

# Ondo forest eviction tragedy: 3 feared dead

**DAYO JOHNSON,**  
Akure

**T**HREE persons were feared dead in Ondo State following the eviction of encroachers from the state government forest reserves across the state. The farmers in the forest reserves who government referred to as encroachers alleged that those that died kicked against their forceful eviction together with their family members by officials of government who came with bulldozers to destroy their economic plants.

But government was quick to deny the alleged death of any of the encroachers adding that adequate notice was given to them to vacate the reserves before they were forcefully ejected. It said that the allegation was a blackmail to buy sympathy by the encroachers. The occupants in Ipele forest reserve alleged that government bulldozer destroyed their economic crops and that the officials of the state ministry of agriculture immediately commenced the planting of teak trees in replacement.

The state government recently announced its plan to eject all occupants of its forest reserves in a bid to reclaim the reserves depleted by encroachers. *Sunday Vanguard* gathered that the development created tension as the occupants of the various forest reserves insisted that they had been farming in the reserves for over 30 years and alleged political victim-

ization on government decision.

Already three of the forests reserves including Ajagbale/Iwese and Ifon forest reserves had been visited by the government bulldozers and farm produce such as cocoa, kolanut, oil palm and sugar cane planted there had been de-

stroyed. Spokesperson of the Akoko farm settlers, Mr. Yakubu Aliu, said they acquired the land from Ipele community several years back with teak trees planted as demarcation against government forest reserve.

Aliu asked government to pay them compensate for the acquisi-

## Bishop admonishes Nigerians

**IJEOMA AYOGU**

**N**IGERIANS have been asked to renounce sin and turn absolutely to the Lord. This advice was given by the bishop of Badagry Diocese, Methodist Church Nigeria, The Right Reverend Michael Akinwale, at the eleventh annual national conference thanksgiving service of the Men's Fellowship of the church with the theme, "Lord In Your Grace, Transform Our Nation", held at the Hoarse Memorial Methodist Cathedral, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.

The cleric reiterated the need for the members of the fellowship to form a common front to fight the ills of the society and the nation, some of which he regrettably described as corruption and drug trafficking. "Since sin is a reproach to any nation, we must, as a people, fight for God and others suffering so that the society will be more meaningful and convenient for all to live in," Akinwale pleaded.

He stressed the need to have a personal relationship with God

through holiness and absolute obedience to his dictates, so that Nigeria can know peace and for God to re-order her priorities for the best of all. While commending the efforts of the founding fathers of

## Deaf and dumb For nine years 'mother-beat'

**JAMES EZEMA**

**A**KETU Customary Court sitting at Ogudu, Lagos State, last week, dissolved the marriage between Mr Toniwel Mamughan and former Mrs Lola Mamughan, ordering Toniwel to pay the respondent (Lola) thirty five thousand naira monthly as allowance.

Toniwel of 15 Olanipekun Street, Ikosi, Lagos, who is deaf and dumb, had, on February 2, 2007, asked the court to dissolve