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A Christian View of Stewardship: A Study of Daniel 6:1-4

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Stewardship is at the heart of Christian life and practice. Yet, the contemporary society does not take the issue of stewardship seriously. God's resources for human life are not properly taken care of. This paper is an attempt to draw attention to key stewardship principles embedded in Daniel 6:1-4 with the effect of contributing to the understanding and practice of stewardship from a Christian perspective. The historical-critical method of exegesis was used to study the selected text and stewardship principles were drawn from the results of the exegesis. These principles—including service and responsibility, accountability, and reward and punishment— are expected to deal with the issues of corruption, thievery, pilfering, negligence of duty, and the likes in the Ghanaian social, political and economic systems. The main thesis of the paper is that one's faith must be expressed in the public sphere in response to issues of societal concern. Therefore, rather than privatizing their faith, contemporary Christians must encounter the public domain with their faith and in the process transform human society both spiritually and socio-politically.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of Stewardship is at the heart of Christian life and practice. Yet, the contemporary society does not take the issue of stewardship seriously. God's resources for human life are not properly taken care of. Contemporary Ghana shows high levels of corruption and negligence to duty in government, the courts of law, and security services among others. Dishonesty is a social canker that generates a lot of benefits for a few persons at the detriment of multitudes. The concept of corruption has been variously defined by different scholars. According to Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, corruption entails a wide range of illegal activities, some of which include bribery, extortion, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, cronyism, appropriation of public assets and property for private use, and influence peddling.[1] According to Ransford W. Agbodohu and Quarmyne Churchill, some of these activities such as fraud and embezzlement can be singularly undertaken by an individual, whilst others such as bribery, extortion and influence peddling would involve collaboration

[1] Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, "Confronting Corruption in Ghana and Africa," *Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-GHANA)* Vol. 4 (2002): 1-2.

amongst individuals to undertake.[2]

The numerous cases of corruption in the predominantly-Christian Ghanaian society underscore the privatization of faith among many Christians in Ghana. As a result of this, Christianity does not have much influence in the public space. Negligence of duty is common in hospitals and financial institutions. Corruption is also not uncommon in security and legal institutions. There is, therefore, an urgent need for theological discourses in the areas of Christian integrity and the role of Christianity in public life. In this regard, Daniel is among the biblical figures whose life offers great lessons for the transformation of society. This research was conducted to explore how key stewardship principles embedded in Daniel 6:1-4 might contribute to the understanding and practice of stewardship from a Christian perspective. The historical-critical method of exegesis was used to study the selected text and stewardship principles were drawn from the results of the exegesis.

Stewardship in the Broader Context of the Bible

This section considers stewards from both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible in order to place the discussions on Daniel 6:1-4 in the proper biblical context. According to Douglas J. Hall, a steward is "one who has been given the responsibility for the management and services of something belonging to another, and his office presupposes a particular kind of trust on the part of the owner or master."[3] Simply put, a steward is a person entrusted with the management of another person's property. This general meaning of a steward is in keeping with both the Old Testament and the New Testament's understanding of stewardship which is explored briefly below.

In the Old Testament, the word "steward" is used in the sense of a person who is in a position of trust or one who is taking control over a house. Hebrew expressions such as *ish al-habbayit,* (Gen. 43:16, 19, 44:1, 1 Kings 16:9), *ha-melcar (*Dan. 1:11), or *ha-sokhen* (Isa. 22:15) are used to describe those "over the house" (overseers of the household). Examples are Abraham who had a steward known as Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2, 24:2, 10). He was Abraham's slave and trusted steward. He seems to have had oversight of all his affairs and was entrusted with the important duty of getting a wife for Isaac. He had charge over the family of his master as well as his property. Another example of stewardship in the Old Testament is the role of Joseph played in the house of Potiphar in Genesis 39:4. He also became a steward in the house of Pharaoh and of all the land of Egypt (Gen. 41:40-44). Later in Genesis 44:4, Joseph became a steward over his own household.

