lifted and political activities began, Adasu diligently sought and got Unongo’s encouragement and support.” Paul Unongo was a Benue State indigenous seasoned and professional politician. His wizardry in political forecasting and postulations won him the name political father in Tivland. Akperashi recorded that, “Paul Unongo did not have to meditate any further before subscribing to the idea of picking Adasu. In fact Unongo tremendously supported Adasu to run for nomination which he knew Adasu was going to win” The political expertise of Unongo aided him in weighing the political atmosphere and the sentiments on the ground nation wide. More or less, his support for Adasu was not for his love for him as it was for the Party. Unongo calculated from the formation of the two political parties by the then president Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida: the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). While the former had a Muslim affiliation, the later had a Christian background; he drafted Adasu to his own party (SDP) because Benue was predominantly Christian with the added advantage of a clergyman.

It was also possible that for the fear of the Church and her laws, Adasu might have been involved with secret political meetings with his political friends and top members of the S.D.P. in the State that made his nomination possible. Nonetheless his nomination did not come on a plate of gold. Describing the nomination exercise Akperashi stated:

“When there was to be a run –off election between Igbetar and Adasu where the first nomination contest proved indecisive...Madam Social was the first to contact Shuluwa in his private residence in Makurdi and solicited for Shulwa’s support on behalf of Adasu.”

For Unongo, his principal interest was the total success of (S.D.P.) at the polls in the whole State.... Of course a vote for a clergyman would definitely mean a vote for the whole Party’s success. Against this backdrop, it was clear that Unongo and other Party stalwarts used Adasu as a strategy to brandish their success over their political opponents in the poll. Adasu himself learnt the game very quickly. He seized the good opportunity as it presented itself and made a career out of it.

3.3.2 Fr. Moses Adasu’s Political Career.

Fr. Adasu was encouraged and won nomination to contest for governorship election on the platform of Social Democratic Party, (S.D.P.) and “recorded an emphatic electoral victory on Dec. 14th 1991” (Akperashi, 2000:154) One can rightly guess that his choice as governor of Benue State goes to portray his quality of person over and above his being an ordained minister of God. Nevertheless, being the first Catholic priest to blaze the trail of a partisan politician made it all the more unique. He was sworn in as the 10th Governor of Benue State on 2nd January 1992. Akperashi described the uniqueness of his swearing in ceremony thus:

Essentially, Nigeria and indeed Nigerians celebrated such for the very first time. Other significant aspects of the event were that it marked the most important step forward in the third republic. Furthermore, out of the numerous successive governors, it was the third time an indigenous governor was taking over the reins of government of Benue State.”

(Akperashi,154)

It was like he came when he was needed most to lead his people to the Promised Land. His career services, both in the civil society and in the church had for a long time opened his eyes to the longings of his people for good leadership. On his part, he was aware of the onerous task that awaited him, and the overwhelming expectations of the people, he said:

all eyes, all ears and attention nationwide are strained on Benue State. This is because of the unique event of national historical significance that is unfolding in the State – the leadership with a clerical background. This singular event has generated excitement, nervousness and fears as well as confidence. Above all, it has generated overwhelming expectations” (Akperashi,154)

In spite of the massive votes he attracted, the mammoth crowd that witnessed the swearing in ceremony, which bore witness to the confidence his people had on him, he still knew it was not going to be easy, because of peoples’ expectations of him as a priest and governor. This made him from the beginning to develop an administrative policy that guided him till the end of his service in Benue State of Nigeria. ‘In line with transforming Benue State positively Governor Adasu identified and adopted some collated transformative administrative policies which were the watch words of his government. For this Adasu will ever be remembered for his administrative impact in Benue State.

These impacts can be examined to showcase his success or failure in the eyes of his curious spectators.

3.4 Fr. Moses Adasu's Achievements

With high hope he entered into politics. As the Biblical Moses he wanted to lead his people to the Promised Land. Fr. Adasu was not oblivious of the fact that Nigerian polity is full of corruption. He knew that Nigerians just like the Jewish nation are stiff-necked people in matters of politics, and needs a man of God specially gifted in self-control and intelligence like Moses of the Scripture to blaze the trail. In the words of a political critic, "in line with transforming Benue positively, Governor Adasu identified and adopted some collated transformative policies which were the watch words of his administration. On assumption of office Father Adasu's administrative policies geared towards consolidating the gains of the past, stimulating new growth and strengthening the state's capacity to face the future" (Akperashi: 15)

In his maiden speech as the governor of Benue he had envisaged that a flourishing co-operation and the unflinching support of the entire people of Benue State was the only secret for successful governance. Hence he insisted that the destiny of the State irrespective of people's firm determination to transform it from its unfortunate posture lies in their hands, so they could either mar or make it. In his words, he asserted that, "if the people have not been involved, I intend to involve the people of Benue State in all the pursuits of our government policies. As I have always emphasized, mine is a people oriented government." (Akperashi: 155) People oriented government is democracy in action. So, it is to his credit that he wanted to exemplify what the church teaches about democracy. He had nearly succeeded in projecting Benue State as a home of democracy if not for the untimely interruption of his tenure by the Military rule. At least his initial good will to move

Benue State forward before impostors and sycophants started playing their own roles for their own gain started, was positive and a credit for him. Nevertheless, in spite of the shortness of his tenure, and the activities of his detractors he achieved the following heights in Benue State.

3.4.1 INDUSTRIALIZATION.

Soon after he had taken over the State administration of Benue State, he focused his attention to the hitherto backwardness of the State in the area of Industry. According to him, “the challenge for a rapid industrialization of the State is a challenge that this administration wishes to tackle with a every seriousness and purposefulness.” Far-reaching decisions were taken to resurrect dormant industries, establish new ones and facilitate a favourable atmosphere for the participation of private sector in the industrialization of the state. Just within two weeks of coming into office, Father Adasu constituted a high-powered committee of experts to reappraise the operations of government industries and companies. The report of the committee formed an integral part of his blue print of a new approach in the management of state’s investments. According to Akperashi: (156)

A notable point of view in this direction was Taraku Mills Ltd. Owing to the lopsided nature of the technical agreement of this and other existing companies and the need to avoid a re-occurrence henceforth, a department of Corporate Affair was created in the ministry of Justice. It was the desire of Adasu administration to see to it that the interest of the state was protected. This also will ensure that only viable industries were allowed in the state. Consequently, the management of all existing state enterprises were challenged to run such a profit oriented ventures.

It was clear that Fr. Adasu saw the state as a baby in his hands. In Nigeria it is a common thing that governors loathe the state for personal enrichment. At the end a governor will be richer than the state, and the money saved deposited with oversea banks, consequently the economy of the

nation will continue to go down and down. It is a credit to Adasu administration that his government witnessed the reappraisal of agreements with technical management partners, replacements, injection of running capital, overhaul of raw materials procurement and utilization procedures, auditing of the accounts and personnel of the companies. It was also clear that his administration did not entertain kickbacks and that was why he was bold to audit accounts and personnels. It was a sign of straight forwardness and sense of duty.

Father Adasu recognized also the value of education in the development of the people; hence he invested heavily in education.

3.4 .2 EDUCATION

Typical of Catholics, he realized the truth in Francis Bacon's saying that Knowledge is power. Being an educationist, he knew the role of education in human development.

When Adasu took over the mantle of leadership in the State... primary school teachers in several local governments were on strike due to one grievance or the other that was not attended to. Governor Adasu personally intervened and brought those aggrieved teachers back to classrooms. (Akperashi: 157)

Other areas in educational sector that received Adasu's attention were the development of 6-3-3-4 systems, which was in previous administration moribund. He set up a special task force in the office of the commissioner for education that implemented the development of Science and Technology at all levels. About 260 schools in the State were equipped with workshop and laboratory equipments. An eloquent testimony of his special attention to schools became evident when students from the State won top prizes at the zonal and international quiz and JETS

competitions. The physical conditions of schools were improved to aid teaching and learning processes.

