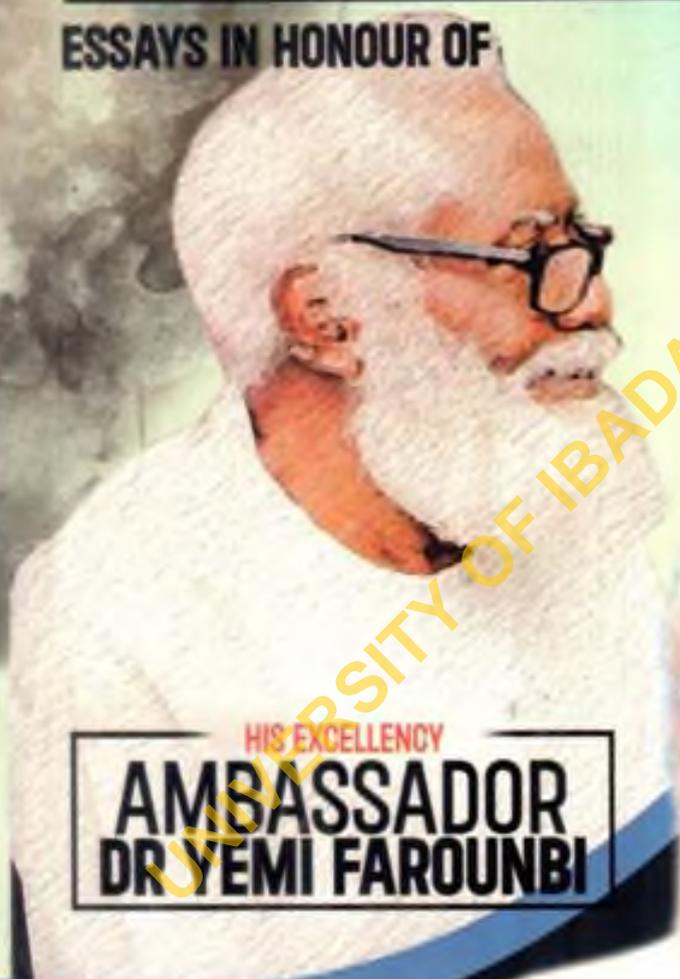


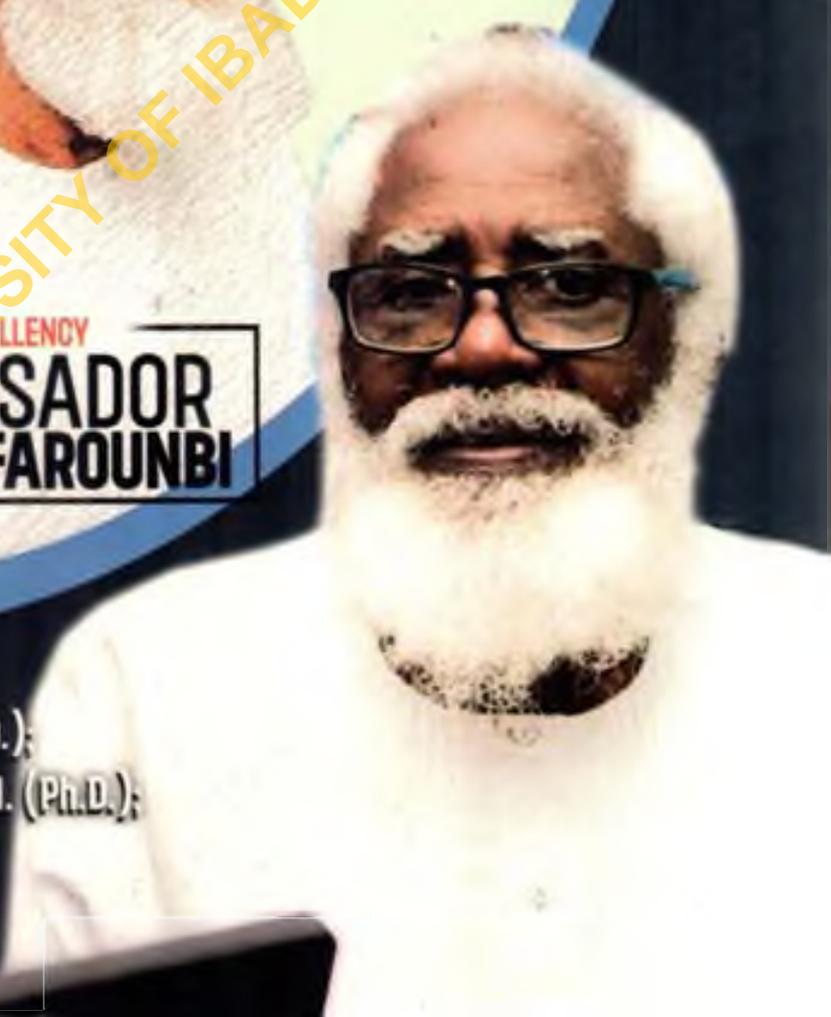
Religion, Politics & Media Discourse in the Global Context

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF



HIS EXCELLENCY

**AMBASSADOR
DOYEMI FAROUNBI**



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**RELIGION, POLITICS AND MEDIA DISCOURSE
IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: ESSAYS IN
HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR
DR YEMI FAROUNBI**

Editors

J.K Ayantayo (Ph.D.)
G.N. Ayantayo (Ph.D.)
E.O. Samuel (M.A.)