The central idea of stewardship from the biblical perspective is this: stewardship begins and ends with God. God is the creator and possessor of all things. Human beings who possess God's creation do so as God graciously delegates.[4] The genesis of this thought is God's charge to Adam and Eve to take dominion over what he (God) has created (Gen. 1:28 cf. v. 26-27). Having created humans in his own image, God charged them to rule on his behalf. The responsibilities of naming the animals, and filling and subduing the earth show that they are being given an ambassadorial reign as God's vice-agents. Humanity's stewardship of God's creation is also underlined in God's act of creating a garden and putting humans in charge of it "to cultivate it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). The expression "to cultivate and keep it" means that human stewardship of God's creation requires both physical labor and wise management of what has been entrusted into one's hands. A key principle that comes out at this point is that stewardship goes with accountability.

This theology of God's ownership also undergirds the Israelites practice of tithes and offerings. The tithe for the Levites (Num. 18:21-24), a celebration tithe of agriculture products (Deut. 12:6, 7, 14:22-26) and the charity tithe (Deut. 14:28, 29). Regardless of the earthly purposes, the core purpose of these offerings

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2 Ransford W. Agbodohu and Quarmyne Churchill, "Corruption in Ghana: Causes, consequences and cures," *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences* (2014). Retrieved on 03/06/2021 from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Corruption-in-Ghana%3A-Causes%2C-consequences-and-cures-Agbodohu-Churchill/a13a87a0ac6525df13fef847ed00dd1ddf8947d9.

3 Douglas J. Hall, *The Steward: A biblical symbol come of age* (London: Hodder &Stoughton, 1977), 32.

4 Ronald Walborn and Frank Chan, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God* (Colorado Springs: The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 2001), 8.

was always to be the heart worship of the God who was the owner and giver of everything (see 2 Chron. 29:14-18). The theme of stewardship continues in the book of Deuteronomy where God instructed Israel to remember that the land truly belonged to him (God) and therefore the Israelites were at best, temporary tenants (Deut. 25:19). Israel does not own the land; God was simply giving what he had created and prepared to them "giving you to possess as an inheritance" (Deut. 25:19 NIV). As stewards (not owners), the Israelites could not do anything they pleased with it.

The covenant people of God in the Old Testament had a very clear understanding of the concept of stewardship. Even their songs of worship contained references and reminders of this important concept. Psalm 24:1-2 says "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who lived in it, for he founded it." Again through the Psalmist, God asserts, "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on the thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine and all that is in it" (Psa. 50:10-12). The Old Testament idea of stewardship with regards to God the creator has three principles: God as the owner of everything, God's people are held responsible for their management and lastly, giving is a worshipful response to God's ownership of all things.

The New Testament uses the words *epitropos and oikonomos* to denote similar positions of the meaning of steward. The exact difference between *epitropos and oikonomos* cannot be clearly defined as they are sometimes almost synonymous. Both words mean the management or caretakership or administration of a household. The person who holds a public office or is in a position of trust is referred to either by the term *epitropos and oikonomos* (1 Cor. 4:1-2, Rom. 16:23, Mat. 20:8, Luke 8:3, Gal. 4:2). The word *oikonomos* is a compound of two Greek words: *oikos* meaning "house" and *nemo* means "to arrange, administer, dispense, distribute or manage."[5] According to A. J. Oosthuizen *oikonomos* is commonly translated as "steward, servant, manager, superintendent, chamberlain, governor, householder and even treasurer to whom the head of the house has entrusted the management of his affairs, namely to take care of receipts and expenditures and to share out the proper portion to every servant."[6] *Oikonomos* then points to a manager or administrator of a household, a person who dispenses the laws of a household, or a public official. The second word *epitropos* is also a compound word, derived from the Greek words, *epi* ("upon") and *trepo* ("to turn or direct, referring to a public officer to whose care something is committed, one who is in a position of trust").[7] The expression refers to a person who has delegated authority over others such as a curator or a guardian, bailiff, agent, guardian of children, overseer of the revenue, or treasurer.[8] Common to all of them is that stewards are responsible for property that does not belong to them and hence, are accountable for what they did with it.