At the tertiary level, attention was given to resuscitation, reconstruction and building of schools of education and State University with the Federal Government's blessings. During his regime, colleges of education in Oju and Katsina Ala came back to life. In one of his maiden speeches he enjoined everybody to make sacrifices to make Benue State next to none in the country with particular reference to education. According to him, "let us lay a solid foundation for a better Benue State University which your ancestors will be proud of. We in Benue State look forward to Benue State University to provide that seat of learning unknown in the history of our great country" (Akperashi, 158) No doubt, education sector stands to bring justification to his achievements in Benue State of Nigeria. Governor Adasu was concerned that with the growth of education in Benue State both integrally and individually the state will be raised to a high standard and produce enough manpower to safeguard the state for the future. Not only that he was building schools but was also involved with promotion of individual capacity for learning by providing scholarships for the students. Out of ₦ 65.75 Million Naira budgeted for education in 1992 fiscal year; #10 Million was for scholarship. Adasu administration empowered the state by training personnel that carried the baton after him. Even children and adults in Benue State cannot forget his roles in education.

What he learnt from the occupation of his father he brought to bear in Benue State in the field of agriculture.

3.4.3 AGRICULTURE

In the area of agriculture, he toed the good steps of his ancestors, and manifested the great interest he developed under his strict father. Benue State had earlier on been identified as," the food

basket of the nation”. Adasu took time to discover that the problem hampering the adequate production of farm produce lied in the poor supply of imputes, lack of finance to boost mechanized farming, as a result he encouraged ‘small farming loan schemes.’ This helped peasant farmers to expand their production.

Furthermore the State Government realized the effective distribution of fertilizers and decentralized the sales and distribution of fertilizers, and took responsibility for its transportation to the rural areas as a deliberate policy to protect the farmers from the exploitation of middlemen. The Agricultural sector was injected with new spirit and new life in Adasu’s administration of Benue State. Foods of various types were being exported to other states of the country.

The Adasu administration was prompt in the provision of equipments that enhanced agriculture in the state. He provided 28 tractors and implements for Benue State Hiring Agency (BENTHA). The administration made fund available to quick off in the state the National Agricultural Development Authority (NALA) to the tune of ₦2 Million. These in small measure enhanced mechanized farming in the state. The result was obvious that the quantity of food exported increased tremendously during his regime. He constructed a 1,800 kilometers of rural roads to open up the food production areas and thereby enhanced the distribution of inputs, evacuation and sales of produce and easier access to agricultural machinery for mechanized farming. Availability of food promoted good health in addition to the provision of basic health conditions.

3.4.4 HEALTH

‘A healthy nation,’ is a wealthy nation. Adasu improved the wealth of Benue State by providing stable good health facilities to enable the citizens enjoy their wealth. He proclaimed health for all by the year 2000 in Benue State. He dramatized his concern for good health of the people by his

declaration to turn the government house into a general hospital as soon as he ascended the throne of administration as the executive governor of Benue State. The people were really happy with him as he constructed one, though in a different site at Apir. He renovated quarters for the staff of the hospital and staffed the hospital adequately. The 35 Million Naira allocation to health in 1992 budget was the highest allocation in percentage terms since the creation of the State. Not only that the allocation was made, but also it was given and through strict monitoring team, the money was truly spent on hospital equipments for improved medi-care.

Fr. Adasu had seen the backwardness of the people and what the citizens were experiencing in health sector: increase in mortality rate of both the pregnant mothers and children. His fulfillment of his campaign manifesto proved him a man of his words, hence a seasoned administrator. His ability to turn the government house into a temporary hospital showed that he considered the comfort of the people first before his own. This is a mark of a true and selfless leader. It was an example that had never been shown before him. What a purposeful administration.

He also demonstrated a vision for true leadership in other areas of development in Benue State within the short period that his regime lasted, such as in the following areas:

- i Works and Transport
- ii Information
- iii Culture and Tourism
- iv Sports

For want of space we shall not dwell on these in detail, but people are happy to testify that nearly all aspects of human endeavour received his administrative attention, and new life put into them during his short tenure. It was really a lively administration.

According to the scriptural parlance ‘be you perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.’ (Mt 5) This indicates that no one is perfect, as such; Adasu’s administration typical of human administration had some defects. Fr. Adasu was not perfect in spite of all his efforts to move the State forward. He was criticized at certain levels. Hence, it is appropriate to highlight the areas the onlookers were not very pleased with in his administration. Let us turn to his weak points.

3.5 FR ADASU’S WEAKNESSES IN ADMINISTRATION

When Adasu emerged a winner, he never allowed the strategists to distract and use him for their own selfish interests. He disagreed with many of his party cohorts that paraded themselves as kingmakers of the state in general and S.D.P. in particular. For this reason he was widely criticized. The critics of Fr. Adasu identified his administrative weaknesses globally in the following areas of human relations. It was recorded of Fr.

Adasu, that he exhibited some questionable administrative policies, which remained the defective elements of his administration. His weaknesses were identified in the following areas:

- i Pride
- ii Anger
- iii Insensitivity
- iv Over Bloated Self Esteem
- v Materialism
- vi Disobedience
- vii Unforgiving Spirit
- viii Mismanagement of public Fund

The above weak points are grievous considerations against any public servant not to talk of a trained Catholic priest; because to whom much is given much is expected. He might have achieved so much within his tenure, but these traits made him not only undesirable but also a misfit in what civil service. It became a scar in his political career. Among his colleagues in the priesthood, owing to these obvious criticisms Fr. Adasu was not a positive reference point. Let us critically examine these points enumerated above and see whether they hold water.

3.5.1 Pride

Pride is a vice that is associated with the fall of Lucifer, where as a result of pride he refused to serve God. ‘Pride’ they say goes before a fall. Pride gives one a false self-esteem and falsely places the individual first before all others, which in practice vitiates the model of the Catholic priesthood. As a catholic priest, he should be an epitome of simplicity and humility, which Christ preached when he proclaimed that his kingdom is not of this world. On the contrary, Fr. Adasu, from the way people projected his pride seemed to have shown that his kingdom is of this world. Because of pride, his contemporaries viewed Fr. Adasu as the sole architect of the series of political crises and persistent attacks on his person, and of course on his administration. Above all, pride made him insensitive to the happenings around him that he failed to address them. In other words, Fr. Adasu failed.. According to Akperashi (Akperashi, 163) who documented so much about Fr. Adasu and his administration:

So many are of the view that the extent to which Adasu keeps malice has quarantined him from being a professional politician. This is... substantial owing to the alarming persistent clashing of politicians as well as the level of estrangement and general cold blood that prevailed as long as this administration lasted.

3.5.2 Disobedience

From the church’s point of view, Adasu was frontally criticized for disobedience. In spite of the church’s decrees stopping clerics from active participation in partisan politics and all its involvement, Fr. Adasu received the ecclesiastical regulations on deaf ears. Party politics is viewed

by the church as unhealthy for priests. According to Onaiyekan (Onaiyekan: 2003:23) “They (priests) cannot be part of the political wrangling and battles. That is why it is, by law, normally not permitted for a member of the clergy to vie for political office, as a member of a political party.” For Odey : (1999:95)

The role of the Catholic priest in politics, I was not advocating that they should become partisan politicians. Rather my aim was to expose the Caesars of our time for what they are, with the view of making ourselves and our people understand that we have a moral obligation to say “NO” to the bastardization of our people and the mind boggling vandalization of our God given and inestimable resources by a few people in the military and their corrupt civilian cohorts.