2024

©Jacob Kehinde AYANTAYO
Gloria N. AYANTAYO
Elijah Oluwatobi SAMUEL
08034297780, 08061221640
ayantayokehinde@gmail.com,

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CHAPTER TWO

AMBASSADOR YEMI FAROUNBI IN MULTICOLOUR GOWNS: RELIGION, MEDIA, AND POLITICS

* * *

Prof Jacob Kehinde AYANTAYO,
Professor of Religious Ethics, Religion and Society
and Religious matters in Peace and Conflicts
University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

E-mail: ayanytayokehinde@gmail.com

Tel No: 08034297780

&

Elijah Oluwatobi SAMUEL

Department of Religious Studies
University of Ibadan.

+2348137690693

onimisitobi@gmail.com

Birth Details

Ambassador Yemi Farounbi, an officer of the order of Niger (CON), a former Nigeria Ambassador to the Philippines and the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Asiwaju of Ora land, is a well-known Nigerian politician, broadcaster, and diplomat who has had a significant influence on the media and diplomatic landscape. Farounbi, born on 1st October 1944 to the family of the Late Reverend Farounbi and the Late Mrs Farounbi, has had a remarkable career spanning multiple decades. He hails from Ora-Igbomina.

Educational History

Yemi Farounbi attended various primary and secondary schools because his father was often transferred during his pastoral work; hence, the family had to relocate on different occasions. Some schools he attended include St Andrew's Primary School, Usi, Ekiti, Christ's School, and Ado Ekiti, among others.

After completing his secondary education, he worked in a Primary School at Aramoko Ekiti, where he met a young doctor who took an interest in him and orchestrated his study at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for his university education after being offered admission. The doctor paid his first semester's fees. He had difficulty paying the second semester's expenses until his parents took a loan with 20% interest. He arrived at UNN 14 days before the commencement of the semester's exam. Therefore, he contemplated whether

to write the exam or defer the admission. He eventually wrote the exam and excellently passed well to become one of the best ten students who received the University's scholarship. Before the results were released, he was already seeking the Federal Government's scholarship. He eventually won the Federal Government scholarship alongside 60 other beneficiaries.

During the commencement of the civil war, he had to depart from UNN because then Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu stated that he could not guarantee the safety of non-Igbos living in Eastern Nigeria, which later declared itself the Republic of Biafra. This created a problem for him since he couldn't transfer the university scholarship from the University of Nigeria to another university. Therefore, he wrote a letter to the then Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, stating that he cannot suffer for what he knows nothing about. Gen. Yakubu Gowon promptly replied to him and copied the Minister of Education, saying that the Federal Government would take over his education. He then transferred to the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where he earned his first degree, then proceeded to his master's degree in Public Administration in the same citadel of learning. After completing his second degree, he was advised to proceed with his doctorate. He listened to the counsel, began some coursework, and was asked what field he wanted to major in; he replied, "Performance in Creativity". He wanted to know when an announcer becomes a good announcer and when a reporter becomes a good reporter. He didn't finish due to some internal issues.

He then went on to bag several foreign degrees. In 1972, he completed a human resources management course at the Polytechnic of Central London. In 1976, he moved to Florida to study mass communication research at Stanton University, Florida and the Centre for Mass Communication Research and Training, Leicester University. In 1974, he earned his master's degree in public administration (1975) and his doctorate (honours) from Northwestern University, Philippines, in 2014.

Career in Media

When Farounbi entered the broadcast sector, he was an assistant secretary for the establishment and training in WNTV-WNBS, Ibadan, the first television network in Africa. Through perseverance and hard work, he advanced to station General Manager, then NTV Ibadan, in 1977. He was transferred to what is now known as NTA Akure in January 1981, from where he retired in July 1981.

Farounbi is a highly productive writer and producer of films and television shows with multiple credits. Her name can be found on credits for critically praised films such as *Agbaarin and Iwa*. Along with *Arelu and Igba Oro*, he produced and funded the two-part Yoruba film *Yapon Yarin*. Farounbi is a writer who has contributed articles and stories to publications like *Owena News*, *Sunday Sketch*, *Sunday Tribune*, and *Saturday Tribune*.