The concept of stewardship was common in the first-century Greco-Roman world in which Jesus lived. Every household of distinction seems to have had a steward in charge. One of the examples was Herod's steward named Chuzas and his wife Joana who among other women followed and ministered to Jesus in Luke 8:3. Another illustration is the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8 who was the treasurer or steward of the Queen of Ethiopia. Jesus, therefore, used the concept of stewardship to teach many lessons. For example, in the parable of the laborers in the Vineyard, Jesus presents the steward (presented as a foreman; see the NIV) as the one who pays the laborers at the close of the day (Mat. 20:8). The parable of the unjust steward best illustrates the practice. This steward had full charge of his master's affairs and could use them to his own advantage if he chose. Yet, he was fully accountable to his master and had to render an account when called upon. If unfaithful, he was usually discharged at once (Lk. 16:1-13). The parables of the Minas

5 William D. Mounce, *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1916.

6 A. J. Oosthuizen, *"Managing the household of God": A study on the managerial principles and skills needed in the effective and efficient management of the church as an organization* (Central University of Technology: Doctor of Business Administration Dissertation, 2016), 79.\

7 Emmanuel Asante *Stewardship: Essays on Ethics of Stewardship.* (Ghana: Wilas Press Limited, 1999), 21.

8 Mounce D. William, Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words. (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2006), 1810.

(Lk 19:12-27), the Talents in Mathew 25:14-30 and the Wicked Husbandmen in Mathew 21:33-46, all teach similar truths. In his warning to his disciples in Luke 12:42-48, Jesus seems to imply that they were to act as stewards in his absence. According to this passage, a steward's task was to manage all the affairs of his master, attend to receipts and expenditures, and portion out to each one of the households what should come to the master. Similarly, the disciples (as stewards) were left in charge of the gospel and were to use this to the best advantage on behalf of others until His return. By analogy, Jesus' parable calls for people to live as responsible and accountable stewards of all that God has entrusted to them.

In addition to Jesus' teachings about stewardship, Paul also presents some principles of stewardship. In Romans 16:23, Erastus is called the *oikonomos* ("treasurer") of the city. Erastus was thus an influential member of the community of Corinth and evidently a faithful Christian. The concept of stewardship consists of more than just material things. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Paul and his fellow laborers regarded themselves as stewards of the mysteries of God. The idea is that he takes scrupulous care of that which was entrusted to him and gives it out to others faithfully and as directed by his master Jesus the Christ. Paul is probably referring to the gospel, the mystery of the manifold wisdom of God that the church has been entrusted to make known (Eph. 3:9-10). Related to this is his use of stewardship (*oikonomos)* to describe his preaching of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 9:16, 17. In this text, Paul states that he has been entrusted with the preaching of the gospel. In Titus 1:7, while listing the qualifications for elders, Paul describes the overseer as God's steward. Paul here is teaching that church leaders who are entrusted with God's church are accountable to God for their oversight.

Background of Daniel 6:1-4

Darius the Mede must not be confused with Darius the one who ruled Persia from 522 to 486 BCE and whose reign saw the restoration of the Temple by the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem.[9] According to Daniel 5:31, Darius the Mede was sixty-two when he conquered Babylon in 539 BCE. This conqueror was the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire located in modern-day Iran. As is often the case with every king after a conquest, the new ruler wants to reorganize the government of the conquered kingdom so as to establish his authority and make things conform to his goals.

The Persians implemented large changes to the former Babylonian government. Satraps or local governors were placed throughout the large Persian Empire. These reported to small central administration that was directly responsible for the king. The number of Satraps Darius then appointed was 120 with three administrators over them. According to Steinmann, "the Aramaic term use here for administrators (*sarak)* is a Persian loanword, reflecting the transition to a new regime."[10] These are comparable to the 127 provinces in the Persian Empire known from the time of King Xerxes in Esther 1:1 and 8:9. The Satraps served as the king's viceroys in each of their provinces. They controlled the military and financial affairs of their respective province and thus possessed much local autonomy and authority.