When a priest gets entangled with party politics he stops being all things to all men, he will begin to have political enemies and oppositions and can arrantly be criticized on his face. Eligie views clerical participation in party politics as highly restrictive and one going into it must come by it, with the permission of the competent authority, and for a special or good reason (Eligie 1994:60-61) Fr. Adasu however was criticized for flouting both Canonical and Ecclesiastical directives. For this reason he was interdicted by the church throughout his tenure as an executive governor of Benue State. True to the Church’s fears, Fr. Adasu could not withstand the wrangling and battles of the partisan politics. He was variously criticized as having unforgiving spirit

3.5.3 Unforgiving Spirit

The political analysts of his time identified that soon after the swearing in ceremony, Governor Adasu let himself to political sycophants who got him entangled in enmity with other top politicians of the area. First among them was Paul Unongo of Benue State, who not only campaigned for him, but as a political godfather took him round the State. Akperashi described Unongo’s influence in Fr. Adasu’s success when he said:

I am quite sure it would have been also clear to him (Adasu) that both the religious and Unongo's influences were among the determinant factors of his success. To substantiate Adasu's meanness and his extent of malice keeping while the gubernatorial election went on where Adasu emerged successful, Unongo was being held away in prison.... Finally when Unongo was released ... he was driven straight to the governor elect's private residence... in the private residence of Fr. Adasu, Unongo pledged his loyalty and contribution where necessary to the government" (Akperashi:167)

Many people had thought that such was the right opportunity for Governor Adasu to resolve matters and reconcile with Unongo if he had a forgiving spirit. Unongo was only but one out of a litany of Adasu's enemies. The matter was pathetic when those he declared enemies were from the class he benefited from. The question that was common in peoples' lips were, 'why he doesn't keep friends for a long time and does not feel any qualms? Why he doesn't appear ready to reconcile with his aggrieved followers and supporters? After Unongo, he battled with King Shuluwa who was instrumental to the electioneering campaigns of Fr. Adasu in various local governments. People would rightly think that Adasu's reason for frequent fall out with the fingers that fed him would be for him to escape being swallowed up in 'God-Fatherism syndrome'. Akperashi articulated this sentiment rightly thus, " what surprised every one was that, barely forty-two hours of Adasu's take over of the government house, he fell apart with Abu Shuluwa. What was the reason for this? Many people insinuated that Shuluwa over estimated his contributions towards Adasu's victory and therefore turned to exploit this opportunity by demanding too much than necessary and after wards, insisting to be one of the basic policy makers" (Akperashi: 167) The truth was that these insinuations were master-minded by Adasu's boys who were his political sycophants.

After Shuluwa, he still had fracas with David Iornem. Adasu complained that Iornem played a chameleon role during his nomination, but later on Iornem publicly gave Adasu his best, ensuring that Adasu occupied that government house. Adasu never recognized all his efforts.

Furthermore, Madam Esther Acka (Madam Social) received her own dose of neglect from Adasu's administration after having laboured for his victory. The annoying thing was that all the rancors established lasted till the end of Adasu's administration. Political analysts are of the view that Adasu fueled these animosities by his over bloated esteem of himself.

3.5.4 Over bloated self-esteem

As a catholic priest, Fr. Adasu was respected and revered from all works of life. His academic attainment also exposed him to important posts and offices. He had attained the status of a senior lecturer, a head of department and had held important offices from ecclesiastical and state . All these air of importance around him, and above all the status of a state governor that made him number one citizen in Benue State entered his head and he felt the most superior. His colleagues described him as an embodiment of pride, anger and insensitivity. In a letter written to him by Paul Unongo pleading for reconciliation, he pleaded with Adasu to slow down or be destroyed. In his words, "Do not forget it, NO TIV son hates you nor wishes to destroy you. The ones around you today, if you do not slow down, will be the ones who may in truth, end up destroying you by the barrages of destructive advice pushed on to you". If this effort was made by Unongo, people asked, what has Adasu to say about his outstanding enmity with him, until his administration was finally sent to the cooler? It was an administrative insensitivity.

3.5.5 Administrative insensitivity

All those who were either ruffled or neglected by Adasu's administration without remorse described him as insensitive. One who fails to remember yesterday. Madam Acka lamented her experience with Fr. Adasu. According to Akperashi, "Madam Acka regretted that she learnt her political lessons with rude shock in the hands of Adasu, who was insensitive during his sensitive political and administrative periods." (Akperashi: 167)

3.5.6 Mismanagement of public fund.

For Adasu's critiques, this is a most favourable ground because Adasu was a priest. To whom much is given, the Holy writ says, much is expected. What a layman would have done and it would not make news, attracted attention and criticisms with Adasu. For instance, Adasu was alleged to have established the directorate of public enterprise and investment, to duplicate the powers and functions of Benue Investment Company, and the ministry of industries and Commerce.

The analysts sharpened their criticisms against Fr. Adasu when it was discovered that one of Adasu's aides in the person of Mr. Sebastine Agbinda was, apart from floating an account on behalf of the State Government where he was alleged to be the only signatory, he was also the only staff in the whole directorate. It was also alleged that this directorate siphoned some handsome sums of money on various occasions in the name of executing some of the state's projects. This is but a mild way of criticizing a catholic clergyman. Deep down in the minds of the critics, Fr. Adasu mismanaged the public fund. People had complained of Adasu's 'unspecified action, which compelled every one to suggest that he can not also escape blame as far as this issue is concerned'. The criticism here for me is short sighted because, considering the corrupt nature of Nigerians, it was possible that Agbinda siphoned the money for his own gains. The critics would have had credit

if they could have pin pointed cheques raised by Fr. Adasu without destination. It was clear that wounded politicians could have said so many things without justification.

There were other claims for administrative weak points in Adasu's regime, but suffice it to discuss only these ones. One therefore wonders why after what looked like a break through in the church's vision of practical democracy that no other priest had tried to emulate Adasu. The criticisms leveled against him are not priestly, no wonder the church each time wishes to influence the practice of politics from outside, to avoid scandals. Hence I wish to conclude this section with Akperashi's view when he said, "it is clearly a matter of fact that no human being is infallible. Consequent upon this, we grow up every day in learning something and yet we learn from our past lives and mistakes". This method of forcing oneself into such places of honour without considering the position of the church authorities leaves much to be desired of a catholic clergyman. The church does not accept responsibility over the sins of Fr. Adasu because the church did not send him.

3.6 THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH WITH FR. ADASU

In the church, the position of the clerics with reference to partisan politics is legislated upon and clearly written in the codes of canon law that regulates the lives and conduct of Christ's faithful. Discussing the canonical provisions for clerical involvement in party politics, Ogale analyzed the content of canon 287#2. According to him:

Part I of book II of Canon Law, the people of God of the 1983 code of canon law of the Roman Rite treats the issue of Christ's faithful. Chapter III treats the obligations and rights of clerics, where this particular canon is situated. For the church, priests getting involved in politics are contrary to the mind and teaching of the church. The church holds that politics is the area that by right belongs to the laity (Ogale 2006: 59).

In the analysis of this particular canon 287 paragraphs 2 that treats the clerical involvement in politics, the canon stipulates that: “They (priests) are not to play an active role in political parties or in directing trade unions unless, in the judgment of the competent ecclesiastical authority, this is required for the defense of the rights of the church or to promote the common good.” (Canon 287&2) This is to say that politics and trade unions are not bad in themselves, but the church needs to keep herself in getting entangled with the materiality of the society, in order to devote more time for the concerns of the church. In maintaining such distance, especially by her clerics, she achieves the freedom, which is the “fruit of the separation from active politics” which also “suits the priest, who is the spokesman of Christ when proclaiming human redemption and his ministry where it applies its fruits in all fields and levels of life”. (Mazoa, 4 2004:385) Furthermore, canon 285 paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 condemn involvement in civil powers as inappropriate for the clergy. The canon states in paragraph 1 that clerics are to shun completely everything that is unbecoming to their state, in accordance with the provisions of the particular law. In Paragraph 2: clerics are to avoid whatever is foreign to their state, even when it is not unseemly. While paragraph 3 states that Clerics are forbidden to assume public office whenever it means sharing in the exercise of civil power (canon 285, 1 2 & 3).

Writing on politics and the position of Christ’s faithful, Gbuji; a Catholic Bishop and a canonist shares the view that:

The world of the family, work and profession, economic and politics has become various theatres for exercise of the mission of the church by the laity. By reason of their secular character which is proper and peculiar to them, and by their special vocation, it belongs to the laity

to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will" (Gbuji 1993:vi)

Other canonists of the church had criticized priests' involvement with active politics that 'as a general rule clerics were to be forbidden from civil offices'. From the researcher's point of view, the above-mentioned canon 287 provided a reasonable route of escape when it says that for a grave reason the permission of the competent authorities justifies a cleric not only to take up civil offices but also to play active politics in a Christian way.