Reportedly playing a crucial role in the founding of BCOS-TV Ibadan, Farounbi served as the Governor of Oyo State's Special Assistant for Broadcasting, Chairman of the Oyo State Information Directorate, and Chairman of the University of Benin Visitation Panel. A member of the Lead City University Governing Council, Ibadan; Farounbi, Chairman, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation; and a one-time member of the Governing Council of the Yaba College of Technology. Farounbi worked as a managing consultant at Ondo State Radiovision Corporation in Akure in 1985-6. He served as a consultant for the hiring of OGTV's pioneer personnel in Abeokuta in 1981 and as a member of the committee on the programming philosophy of OGBC Radio in 1976. In 1981, he was also a consultant for establishing Ondo State Television.

Diplomatic Career

Farounbi's experience and clout went beyond the media as he entered the diplomatic sphere. He was chosen to serve as Nigeria's ambassador to the Philippines (July 2012-2015), where he successfully advanced Nigeria's objectives and developed friendly ties between the two countries. While serving as an ambassador, he worked to improve trade, cultural exchanges, and educational opportunities between Nigeria and the Philippines. He also served as Nigeria's ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, a former French Colony which, in 1972, the Nigerian government sent Nigeria Police to restore order to the territory.

Associations

Farounbi served in several organisations, such as Oyo State Council of Arts and Culture, Ibadan: 1979-1983. Governing Council, Yaba College of Technology: 1985-91. Governing Council, Lead City University, Ibadan: 2005 till date. He is also a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management-1980, Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria-1980, Overseas Press Media Association-1978, and Oyo State Amateur Wrestling Association-2006-2010.

He is a Fellow of the Society of Nigeria Broadcasters-1985, a Fellow of the Nigerian Union of Journalists-1980 and Trustee, Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners -1994, and a Council Member of the Professional School of Public Relations 2019.

Media Outlets Established

Farounbi established several media outlets such as Living Spring 104.5 FM, Orisun Radio 89.5, a complete Yoruba radio service, Channel32 TV, Osogbo and New Dawn TV, and Ibokun. Started Iwo Television: 1982-83 completed Reality Television Service, Iwo; 2007-2010 and the installation of Realty Radio Service, Iwo in 2010

Appointments

Farounbi has been on different occasions appointed as a Member of the Committee on the Preparation of Programming Philosophy for Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation-1976, Member of Western State, Economic Project Performance Unit (EPPU) Study Committee on Establishment of Radio Oyo, Ogun, and Radio Ondo-1976; National Secretary, Society of Nigerian Broadcasters-1980-1981; Consultant on the Staffing of Ogun State Television, Abeokuta July-Sept 1981, External Examiner(Department of Mass Communication) the Polytechnic, Ibadan-1982-1993, Member, Committee of Enquiry into the Lagos State Broadcasting corporation-1985, Member, Executive Council, Society of Nigerian Broadcasters-1986, Chairman, Committee on the establishment of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation-1992 External Assessor to Appointments & Promotions Committee, the Polytechnic, Ibadan-1983-1987.

Lecturing Experience

Farounbi has experience lecturing part-time at the Department of Language and Communication Arts, University of Ibadan, teaching post-graduate classes in the history of communication thought, media planning, and techniques from 1985 to 1992. Part-time Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Ibadan Polytechnic, Ibadan, teaching public relations and advertising, and Communication Theory: 1985-1991

Head of Organizations/Bodies

Farounbi has headed different organisations on different occasions, such as Chairman Deolag Advertising Ltd; Ibadan: 1983-85. Chairman, Delphi Communications Ltd, an AAPN registered agency, Lagos: 1985-1995. He was Chairman of Daily Times on Nigeria Plc, Lagos: 2000-2004. Was Chairman, Osun State Broadcasting Corporation, Osogbo: 2000-2010

Chairman, Board of Trustees, Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners Member, International Press Institute -1979, International Institute of Communications -1979, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Association of Nigeria Theatre Practitioners-1994till date; Trustees, Centre for Media Resources in Development -2006-2012, Chairman, Centre for Public Policy Analysis-2003-2012, Chairman, Ibadan City Polytechnic-2016 till date

Fight Against Oppression

During his undergraduate days at the University of Ife, he quarrelled with his Head of Department because he attempted to divert a scholarship meant for the poor student in his class, whom they all knew should be the recipient of the scholarship. The HOD tried to award a lady in the department whose standard of living was good. So, he mobilised his department's members against the department head. Although the HOD was expected to fail him, he didn't. Afterwards, due to his statistical proficiency, the HOD called him to assist with analysis.