In an attempt to mitigate damages he might incur on account of unscrupulous officials, Darius appointed three administrators over 120 satraps. Daniel had been promoted to one of these three high-ranking positions that supervised the satraps and reported directly to the king and gave him counsel. Daniel so distinguished himself by his exceptional qualities above the other two administrators that King Darius planned to place him as number two over the entire kingdom. The Masoretic Text credits Daniel's success to an excellent spirit (*ruah yattira)* within him. This reflects the spirit of the holy gods mentioned in Daniel 4:8-9, 18 and 5:11-12, 14. The NIV's translation, "qualities" better describes his aptitude and abilities which were also given by God (Dan. 1:17). This happened because Daniel handled his affairs faithfully. The spiritual principle "whoever is faithful in very little is faithful also in much" is proven true in Daniel's life (Luke 16:10).

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9 Warren W.Wiersbe , *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 1364.

10 Andrew E.Steinmann, *Daniel* (Illinois: Concordia, 2008) , 301.

The author of this story further indicates that the administration of the Persian government was in place so that the king might suffer no loss. This implies that the idea of harm is significant in the story such that the king needed checks and balances against the temptations of political life. Daniel, however, demonstrates that one can serve in political office, even in high political office and retain high morals in service to the Lord. He led a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. In other words, Daniel was cut above the rest. He stood head and shoulders above the others.

This administration, like most other organizations held opportunities for government workers to demonstrate higher aptitudes and move up to a higher rank. However, showing such life brought the possibility of jealous and sullen opposition from those who were not moving up the government ladder with dignity. Daniel once again demonstrated the excellent nature of his God-given gift but attracted hostility from his colleagues who tried to bring him down to their level of mediocrity. His colleagues scrutinized Daniel and his work to find a way to gain the king's favor and cause Daniel to be disfavored. It can get lonely at the top as success can multiply your enemies. The blessings of the righteous can stir up the jealousy of the wicked. Those who are blessed and honored by the Lord can expect the same trio to come their way as well. Such conflicts among officials are no doubt common in this country, Ghana. As the story goes, these conspirators were almost out of options to degrade Daniel and make him look bad. It is to be noted that the two jealous administrators sought to undermine Daniel's chances for success although not by demonstrating his incompetence but rather by challenging his character. Ironically, their corruption was clearly implied.

Close Reading of Daniel 6:1-4

Daniel, a Steward in a Foreign Land (vv. 1-2)

> *It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss.*[11]

The first point to observe in this chapter (Dan. 6) is that Daniel had learned to live as a pilgrim in a foreign land. From the outset of his career in Babylon, Daniel had resolved to serve the Lord of the Jews and not to be stained by Babylonian culture (Dan. 1:8). Far from using his seventy years of age as an excuse to retire, he continued to serve the new administration.[12] Belshazzar had been replaced as king by Darius and the Babylonian empire had been replaced by that of the Medes and Persians, but Daniel kept on serving. Daniel served the empire so well that he continued to get promoted. He became one of the three administrators that King Darius appointed over the 120 satraps of his kingdom (Dan. 6:1-2). It could mean that Daniel being the third ruler under King Belshazzar in Daniel 5:29 received the king's reward in spite of his death. Yet, Daniel did an excellent job in this role that Darius planned to set him in an even higher position, over the whole kingdom (Dan. 6:3).