Fr. Adasu was an educated clergyman who was not oblivious of the canonical provisions and implications of his choice. The only snag here was that Adasu did not seek for any permission and was not given. Even when his bishop advised him, he did not heed the ecclesiastical authority. For this he was said to be ambitious and disobedient. Whatever political out puts he must have made in the realization of democracy in Benue State was regarded by the church as private and unofficial, because he was not appointed by the church for the reasons of the defense of the church or to promote the common good. The church has always maintained that, "priests ought to treat everybody with the greatest kindness, they should unite their efforts with those of the lay faithful and conduct themselves among the laity after the example of their master, who came amongst men 'not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mt 20:28) Priests are to be sincere in their appreciation and promotion of lay people's dignity. (Presbyterorum Ordinis No.9) On the contrary many people felt undermined and poorly treated during Adasu's regime. Nevertheless the church awaited his repentance and forgave him when he repented.

3.7 LESSONS FROM FR MOESES ADASU’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The criticisms leveled against Fr. Moses Adasu notwithstanding, certain positive lessons are bound to be drawn from his policies and positive advancements in the politics of Benue State. In the section on Fr Adasu’s weak points I have tried to objectively project the way people felt but it did not stop us also from pointing out positive values in his political contributions not only to the state but to humanity in general. If the church will in the future change her stand, Fr Adasu shall be remembered as the great scientists of old; who equally at their own times suffered persecution from the church for their discoveries, which later gained approval from the church..

1. It is a known fact that the church is not a perfect society. The Canons of the church upon which the administration of the church revolves can be short sighted according to the prevailing situations of a given time. From our earlier expositions, we understand that the activities of the pagan emperors painted the concept and practice of politics black. From Fr. Adasu we can learn that time is ripe for us to understand that politics can be put to good use, introducing the light of Christ into it.
2. It is easier to pick out a speck in another person’s eyes. Fr. Adasu was variously criticized, especially as it involved finance; the critiques were not true to themselves. If one may ask, “was the money siphoned directed to Fr Adasu’s personal account? If it were, the detractors would have loved to publish details about the account in order to discredit him the more. Whoever would want to sincerely serve the public must step on the toes of the greedy ones who may never escape raising criticisms.
3. If Adasu did not do well as a clergyman governor, it will be over generalization to say that all priests will not do well as governors or political administrators. The church simply did not support Adasu and also refused to give him directives and as such did not want to sing his praises.

4. The 1983 Code of canon should be revised to meet with the present day demands of the human developments.

5. It is good to be good. Posterity holds the reward. Humanity benefited in Adasu's administration from the point of view of good health he improved for the people, food he made available and so on. The people truly know.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: THE VIEWS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4.1 THE CATHOLIC NOTION

There are two powers in the world that of the church and the state. The former is concerned with the attainment of eternal life; the later is charged with temporal welfare of man. According to Rodger, (1998; 83) “ these two powers rule the world, but the burden on the former is greater because the ecclesiastics will have to account to God’s judgment for kings as well as for their subjects”. From the earliest times of the church, this understanding has ever guided the relationship between the church and the government.

Bearing in mind that man is subject to both the church and the state and that the human person is the foundation and purpose of political life, the church does not keep quiet in political matters for the salvation of souls. Being open both to the transcendent and to others, it is the characteristic and distinguishing trait of human person to play this dual function. ‘If the bishop fails to speak when he should... he will be in great spiritual danger, as also will those who hold his authority in contempt.’ The church in Nigeria through the Catholic Bishops’ Conference has always been vocal in insisting that Nigerian government adopts and maintains a genuine democratic process. Let us examine here the notion of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria, being the voice of the Church in matters concerning politics and democracy.

4.2 CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF NIGERIA:

Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria is the organ that unites all the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria. Through a united voice they give pastoral directives as it affects faith and morals. In 1993 a memorandum was directed by this body to General Ibrahim Babangida; the then military president of Nigeria over political quagmire the nation was in. In a nine point message to the president, the Bishops touched the vital issues in Nigeria, In point one they stated, "we know, you have been meeting and listening to many groups: – each offering ideas and suggestions on how best to come out of the political impasse in which the nation now finds itself.' Point two carries the message of prayerful support to the management of the nation." The meeting was called specifically to pray for our nation, to rub minds on the happenings around us, and to forge ahead and confirm a union of hearts and minds as regard what positive contribution we can make towards solving the critical problems of our nation. In point three, they pledged to continue to work for peace and harmony among our people. (Schinellar P. 2002: 291-292) From 1960-2002 at different moments, they had assembled to address one issue or the other as they affected the peace, harmony and progress of the nation. As it affects democracy and democratic culture, they have always spoken. In 1985 with one voice they echoed:

Another element in our new vision of Nigeria is the hope to see installed and stabilized a democratic culture in the country. Events of last 25years have repeatedly shown that Nigerians cherish their personal freedom and cannot barter it away on the alter of a misguided messianism that relies on oppressive and totalitarian methods of rule. (Scheller, P. 2003:41).

In 1990 they affirmed that, “Government especially one that has not been democratically elected, cannot continue to presume that all its decisions, no matter how carefully studied and good intentioned, are always according to the wishes of the people, or even in their interest. Some basic democratic issues rightly belong to the people... (Shneller:41) In 1993, they issued out a communiqué under the title ‘Nigeria in distress, the way out – towards democracy? In 1995, they opined that the only way towards a lasting democratic government cannot be adequately addressed outside the framework of a social democratic good government, which will encourage and promote the free expression of diverse opinions, and harness the enthusiastic collaboration and participation.

In 1999, they advocated that the task of building a democratic culture is an arduous one and demands patience and diligent study. From the above deductions, one can see that the Catholic Bishops’

Conferences of Nigeria is not passive but an eloquent and dedicated organ, pursuing the trend of democracy in the country. As a united force, they have acted the mouthpiece of Nigerian Catholics that form 52% of the Nigeria population, according to the 2006 national census statistics. In particular involvement in the democratic development of the country, the C. B. C. N opened a commission of justice and peace in all the dioceses of Nigeria, to oversee, observe and monitor democracy in practice, especially during elections. In the next section, we shall examine J.D. P. C. (Justice Development and Peace Commission) as a tool in the hands of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria for enforcing democracy in the country.

4.3 JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE COMMISSION (J.D. P.C.)

Justice Development and Peace Commission (J D P C) is a body instituted by the Catholic Bishops’ conference of Nigerian as a tool to respond conscientiously to the demands of the Second

Vatican council which stipulates that there should be, “no false opposition between processional and social activities on one part and religious life on the other.”(*Gaudium et Spes* no43) This is the view of St Paul in his second letter to the Church in Thessalonica when he enjoined that he who does not work should not eat. (2 Thes: 4) In practice, it is justice not to rob Paul in order to pay Peter or the powerful over feeding while the weak and poor go hungry. In Nigeria where corruption has defaced the original claims of human rights, the church cannot fold her hands. Since the history of man and religion, in situations of insecurity and anxiety, such as failure in politics, which arises from inequitable distribution of common goods; frustration, sickness, and death, mankind is always urged to find remedy. The J.D.P.C offers this remedy in Nigerian situation. This organ speaks where no one can. Through their activities, the Bishops of Nigeria not only get involved, but also play indispensable roles in the politics and development of the country’s democracy.

The J.D.P.C in Nigeria is a living organ that expresses the moral teachings of the church and enjoins people to follow the footsteps of Christ the founder of the Christian religion, who came to set mankind free from sin and corruption. In doing this, the church, “strives to free all men from hunger, misery, oppression, ignorance, institutionalized injustice and hatred which is rooted in man’s selfishness” (Achulike 2004 :131) Furthermore Achulike appreciates the role of the J.D.P.C and pictures her as in keeping with the observation of Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio* (on fostering the development of the people) where the holy father affirmed that the church is both interested and concerned in the progressive development of the people. Of particular importance are those trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic diseases and ignorance, of those who are genuinely trying to improve themselves by fuller growth and the possession of a larger share in the benefits of civilization. (Achulike : 132) The church promotes J.D.P.C in full

conviction that in any society where there is no peace, there will be no development, and apparent lack of justice will be noticed. The church carries the nation along by injecting into her systems the sense of peace, justice and development through the roles of J.D.P.C.