During Gen Sanni Abacha's regime as the Head of State, the Nigerian Punch interviewed him, and he emphatically stated that "It is an irresponsible thing for anyone to support Abacha in self-succession and that such politicians that do so are irresponsible and unpatriotic." Some Yoruba politicians bought copies of the newspaper interview and gave them to Abacha. Someone told Farounbi that he would be vehemently punished for that act; surprisingly, Abacha received the information but did not respond or react.

Political Involvement

Farounbi was involved in Nigerian politics and his work in the media and diplomacy. On several venues, he has promoted development, good government, and the advancement of Nigerian culture and values.

His political engagements include Publicity Officer, Action Group Students Wing University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus-1964-1965; Coopted Member, Executive Committee, Unity Party of Nigeria, Oyo Stat-1981-1983; Deputy

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National Chairman, PeoplesSolidarity Party-1987-1989; Chairman, Campaign Committee, Oyo State, Social Democratic Party-1989, Chairman, Osun State Social Democratic Party-1991-1992, National Vice Chairman, Later National, Deputy Chairman, United Nigeria Congress Party-1996-1998, National Chairman, Network for Democracy-1994-1998, Trustee, Peoples Democratic Party-1998-1999; Chairman, Peace Committee, Osun State-2003, Chairman, Campaign Committee, Osun State PDP-2003, Chairman, Technical Committee set up by Governments and Leaders of South Western States to produce, South-West Agenda for CONFAB-2006. He had earlier served as a consultant to the SW delegates at the 1995-6 Constitutional Conference.

Publications

Some of his publications include Farounbi Staffing and the Nigerian Broadcasting Organizations. Thesis for Master's Degree University of Ife, 1975, Farounbi The Nigerian Manager and his Environment, Management Information Journal, June 1979; Farounbi Television, Politics And Society in Nigeria: Options for the Future; Television Quarterly (vol.1 no.3 October 1979).Farounbi, 25 years of TV in Nigeria, Africa now, Oct 1984 and Farounbi Television in Nigeria, West Africa Technical Review May 1983 Mass Media and the future (NTV Ibadan, Ibadan, 1979).Television and the Society (NTV Ibadan, Ibadan, 1980), Controversy within; The Dynamics of Office Politics. (Sketch Press, 1983), Yemi Farounbi: In the Media. (White Management Services) Ibadan 2004) Broadcasting Management: An Analysis of Principles and Practices 1972) In defence of Nigerian Broadcasting (1975), Whither Nigerian Broadcasting (1975), Pause to Think (1976), Managing Broadcasting in Challenging Environment: A Book of Readings (awaiting publication), Ona Abayo, (Banji Ojo Communications, Ibadan 2006). He is married with children.

Legacy and Impact

He persuaded Bola Ige's administration to construct a 20-bed health centre in Ora, begin rural electrification, establish a technical college in Ora, begin construction on the Ila/Ora Road, and offer portable water supplies. He also made politics worthwhile and opened doors for diverse leadership roles. He played a crucial role in giving many people who became outstanding men and women in today's society jobs.

Philosophy of Life and Religious Belief

He does not believe in excessiveness; hence, he lives a straightforward life void of greed and filled with contentment. He does not believe in the accumulation of assets. He attributes all he has acquired, accomplished and achieved to the grace of God and the work of God through him. He firmly believes that when anyone is under God's protection, God will make them escape the time/moment those planning their downfall have fixed.

Hobbies

Ambassador Yemi Farounbi has a penchant for Music, Singing, Dancing, and reading. His passion for reading was spurred during his first year at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, when he read a piece titled "The usefulness of unrequired reading." This spurred him to read wild and wide. He believes that any information obtained through reading will be helpful someday. He also loves media. Hence, he ventured into broadcasting. He is a staunch lover of local delicacies and does not eat to satisfaction.

Ambassador Yemi Farounbi is widely honoured for his contributions to Nigerian media, diplomatic career, and dedication to advancing his country. In addition to improving Nigeria's foreign relations, his work in television set the groundwork for upcoming generations of broadcasters. Farounbi is still regarded as a significant person in Nigeria because of his commitment, foresight, and different service forms. Many people working in the media, diplomacy, and public service continue to be inspired by his legacy.

Achievements/Awards

Farounbi is a recipient of different awards. He was listed in the following categories: Whosewhere in Nigeria, Whosewhere in Africa, Whosewhere in the Commonwealth, and Whosewhere in Communication in the World. Awards: State Scholarship, University of Nigeria, being one of the best ten students in the 1964/65 session, University of Ife Students Union, Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Leadership-1968 and Peter Odumosu Prize for having the best result in the Masters in Public Administration Examination, University of Ife (Now OAU Ife). The Federal Government of Nigeria awarded him the Officer of the Order of the Niger (2008) and the Osun State Certificate of Merit.