Another truth from this section is that Daniel suffered persecution in a foreign land. Daniel recognized himself as a pilgrim in this world, more so in Babylon. Pilgrims understand that this world is not their home and therefore they should not be surprised if their welcome is less than warm. When Daniel's enemies brought the charge against him before the king, they called him "Daniel, the exile from Judah" (Dan. 6:13). They meant to insult him, a disgrace that after all these years of living in Babylon, he was still essentially foreign. This was the highest commendation they could give Daniel after all these years. Even though he served the empire faithfully, Babylon was not his home. As noted earlier, Daniel decided strongly not to defile himself with anything from the King's table (Dan. 1:8). He accepted the will of God for his life and served the Babylonian community, yet he also inwardly resisted the assimilation process of the Babylonian empire. He refused to give in to the Babylonian name but did maintain his Jewish name and identity as well. He did not become Belteshazzar, even though he answered to that name. He preserved his Hebrew name as a marker of who he really is.

[11] The authors have adopted the NIV text for Daniel 6:1-4 for the exegesis and exposition.

[12] Iain M. Duguid , *Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008), 106.

Testimony of Reputation in the Life of Daniel (v. 3)

> *Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.*

Testimony is the firsthand authentication, verification or attestation and proof of a fact. It is an open knowledge or a public profession either orally or written about something or somebody's characteristics. Daniel continued to show an outward sign of virtue. The key to Daniel's success as already mentioned was because he had an extraordinary spirit. Even though Daniel lived as a steward in a foreign land, this had become the consistent witness and testimony of his life for some time. In Daniel 4:8, Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel "a spirit of the holy gods" as a reference to the spirit of the Holy God functioning in him. Nebuchadnezzar understood Daniel's skills as the influence of pagan gods Bel for Marduk, the city and national god of Babylon,[13] ignoring the God of gods, the Most High God. The latter two elements in Daniel's Babylonian name, *sar-usur* (sha-zzar) mean "protect the king."[14] Daniel was seen by king Nebuchadnezzar as the god who protects the king and so has the ability to correctly decode the dreams of the king.

The text emphasizes the Spirit of God at work in Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar notes this again in Daniel 4:18 when he had come to be aware of Daniels' ingenuity to interpret his dreams. He reiterated his confidence in Daniel's ability to tell him what the dream meant. Nebuchadnezzar recognized and acknowledged that Daniel possesses an ability that others did not. The king did not need a "yes man" but rather a true man who will speak truth into his life, and Daniel was such a man. The queen will reaffirm it in Daniel 5:12 as a man with an excellent spirit, knowledge and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve problems" while King Belshazzar will join the same chorus in Daniel 5:14 that "I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you." Belshazzar repeats the queenmother's praise on Daniel, revealing that his reputation precedes him. Daniel's rise to power is not to be attributed so much if at all to his natural abilities or exceptional giftedness. It is to be attributed to his walk with God and the work of God in his life. Daniel reflects the James 3:17 man who possessed spiritual wisdom that comes from above and allowed himself for God to make him the man he wanted.

How Darius came to know of Daniel is never mentioned. But since every employer needs a faithful, intelligent and experienced employee in his job, Darius would have also heard of the same reputation of "exceptional qualities and the endowment with a divine spirit" in Daniel that had already been affirmed by Nebuchadnezzar, the Queen and King Belshazzar. The indwelling of this divine excellent spirit made Daniel become distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps which affirmed Darius considering elevating the Hebrew civil servant to an unspecified position of supremacy in the kingdom. Daniel as a servant of the Most High God took a resolution from the beginning of his exile not to defile himself but to guard his reputation.

Honesty versus Corruption (v. 4)

> *At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.*

Even while Daniel served the Babylonian and Persian empires well, he was not shaped by their values. Graft and corruption were widespread in the ancient world, as they are much of the modern world. How easy it would have been for Daniel to justify taking a little back of everything the Empire had stolen from people. Yet, Daniel's life was so completely free from corruption and negligence that his enemies could find nothing to use against him, even when they searched diligently for it. His enemies scrutinized his abilities and dignity and found him above reproach. They recognized that they would never find fault with him unless it was in

[13] Shea H. William, *Belteshazzar meets Belshazzar* (Spring: Andrews University Press, 1988), 61-80.