The commission has been so eloquent in the country in the areas of education both of the youths and adults, where they foster basic understanding of civil society, civil culture and culture of citizenship. Through education, they impress on the minds of the people the principles and social teaching of the church, regarding equity and fair play in the distribution of common goods, promote the principle of subsidiarity, the principle of participation, the principle of solidarity and a lot more. In the area of politics, J.D.P.C. has made crystal efforts to enforce democracy in Nigerian government. They do this in exercising monitoring and observational roles during elections. Granted that the disgruntled and greedy politicians suppress them, their voices have always carried the expected weight by creating awareness when there is malpractice in elections. This awareness in turn helps to precipitate the level of corruption among the ruling class.

One of the strongest reasons why their voices failed to meet with the expected result is often attributed to the secular nature of Nigerian government. The ‘*Populorum Progressio*’ informed by earlier papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII and *Pacem in Terris* of Pope John XXIII speak to the catholic world mainly, but where the situation is such that the policy making is in the hands of non – Catholics, the realization of the values projected by the J.D.P.C may not be reached at promptly. The dividends associated with democracy are such that J.D.P.C. will keep on working whether they are heard or not.

4.4 DIVIDENDS OF DEMOCRACY

Pope John XXIII in his encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra* No. 3 articulated the Church's concern for democracy when he wrote that:

Though the church's first care must be for souls,
how she can sanctify them and make them share
in the gifts of heaven, she concerns herself too with
the exigencies of peoples' daily lives, with their
livelihood and education and their general welfare
and prosperity.

The Church ensures the achievement of dividends of democracy by involving the church's political arm, "Justice, Development and Peace Commission", in the day-to-day running of democracy especially during elections in Nigeria. In a document by the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace of the Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province called "Democracy, good governance and general election 2003" issued on 31st July 2003 it was stated that: "in order to ensure credibility of Nigeria in 2003 General Elections, the Independent Electoral Commission, (INEC) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria granted the department of Justice, Development and Peace Commission the privilege to monitor and comment on the conducts of the elections."

According to this document:

The first step towards the achievement of fair and free elections and from there earns dividends of democracy is by enthroning full democratic principles which is free and fair elections. When the election is free and fair, the politicians with the mandate of the people will be elected. Similarly the electorates will enjoy some control over the elected officials. The dividends of democracy will naturally flow as the fruits which good governance bear.
(Democracy, Good Governance and General Elections 2003).

The activities of the Justice, Development and Peace Commission in Nigeria have tried over the years to exeout dividends from democracy, even when the officials were not elected by free and fair means. This is done by making public the activities of government officials. The practice made some local government chairmen to make judicious use of both the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and statutory allocations from the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). In Ijebu-Ode L.G.A of Ogun State for instance, a monthly analysis of the Local Government's sources of income was published in 2004. This made the chairman to be up and doing. The fund generated internally and fund allocated to the state were known and spread between recurrent and capital expenditures. In a document called "Ijebu Ode Local Government Council 2004 Budget Analysis" published by Democracy Monitor stated, "the executives of the Local Government already aware of the possible areas of criticisms could come and intensify efforts towards making the people feel the dividends of democracy". Similarly the Magazine, in the month of June reported that the Council carried out a lot of water projects so that the common people can enjoy the basic necessities of life.

The efforts in this sector, notwithstanding, the "Democracy Monitor" analyzed and criticized the government for poor performance in other sectors. "The following items did not meet their target as they achieved (4.7%) in Community Development and (65.9%) in General Administration. This simply means that much development has not been achieved as regards the provision of adequate social services in the month under review. It implies that the level of development within the council is low. Unfortunately, most of the items that could bring more revenue to the Council were not provided for while a huge sum of money was spent on recurrent expenditure that is solely meant for salaries and over head". The Democracy monitor recommended for more provision of dividends to the electorates, that, "the council should therefore relocate part of the money meant

for recurrent expenditure to capital expenditure in order to improve the living conditions of the people.” (Monitor: 20) It is the improvement of the living conditions of the people that the democracy dividend is all about. The electorates vote people into offices with the expectation to yield some dividends from their governance. The Catholic Church through this agency makes democracy to bear fruits without actually being in the system.

When the government officials are monitored, analyzed and criticized in this form, other amenities such as road maintenance, provision of electricity, education, good health care delivery, qualitative and basic education will be provided for the common people that constitute the greater bulk of the electorates. The church is concerned about all these, because the creator meant them for all and sundry.

Nigeria has suffered this set back since her independence. A turning point came in Jan 2nd 1992, when Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu of Benue State of Nigeria; a Catholic priest took the bull by the horns. He became involved in the policy making in the politics of Benue State in order to take them to the drawing board of democracy. His political involvement has raised series of criticisms, and wagging of tongues. These attitudes of the people sharpened the interest of the researcher to move into the background of the political setting of Fr. Adasu. Hence in the next chapter we shall consider the local context of this research to find out from the people of Benue State, whether Fr. Adasu succeeded in taking them to the drawing board of democracy or not.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 LOCAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

5.1 LOCAL EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF FR. ADASU

The study is on the Church and Democracy: A case study of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu of Benue State of Nigeria. The context of the study is the church and her attitude towards democracy and its realization, and more so the influence of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu, in the realization of democracy in the government of Benue State. On the surface it would look as if Fr. Moses Adasu was on a peace saving mission sent by the church, but often the appearance is very much removed from reality. Hence the importance of this study, to delineate the areas of conflict. This study answers the question raised by many, why the conflict between the roles of Fr. Adasu and the struggles of the church to bring about democracy. Was it not the democracy that the church talks about, that Fr. Adasu was in pursuit of? The study reveals that Fr. Moses Adasu in spite of his efforts to bring about democracy in Benue state was on his own because, he was not sent by the church to do politics. The study also brought us close with the church authorities in the Catholic Diocese of the Makurdi, and a random survey of the opinion of the people of Benue State where Fr. Moses Adasu hailed. On the side of the church, Fr. Adasu was more on a self assigned mission and as such was not representing the church and her interests. So, if he had succeeded, he would have succeeded on his own name, and if he failed, he failed on his own name. His failure would not be the failure of the church and his mistakes

were not the mistakes of the church. The Catholic Bishop of Makurdi, Most Rev. Dr Athanatius Atule Usuh was reported to have maintained that, “ if the people had directly come and requested for a clergy man and the church obliged them one, then the church would have had to worry about how its candidate was performing” (Akperashi: 179) Fr. Adasu did not have the mandate of the church to be governor and that is why he was abysmally described as disobedient. Fr. Adasu was also insensitive to the fact that he was not having church backing and arrogantly made Methodist Bishop of Oturkpo, Dr. Benjamin Achili the state clergyman. He might have had his reasons but was misunderstood by his colleagues. There was an outburst of expressions and exclamations, symbolizing prevalent feeling of disappointment by some church members “some church members (Fada’s constituency) queried that the symbolism (Reverend Father) on whose crest Adasu rose to power had been abused and the tremendous good will be severely punctured and sagged”. (Akperashi: 178) Interviewing the priests of the diocese the story is almost the same. However, some observers had the view that Adasu’s colleagues in the priesthood were jealous. But be that as it may, the public was disgusted with Adasus’s administration that they had to come to the Bishop to call Adasu to order. The matter was made worse when Adasu abandoned his priestly functions and started attending other churches outside the Catholic Church for his Sunday worship. This conduct is vividly reported by Akperashi when he wrote, “... he dispersed his attendance outside the Catholic. Every Sunday, he attended a different church each in different towns.” (Akperashi: 179) Benue state like every other states in Nigeria was a state with difficult sets of people, settling where experienced politicians did not go without sustaining scars would not have been very easy with Fr. Adasu who was inexperienced in politics. Akperashi concluded his criticism of Fr. Adasu maintaining that:

Adasu actually had a tough time in dealing with the people of Benue state during his regime, judging also that he was persistently tough on many fronts, it is imperative to ask ‘is this not the celebrated “Moses” that was to deliver Benue State?’ (Akperashi : 181)

The fieldwork analysis and questionnaires will reveal authentically the rest of the peoples’ feelings about Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu.

