

Govt urged to sustain gains made in galamsey fight

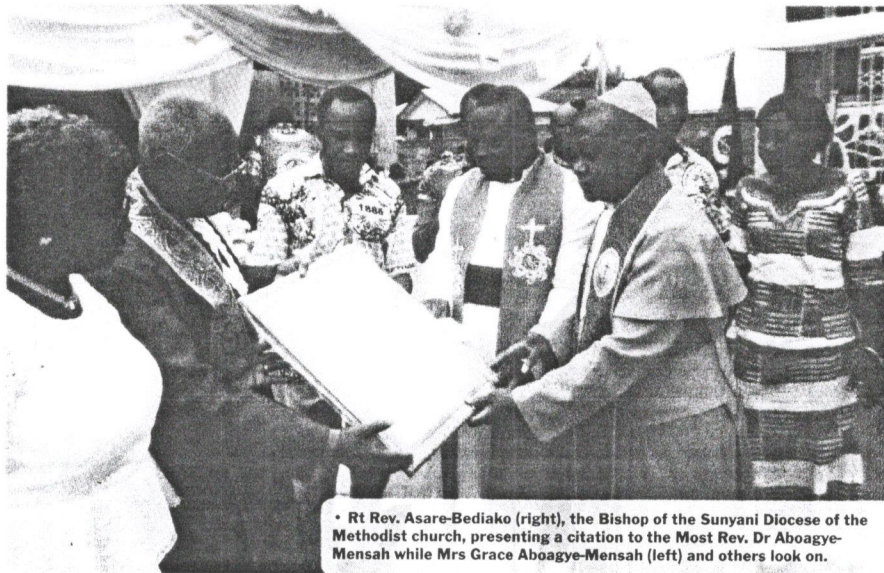
By Emmanuel Adu-Gyamerah,
CHIRAA

A FORMER Presiding Bishop of the Methodist church of Ghana, the Most Reverend Dr Robert Aboagyee-Mensah, has urged the government to sustain recent efforts and gains made in the fight against illegal mining (galamsey). He said the government should pursue both Ghanaians and foreigners engaged in such illegal operations without looking back on its shoulders to ensure that issues pertaining to galamsey were settled once and for all.

He was speaking in an interview with the *Daily Graphic* after a thanksgiving and valedictory service organised in his honour by the Sunyani Diocese of the church at Chiraa last Sunday.

Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah, who hails from Asuakwaa, a village near Chiraa in the Brong Ahafo Region, was the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Ghana from 2003-2009 and retired from active service last year.

The thanksgiving and valedictory service was, therefore, organised to give thanks to God and congratulate the retired presiding bishop on bringing honour to his village and the Sunyani Diocese of the church.



• Rt Rev. Asare-Bediako (right), the Bishop of the Sunyani Diocese of the Methodist church, presenting a citation to the Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah while Mrs Grace Aboagyee-Mensah (left) and others look on.

Foreigners in galamsey

The Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah described as unfortunate the impression being created that it was only foreigners who were involved in illegal mining in the country.

"Let us work to expose the so-called big men who are behind the surge in illegal mining which has led to massive environmental degradation across the country," he stated.

He said the so-called "big men" who were the brains behind the galamsey canker were as guilty as young Ghanaians, as well as foreigners who had been hired to engage in such illegal business and should, therefore, be pursued if the government really means to stop galamsey.

Earlier in his sermon, Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah urged Christians to do away with the worries of the world and

relentlessly strive in their service to God and humanity in order to reach their goals as Christians.

He thanked the church for offering him the chance to serve his maker at the highest levels and called on ministers of God to do away with material gains to the detriment of focusing on their call.

Church-state collaboration

The Bishop of the Sunyani Diocese of the Methodist Church, Rt Rev. Kofi Asare-Bediako, called for collaboration between the church and the state to promote the well-being of the people.

"Both the church and the state stand for development and we should, therefore, come together and play our respective roles to uplift the people from spiritual and socio-economic deprivation," he stated.

He commended the Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah for his dedicated service and urged him to continue to offer his service to God and the church even in retirement.

For his part, the Chief of Asuakwaa, Nana Kwasi Yeboah, thanked the Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah for the number of developmental projects he had brought to the town and how he had continuously marketed the area over the years.

"He did not shy away from making the world know about Asuakwaa notwithstanding the height he attained," he said, adding: "He has over the years solicited support for the development of his 'Small London'."

Profile

Besides becoming the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, the Most Rev. Dr Aboagyee-Mensah held various positions and served on several committees in Ghana and outside the country.

He is a former General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, former Vice-President of the World Council of Churches and Executive Director of Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, Kitwe, Zambia.

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