[14] William, *Belteshazzar meets Belshazzar,* 61-80.

regard to the law of his God. This is an incredible testimonial from the enemies of Daniel and of his God.

In the service of Daniel as a government official, he distinguished himself above the other two administrators that King Darius planned to place him as number two over the entire kingdom. This speaks well of the honesty that Daniel exhibited with the excellent spirit that was in him. When Daniel was given the work to do, the king knew it will be done thoroughly with excellence and dignity. Rodney Stortz has stated that "the king did not have to look over his shoulders all the time or worry about whether the job would be done."[15] Daniel was honest and trustworthy without negligence to duty or corruption. In all his years of service, there was not one blemish on Daniel's record and he was not corrupt but trustworthy and diligent in discharging his responsibilities.

Stewardship Principles in Daniel 6:1-4

The Principle of Ownership

A foundational idea of stewardship is the concept of "owner" and the "steward." God is the owner of everything and humans are trustees/stewards. David makes this point when he says "Everything comes from you [God]" (1 Chron. 29:14). As evident in the above analysis, Daniel's public life is rooted in this owner-steward principle. Daniel recognized that he does not own the administrative area under his care. God had given him an administrative role through King Darius. In this case, the King could be considered as the owner who employs Daniel to be in the position of a high official. This means that Daniel had delegated power from the King to make sure that things go on well for the king and the Persian economy so that the king suffers no loss. This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship (Psa. 24:1-2). In the beginning, God created everything and put Adam in the garden to work it and to take care of it. Humans were created to be stewards of God's creation. God is the ultimate Owner of everything; humans are simply stewards, managers or administrators acting on his behalf. Given this understanding, stewardship could be regarded as an expression of human obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under their control. In other words, stewardship is the commitment of one's self and possessions to God's service recognizing that man does not have the right of control over their properties.

The Principle of Service and Responsibility

One idea drawn from the concept of stewardship is that owners have rights while stewards have responsibilities. This idea of stewardship from Scripture has its grounding in the institution of slavery. In the institution of slavery, the master appoints a slave to administer his household. Here, stewardship means the service of trust according to directions.[16] It follows from the above that from a biblical perspective, stewardship implies the function of delegated responsibility.

Although God gives man everything to enjoy, nothing belongs to man. God owns everything and so man is responsible for how he treats it and what he does with it. Daniel was called by Darius to manage that which belongs to the king. Daniel was called to serve the Persian government and has the responsibility of serving diligently. Daniel sought to maintain his faithfulness to God by working within the Babylonian system, not against it. Responsibilities involve a great concern for the work to grow without negligence of duty and intentions to destroy it. Daniel proved this in his responsibilities as a high official with no corruption in him or negligence of duty. He was among the three officials whose service was recommended for promotion by king Darius.

Daniel kept the experience of time in exile as a moment of service. He helps readers understand time as a moment in which they render service to God and humanity with the opportunities they get. Jesus said in John 9:4 that "As long as it is day, we must keep doing the work of him who sent me." The idea in Daniel's appointment as a high official helps in knowing that time understood as *chronos* must provide the opportunity to offer to God loyal and eager service in relation to service to humanity in the spirit of Christian

[15] Rodney Stortz, *The Triumph of God's Kingdom* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004), 108.

[16] Asante, *Stewardship: essays on ethics of stewardship,* 21.

love and concern which in turn reveals God's glory. This is a divine challenge that must confront every believer in his/her daily work to put him/herself obediently at God's service for human benefit.

Daniel's public life also highlights that authority is an avenue for service. According to Bernard Zylstra, "Authority is an office that is a channel for the realization of divine norms in social relationship."[17] This means that authority derives from God who has established the norms that should hold for human life. It means that humans must exercise all authority for the welfare of those subject to it. It must be to promote justice, ensure peace and tranquility, protection of human property etc. however, politicians and all office bearers are to execute their administrative, executive, legislative and judicial office for the good of the citizens with a distinguished ability as did Daniel.