5.2. FIELD WORK INVESTIGATION

This section considers the instruments of data collection, which involves: questionnaires, Oral interviews and participant observation.

5.3. QUESTION NAIRES

Questionnaire distribution is one of the research method devices I used. This is to facilitate the gathering of ethnographic data through direct delivery techniques. 150 copies of the questionnaires were distributed among the people of Benue State indigenes. 100 questionnaires were returned upon which I am going to report my findings. In my questionnaire, I requested that the respondents remain anonymous so that information will be supplied without fear of being exposed. Secondly, the questionnaires were distributed to adults and not primary school pupils, this is to enable the researcher to get objective assessment of the situation under study, and the respondents were within the ages of 18 and 65 years. The respondents were adults living and active at the time of Adasu. This is completely to remove guess work.

Question one asked the name of and personality of the individual under study. All the respondents without doubt knew that Rev. Fr. Moses Ushie Adasu was a clergyman of the Catholic

Church. They also responded that he is from the lowly Mbaamena community of Konshisha Local Government Area in Benue State of Nigeria.

Question two was to establish his position with the Catholic Church at the moment of joining partisan politics 60(60%) respondents affirmed that Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu was in perfect union with the Catholic Church and her authorities at the moment he entered into active politics, 30(30%) respondents were of the view that he was not in union with the church and may be, that pushed him into politics, while 10(10%) respondents claimed that they did not know.

In Question three we wanted to find out the reason behind Fr. Moses Adasu joining politics at the time he did. Whether it was as a result of frustration, or a willful act personally and consciously undertaken to change the face of democracy in Benue State. 45(45%) respondents opined that frustration led him to partisan politics. 50 (50%) persons were of the view that he willfully entered into partisan politics to lead his people into the Promised Land, while 5(.5%) respondents did not know what to answer.

Question four wants to establish whether Catholics supported Fr. Adasu with their votes in his gubernatorial race? 70(70%) respondents affirmed that Catholics were behind him as they voted for him on election day. 25 (25%) persons however hold a contrary view while 5(5) respondents did not know.

In question five we want to probe into what was behind Fr Adasu's decision to join politics. 10{10%} respondents feel that his reason was personal to him, 60{60%} individuals feel that ambition for leadership motivated him. A clergyman from the same Catholic Diocese buttressed this claim by adding that Adasu thought he was the rightful candidate for the Bishopric in the Diocese. Since the Bishopric did not favour him he opted for gubernatorial race. So he was ambitious for

power. Nevertheless, 25 {25%} respondents feel that the desire to lead Benue State to the Promised Land was his motivation, while 10 {10%} persons said he wanted to make name.

Question six wants to rate the performance of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu. 40 {40%} respondents rated him the best governor that ever ruled Benue State, 30 {30%} persons rated him the worst, since he recorded the highest number of enemies. 15{15%} persons viewed him as a wicked governor while 15{15%} persons also considered him a quarrelling governor.

In question seven the researcher wants to know whether Rev. Fr Moses Adasu had left a legacy worthy of emulation by other priests of the catholic world. The respondents mainly from the clergy circle reacted sharply with distaste. While 90{90%} persons hold that it is an unfortunate history that should only be read in papers as an admonition on the younger generations against disobedience and negative radicalism, 10{10%} respondents from the laity affirmed that Rev. Fr Moses Adasu was a trailblazer and should be emulated.

Question eight inquires into the successes or failures of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu's objectives in Benue Stat, 30{30%} persons were satisfied with his administration. For them his administration achieved its desired goals.70 {70%} respondents feel that Fr. Adasu failed woefully, such that if he should be interviewed today it behooves him to apologize for his mistakes.

The researcher in question nine wants to establish the state of affairs during the regime of Fr. Adasu, whether peace or disaster reigned? 40{40%} respondents maintain that peace reigned. Another 40{40%} persons believe that it was disaster all through. It was such that Fr. Adasu himself did not know peace, since so many people were after his life, let alone giving others peace. 20{20%} persons however claimed they did not know.

Lastly, question ten wants to know whether Fr. Adasu will be eager to come back as the governor of Benue State if he is given a second chance. 20 {20%} respondents firmly believe that as a true Nigerian he will certainly come back if not for any thing to correct his mistakes, while 80{80%} persons hold that he will not come back because it was not what he expected that he saw in politics.

From the public opinions one can conclude that Fr. Adasu's position was a dicey one. The respondents nearly corresponded with the criticisms raised against him. Nevertheless the criticisms notwithstanding, it takes a genius and courageous person to make a history. With the position of democracy in Nigeria, the researcher personally shares the idea that it takes the discipline of a Catholic priest, but of a humbler, peaceful and dedicated type with the mandate of the Catholic Church to lead Nigeria out of the mess she is in now.

5.4 ORAL INTERVIEW

The researcher carried out his interviews between two classes of people in Benue State of Nigeria. I discussed with the laity, which included the Catholics who are not in holy orders. The other group is with the members of the Presbyteria of Makurdi and Oturkpo Dioceses. These two groups provided for the researcher an over view of Rev. Fr. Adasu's influence in the democratization of Benue State during his regime, at least from the Catholic stand point.

While some members of the laity in Benue State are bold enough to identify with the roles of Fr. Adasu in the politics of Benue state, other people pleaded to remain anonymous even in their determination to identify with the positive changes that Fr. Adasu introduced in Benue State.

Discussing with Madam Esther Acka popularly known and described as ‘Madam Social,’ she had this positive view of Fr. Adasu not minding she suffered some political neglect from Adasu’s team after working hell bent for the success of his campaign, touring both Idoma and Igala speaking areas of Benue State. According to her, “Adasu unfortunately became a prey to rumor mongers, I cannot blame him. She asserted that the Adasu she used to know was not doubtful of her ability up till the very last hour his administration was overthrown”. (Esther Acka: 2004) If not for the bold minded Fr. Adasu who was conscious of his vow of celibacy, who could have confronted the political bulldozers of the state?, whom the enemies of progress held against him as unforgiving and always quarrelling. The daring personality of Fr. Adasu aided him in accomplishing the developmental height he achieved in Benue State. In the words of Akperashi, “it is on record that Adasu performed relatively well owing to some achievements his administration recorded within just the space of one and half years. Some members of Water life services Ltd, Yaya Associates (Nig.) Ltd and Balsan Nig Ltd, who handled some sports outfits for Fr. Adasu’s administration, though pleaded to remain anonymous, claimed without mincing words that Fr. Adasu not only ensured successful hosting of the sports festival, but have also continued to be a strong foundation for the development of sports in the State. Human memory may fail, they maintained, but God almighty who made it possible for him to become a banner carrier in the State will bless him in His own way.

Addressing a diagonal section of Benue State women wing for ‘women emancipation,’ with one voice they chorused that, if Fr. Adasu comes back ten times in politics we will vote for him”. The catechist of St Thomas Church, in one of the parishes where Fr. Adasu served, was of the view that ‘nothing escapes the will of God. ‘Nothing goes for nothing.’ God appointed him governor and judgment belongs to him.’

Furthermore, those who suffered under the boot of his administration still had to lay bare their feelings. For Paul Unongo, “if not for the fact that the formation of political parties coincided with the eruption of the religious unrest in the nation, if not that the activities of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) intensified and propagated her activities in the nation, who could have given Fr. Adasu ticket for Governorship race, knowing his kinsman’s weak points.”(Paul Unongo 2000)

On the part of Abu shuluwa, who played the determinant ‘joker’ card during the run- off election between Fr. Adasu and Late Joseph Igbeta, and whose only vote gave Fr. Adasu victory, the story of Fr. Adasu should not be ‘an early morning hour discussion’. Forty-two hours of Adasu occupying the government house, Adasu fell out with Abu Shuluwa claiming that Shuluwa was overestimating his contribution towards his victory. According to Shuluwa, “it was all false because I made up my mind ‘ab intio’ not to work with Adasu, because if I do, and Adasu fails, Benue people will attribute the blame to me and apparently will assess that even if I was directly at the helm of affairs as I had sought for, that I would not have proved any difference. And I know it would mar my own political aspirations. (Abu Shuluwa 2004). The myriads of voices that wanted to remain anonymous firmly believe that Adasu used his cassock to maneuver himself into the government house, and quickly forgot he was a man of God.

In the course of this research I interacted with a good number of Markudi and Oturkpo Diocesans. The general consensus of the priests was that Fr. Adasu was a ‘black leg’ in both Presbyteria. In an interactive forum with Rev. Fr. Ogali Vincent of Oturkpo Diocese, he argued, “Fr. Adasu was not a man of history. He failed to acquaint himself with facts of the church history”. (Ogale: 2005) He cited cases of Aristide and Makarios (Priest and Bishop respectively) who became presidents of their countries – Haiti and Cyprus – but despite their clerical state they did not do better in civil power. They were both forced out of office. This is basically true because being a

cleric is not a guarantee of success in power, without all the ingredients of political administration. Like Aristide and Makarios Adasu failed. Another priest who pleaded for anonymity said, “What doomed Adasu was ambition”. He further elaborated, “Fr. Adasu was to be a Bishop of the Diocese, but became too vocal and pompous, and the mantle fell on Bishop Usuh of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. To make this up, he determined to be a governor against the will of the church”.

Conclusively, the world will never be devoid of history and historical personnels, of which Fr. Adasu is one. Today history is being made of him. That Fr. Adasu failed in the eyes of many cannot in principle annihilate all the positive intervention he made in human history especially in the development of human and natural resources of Benue State. For the priests who hold that, because Aristide and Makarios had failed, and Adasu too, it is not right to maintain that all priests will fail if given the opportunity to lead. Furthermore the complex nature of Nigerian society will not favour a 100% support of all. It is normal that while some people say one thing others will say the other.

5.5. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

For a good research work, the research should have a “first hand observation and participation on the natural settings” (Wegh 1998:19) Participant observation is a scientific tool for research which “refers to an empirical research method whereby the researcher resides in the locality intended to be studied for a protracted period of time, observing the activities and life style of the people and thereby collecting the necessary information needed.” (Amissa: 2004) In the course of this research, the researcher is not a native of Benue State, but the curiosity to know more about Fr. Moses Adasu made the researcher to go extra miles to acquaint himself with valuable information. The researcher made repeated visits to Oturkpo and Makurdi Dioceses, observing,

interacting and interviewing both the clergy and lay faithful in the Dioceses. This exercise of familiarizing with the people and place of research lasted from January to June 2006. During this period, the researcher made friends whose invaluable contributions are recorded in this research work.

The researcher has shared intimate relationship with priests of Benue State origin, and students of Department of Religion who were privileged to have been taught by Fr. Adasu. The researcher has also read so much about Fr. Adasu and his activities in the government of Benue state, both in texts, journals, magazines and dailies. When the researcher moved round to interview people, the experience gathered was satisfactory to the researcher owing to the fact that there were no contradictory information earlier on given by those who knew Fr. Adasu more intimately. One can figure out the inclination of his political enemies. One of the students, who passed under the formative supervision of Fr. Moses Adasu, commented that as a member of the constitution review conference and member of human rights activist, Adasu had done so much in the implementation of Democracy in Benue State. He took the bull by the horns by being the first catholic clergyman to become governor in Benue State.

The history of democracy in Benue State from 1960 till the time of Adasu reveal peoples' opinion that Fr. Adasu was God sent for the salvaging of democracy in Benue State of Nigeria. The people of Benue State had consistently fought for democracy because they hailed from geo-political area where they not only felt marginalized, but also were intimidated because of their minority. Their desire to get autonomy however was not easy to come by, chiefly because of lack of personalities at the helm of affairs to clamour and pressurize in their favour. The minority notwithstanding, the people did not fold arms in their pursuit of the government of their own by their own people, hence at various points in time, a series of delegation, deliberations, threats and resolutions were reached at, aimed at state creation. According to Akperashi "the struggle for recognition and for integration into the comity of tribes saw Benue people through two experimental but distinct political moments. The first... was when the Benue people were merged with the

Northern region with its headquarters at Kaduna. Next came the military interregnum and with it, Benue plateau to which the Benue people belonged”’. (Akperashi: 22).

The political journey of Benue people to self government (democracy) started on 27th May 1967 when the then head of state General Yakubu Gowon created 12 states from the existing four regions. The inclusion of Benue people in Plateau State was a bold step; nonetheless the feeling of marginalization was still being experienced. For the Benue people they had not found a home, so the struggle was on, and political autonomy was imperative. On 3rd February 1976, the long awaited victory for autonomy was obtained when Brigadier Murtala Mohammed gave them Benue state on a Plateau of gold.

The first civilian democratically elected governor of Benue State came in 1979 – 1983 under the leadership of late Mr. Aper Aku and the real dividends of democracy was experienced by further breaking the state into smaller administrative units for better administration. Mr. Aper Aku created additional twenty-one Local Government areas bringing the number of local Governments areas in the state to 34. The ambition of Benue State people were intermittently shattered like every other states in Nigeria by the military governments which punctuated the full realization of democratic dreams in the state. Akperashi summarized governance in Benue State thus:

since the creation of Benue State out of the
then Benue Plateau State, in 1976, it recorded
more successive governors than any other state
in the Federation... it is amusing that this twenty
years old state has had fourteen governors..., that
has administered over it, viz : Col Abdullahi Shelleng
(3rd Feb. 1976-July 1978), Group Captain Adebayo

Lawal (July 1978-30th Sept 1979), Mr. Aper Aku (1st October 1979-31st December 1983), Brigadier Atom Kpera (4th January, 1984-27th August 1985), Group Captain Jona David Jang (27th August, 1985-5th Sept (1986), Col Yohana Madaki (1986-22nd December, 1987), Lt. Col. Fidelis Attaliru Makka (27th July, 1988-2nd January, 1992), Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu (2nd January, 1992-Nov. 1993).. (Akperashi: 55).

The story of neglect and harassment were still been repeated as many complained that the unwarranted perpetual change of governors were still an extension of marginalization. This made the governors sent to them not to achieve any height in developing the state. It is the opinion of majority in Benue State that Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu was motivated to join politics to correct this anomaly, and avail the people of Benue State the dividends of Democracy.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 EVALUATIONS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 EVALUATION

The Church and Democracy: A case study of Rev. Fr. Adasu of Benue State of Nigeria is aimed at studying the interest of the Church in democracy, the interest of Fr. Adasu in democracy and why the Church failed to recognize the efforts of the Reverend gentleman as the efforts of the church to sanitize the way people of Nigeria play politics. It pleased God to create man in freedom and not to be a stranger in his world. For this reason God placed the care of human race under two powers: the ecclesiastical and the civil powers, so that what the civil society cannot do for man the church can creditably supply for the full realization of man's temporal and spiritual needs.

The Fathers of the Vatican II council appreciate the need for the proper functioning of the two powers, and had the vision that the theological 'aggiornamento' meant more than rephrasing the conventional theology in modern language of today. Hence they invited theologians to seek out relentlessly the suitable approaches to communicate doctrine to man of our time to know God without losing trend with the societal development. This is because the deposits of faith or the revealed truth is one thing and the manner in which they are formulated without violence is another. (G/S No 62) Man is a subject of society as well as subject of heaven. The proper ordering of the goods of the earth helps man to realize these earthly and heavenly dividends. This is why the Church hierarchy is interested not with partisan politics, but the politics that benefit the common man. The interest of the Church in politics in the recent times has raised some questions, especially

with the activities of Rev. Fr. Adasu of Benue state. The distinction between the contributions of the Rev. Fr. Adasu and what the Church claims to pursue sharpened the curiosity of the researcher, hence the invaluable need for this study. In chapter one, we took up the task of giving a background to the work, by stating that the Church is older than democratic practice in Nigeria.