The principle of service and responsibility serves as a very important principle for dealing with mediocre services rendered by some workers in Ghana. There are many people in Ghana who intentionally commit themselves to negligence, corruption and many intentional errors which result in losses for companies. In many a case, the various dismissals that take place in this country usually involve Christians with charges of pilfering, negligence and obstinacy in job places. In contemporary times, political positions are used as avenues for corrupt practices, untrustworthiness and unfaithful discharge of duties. The lackadaisical attitude of people in the public sector confirms the Akan saying, *Aban edwuma, won soa* (lit. "Government work is not carried on our shoulders). This research requires the understanding that all persons are also called as God's stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted mankind with the care, development and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, they are responsible to manage his holdings well and according to his desires and purpose. God has called each one to serve and each one is accountable for the service rendered.

The Principle of Accountability

The principle of service and responsibility leads to accountability where one comes to explain what he/she did and why he/she did it at the time that it was done. To account is to give a reckoning or accounts of something that they have entrusted into one's hands. As emphasized in the preceding paragraphs, by virtue of the fact that the steward is a trustee, he/she is accountable to his/her master who owns all that has been entrusted to him/her. This implies that Daniel as a high official will have a moment of reckoning when Darius would expect him to give an account of his position. This shall determine his reward or punishment. If Darius planned to reward Daniel by setting him over the whole kingdom, then it could mean that Daniel with an excellent spirit in him gave a good account of his position to the king that pleased the king to reward him. From the Christian perspective, this means that people in power are answerable not only to those over whom they exercise their power but also to God, the absolute power who alone provides the delimiting aspect of power in this world. The wielder of power must not lose sight of the fact that the day of accountability before God will surely come.

By implication, the gospel, the churches, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, none of these wonderful blessings belongs to man. Humans are the gracious recipient of the good things of God. Therefore, they are responsible for their use on this earth, and will ultimately be held accountable for their faithfulness to them. The New Testament reminds readers of the Christian day of reckoning before the judgment seat of Christ. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 makes it clear that "so whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Therefore, all men are stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to their care and one day each one of them will be called to give an account of how they have managed what the master has provided. Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-20 and Lk. 19:12-27), each one will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given, including our time, money, information, relationships, authority and wisdom.

[17] Bernard Zylstra, "The Bible, Justice and the State (An Exploration)," *International Reformed Bulletin* 55 (16) (1973), 11.

The Principle of Reward and Punishment

As responsibilities go with accountability, so accountability results in either punishment or reward. Daniel, like Joseph before him, was entrusted with a distinguished position in a foreign kingdom. He executed well his duties as a leader, all the while showcasing the greatness of his God through his unflinching integrity and devotion. However, with this unflinching integrity and devotion, the king planned to reward Daniel by setting him over the whole kingdom. This reward of Darius reads like the master's speech in Mathew 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." Daniel in proving himself faithful as a high official over satraps was also rewarded with much "I will make thee ruler over many things." Jesus shows in the Parable of the Kingdom that faithful stewards who do the master's will with the little resources available to them, can expect to be rewarded incompletely in this life but fully in the next.

CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that stewardship is rooted in the fact that God (as the owner of everything) delegated authority of service to humanity from the beginning. The exposition on Daniel 6:1-4 revealed Daniels's faithfulness, honesty and integrity as a faithful servant of God as key to his success in the foreign land of Babylon. He so distinguished himself that King Darius planned to set him over the entire kingdom. Based on the text, the paper examined stewardship principles such as service and responsibility, accountability, and reward and punishment. The main argument has been that one's faith must be expressed in the public sphere in response to issues of societal concern. Therefore, rather than privatizing their faith, contemporary Christians must encounter the public domain with their faith and in the process transform human society both spiritually and socio-politically. It is hoped that, when Christian Stewardship is developed and promoted, it will have the possibility of enhancing public relevance with the Christian faith.

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