Nevertheless politics is as old as man, suggesting that other forms of governance had been in vogue before the introduction of democracy. Democracy as a system of government became necessary since independence in 1960. The nation however had experienced a lot of ups and downs in her practice of democracy. Hence the Church has become involved not as a stranger but as a major stakeholder in the well ordering of the society. Hence in the statement of the problem we set out to examine the roles of the Church in the realization of democracy in Nigeria. Given the scope of the work we centered on the Church and Democracy: a case study of Rev. Fr. Adasu. Of particular interest to the researcher is the involvement of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu of Benue State in partisan politics. Furthermore the researcher hi-lighted the reasons why the Church did not recognize the contributions of Fr. Adasu as part of the Church's efforts to foster democracy. Hence the significance of this study to x-ray the interest of the Church not only in playing the custodianship of democracy, but also her roles in enforcing its realization. There is also a bold step by this research to remind the church of her earlier mistakes with early scientists, as a caution for outright condemnation of Fr. Adasu. This suggests a need for more critical study of Fr. Adasu and his contributions in politics of Benue State in particular and Nigeria at large. The method employed in the research is the use of library, where books were consulted to add flesh to the researcher's idea of Nigeria and her politics in the midst of divergent ethnic differences. We used fieldwork method

where, through oral interviews and questionnaires we established peoples' opinion about Fr. Adasu and his contributions. Finally we divided the work into chapters.

In chapter two, the literature review examined the meaning and relevance of the church to man's earthly and heavenly needs. Related to this is the meaning and significance of the term 'democracy.' The Athenian origin of the term was discussed with its possible origin going back to Aristotle. Here some sample definitions were taken and finally concluded that the understanding of the concept is as elastic as the concept itself. The meaning of the term democracy as a system of government was chosen for this discussion. In this chapter also, we examined the Church and State in their common stewardship to man. Here the inter-woven nature of the Church and State are spelt out clearly, as Fr. Adasu pointed out that they are integrated. 'Once you leave out religion there and go into politics, it can never work.' In other words the state in her political activities no less than the church owe man an ordered society which is a stepping stone to heavenly glory.

In chapter three we examined Rev.Fr. Adasu's view of democracy, his humble beginning dating back to 12th June 1945. Fr. Adasu as a man of varied experiences who touched the lives of so many people both in the Church and in the civil government. He entered politics to bring to bear his dreams of democracy. His political ambitions were discussed in this chapter and as the third indigenous governor who came when he was needed most recorded achievements he made within the short period he was in the office. Adasu remained a sober governor till he was out of office holding to his opinions. This earned him criticisms as a man with unforgiving spirit, insensitivity, over-bloated self esteem and things of such sought. Fr. Adasu's relationship with the Church was also examined in the chapter, which labeled Adasu as disobedient in line with the provisions of canon 287 that generally forbids priests from playing party politics.

Chapter four treated democratic governance in Nigeria, the views of the Catholic Church and Fr. Adasu. Here we broadly examined democracy and the Nigerian nation asserting that democracy, as a political concept is far older than Nigeria as a nation. A brief historical survey of Nigeria as a nation was examined to see how the nation finally settled with democracy as a system of government. The Church and Democracy was discussed in this chapter to expose the church's involvement with politics to realize the true spirit of democracy in Nigeria. The practice of democracy in Nigeria exposes the possibility of bringing the dividends of democracy to the doorsteps of many in the nation.

In chapter five we carried a fieldwork study of the locality where Fr. Adasu hailed. The study took the researcher to Benue State where the opinions of the people were sought for about Adasu's fight towards the realization of democracy with its dividends. The instruments of the study included the use of questionnaire and oral interviews. Amongst our findings was peoples' wholistic choice of Adasu, which was made manifest in the electoral mandate. Adasu was the choice of the people. Nonetheless, the Church did not recognize his contributions as the Church's contributions because the Church did not send him.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Since Political Science deals with the study of the polity, its constitution, management and leadership, and the church encourages science, the church should support politics and encourage the selection and maintenance of the best government for the people.

2. 'Change is the only thing that is permanent', they say. The Canonical and Ecclesiastical laws affecting the involvement of clerics with partisan politics should be reviewed to be more embrative. This will encourage more priests to take interest in the government of their people. The job of the

church authorities then will be to field in men of unquestionable character. The church will both select and monitor the activities of the personnel appointed. This will reduce the sinister statement from the laity that the priests should mind the church and leave politics alone, as if priests have no say in the government of their land. A very good supportive argument is that the church herself is not a perfect society managed and ministered to by priests. It is clear that considering the human face of the church, she is not free from corruption, but today its organization and management is better than the civil society in all standards hence the services of the clergy can be employed in politics to salvage the country.

3. The positive achievements of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu are glaring for people to see.

If Fr. Adasu should come up again in Benue State, from the testimonies of the indigenes, to re-contest election he will win again, irrespective of criticisms from those who did not get what they wanted in his administration. Fr. Adasu's achievements therefore should be given more highlights than his weaknesses that are deeply rooted on personal idiosyncrasies. He was human, and as such imperfect. His achievements should be seen as struggles towards perfection. God considers efforts to do good much more than He upholds human faults.

4. The fact that a Priest and a Bishop who failed in the leadership of Haiti and Spain and may be in Benue State of Nigeria are not a logical conclusion that every other Priest or Bishop of every other place in the world must fail each time one is appointed to be governor or president of his State or Country. Only those who make attempts may fail or succeed. Those who never make effort as in the case of the church shying away from either committing scandal or failing will always continue to fail because once you do not succeed you have failed, and you cannot succeed unless you make an attempt to be part of something.

5. After women shall have been given equal opportunity to take part in the government of this country, and they are not able to save this country from the political, economical and socio-religious quagmire she is into, then I strongly recommend that priests should be given the opportunity once in a while to govern small sections of the society. When priests were used as commissioners for education particularly in the then Anambra State, the standard of education had not fallen to the level it is today.

It is the objective view of the researcher that if these recommendations are experimented upon, there will be a change of attitudes of Catholics towards politics. As a result the realization of democracy will be faster. It is also intended that this research will provoke further reflections on his criticisms to get at what is best for our society.

6.3 CONCLUSION

In the course of this study we have been privileged to discover healthy close ties that exist between the church and the state. The church and the state have their common source of power from God who is the author of all powers. While the church works relentlessly for the realization of the beatific visions in the life eternal, the state is entrusted with the responsibility of harnessing and harmonizing the earthly goods for the benefit of all. Nigeria like many communities of the world is faced with a similar problem of channeling the goods of the earth for the benefit of all. This is due to the fact that the nation is a conglomeration of people with different political, socio-religious backgrounds. In politics, this ranges from democracy, autocracy, theocracy, and monarchical systems of government. In Religion the pendulum swings between Christianity, Muslim and Traditional Religions. The workability of a nation with people of different mentality demands a system of government that considers the interest of the electorates much more than the welfare of

the few that lead, because the power belongs to the people who decides by fair votes who will represent the masses. The church on the other hand is a neutral non-partisan organ that identifies the right of fair governance as having divine origin. She keeps monitoring the government as a watchdog and guide for the realization of a true democracy. This consideration influences the choice of the topic: 'The Church and Democracy in Nigeria: A case of Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu of Benue State.' Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu threw in his weight in politics not minding whether his decision will be hurting, to bring about a radical realization of an ever longed for dividends of democracy in a country like Nigeria.

Nevertheless, virtue remains forever enthroned in victory to vices. The virtuous contributions of Fr Adasu will survive the tides of history while his mistakes have been identified by this research to forestall the future occurrences. The world shall continue to need people of such quick blood, but more of people who are down to earth, to achieve positive revolutions silently.

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