

GOD'S ECONOMY – OUR STEWARDSHIP

(Revised August 27, 2013)

Stewardship Workshop – XXII Diocesan Council-Sobor, Christ the Saviour Educational Center
1:30 – 3:30 PM, Monday, October 21, 2013

'While Gathering/Settling' [1] Stewardship Commission's Mission Statement

Introduction [2]

Our next segment is entitled 'GOD'S ECONOMY – OUR STEWARDSHIP.' We're going to engage in what we might call a "word study." Doesn't it seem appropriate that a solid grounding in the practice of Stewardship should have at its foundation a clear understanding of the meaning of the word itself? What does the word *Stewardship* really mean?

[3] So let's begin with a look at how the word *stewardship* originated, and how it was used in its original from a Biblical point of view.

The title of this presentation was on the previous slide, and that gives it away. Can you remember what that title is? God's Economy – Our Stewardship. The word *stewardship* is directly related to the word *economy* or *economics*. The word *stewardship* –which will be the main focus of this presentation – comes to us as an English translation of the Greek word for economy: *oikonomia*. But we're not talking about "trickle-down economics" or "the economy of oil" or other worldly ways of talking about economy. And we're not going to talk about the state of the economy after the fall of the stock market in 2008 (or for anyone who might be in my age group, we're not going to talk about the crash in 1929, either). What we ARE going to talk about is the *economy of God*.

Originally written in Greek, the language of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, this short phrase [4] "the economy of God" incorporates the answer to every truly important question raised by man.

- What is the purpose of human existence?
- What is the goal of human life?
- Why is God one, and yet three – the Father, Son, and Spirit?
- Why does God so love the world?
- How is God’s tremendous love for mankind manifested?
- What will be the consummation – the final end - of everything in the universe?

The answer to each of these questions is wrapped up in *God’s economy*. God’s economy is simply His plan for all creation. What God desires is that human beings return to the condition in which they were created: that is, in the image and likeness of God. God Himself has made this possible through Christ. When God became human in Christ, He made it possible for all to become Christ-like. This is God’s plan. This is God’s economics. [5] God’s economics answer all the questions we have, so:

- How can we know God’s plan?
- How does He carry it out?
- How can we participate in it?

Although the term *economy* is widely known, its usage in the context of the things of God is unfamiliar, even to many Christians. As we said, *economy* is the English form of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which occurs throughout the New Testament. [6] *Oikonomia* is a compound noun composed of *oikos*, which means “house,” and *nomos*, which means “law.” Therefore, *economy* denotes the law, the rules, the administration, or the management of the resources of a household. Its original, but now outdated usage referred to a system or a plan needed by wealthy householders to dispense food and other necessities to all the members of the household. More generally, *economy* refers to a plan or arrangement designed to carry out a certain purpose.

Think of our God as an immensely wealthy householder. He desires to share His unsearchable riches (Ephesians 3:8) with all of His people. And to accomplish this immense task He provided a plan, an arrangement – an *economy*.

[7] God's economy is His plan to carry out His eternal purpose in man. St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, speaks of "the good pleasure of His will," revealing to us that God has a *good pleasure*, a heart's delight. In other words, something that makes Him happy! God is not impassive, GOD HAS FEELINGS! His heart burns with the longing to gain an expression among the human race that will forever satisfy Him. He was therefore willing to pay a tremendous price and, in Christ, willing to undergo a costly process in order to pursue, attract, and win the heart of mankind over for His economy; His grand plan. We can see that His attention is fixed and His heart is set on the fulfillment of His economy.

The crucial focus of God's economy is to provide a way for man to return to the image in which he was created, to what mankind was before the Fall. God provides this way back through Himself as the Divine Trinity. God the Father is the Source, the Originator of all creation; He made all humans in His image and likeness. God the Son is the One through whom this plan is accomplished; and God the Holy Spirit is the instrument through whom God's economy is made possible in each of us.

[8] In God's economy, Christ is everything. His person and work constitute the center as well as the circumference of the entire sphere of divine activity in the economy of God. Again according to St. Paul, before all time God made His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. Then, in the realm of time, Christ accomplished God's economy through the processes of His incarnation (that is, by taking a body, mind and soul that are in every way - except for sin - like ours), than in the life that He lived on this earth, in His death, resurrection, and ascension.

In His incarnation, Christ brought the infinite God into the finite man. In His human living, Christ expressed the bountiful God in His rich attributes through Christ's human virtues. In His death, Christ redeemed all of the good things created

by God that had subsequently fallen through sin. He brought to an end all things of the old creation, and released the divine life. In His Resurrection, Christ was begotten by God in His humanity to be the Firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33), He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45b), and He regenerated the believers to become His body (1 Peter 1:3). In His ascension, Christ was officially inaugurated to be the Lord of all.

[9] This slide expands upon Christ's accomplishments of God's economy with a wealth of Scriptural passages. A more detailed copy, including the scriptural texts has been included as Table I of your 'Homework' in the sincere hope that when you do get home you will use it to gain a better understanding of Christ's central place in God's Economy. Please do this in your private prayer and study, or as a family, or as a Church school series. Our Bishop has told us that we should never stop learning!

So now, incarnated, resurrected, and ascended – having accomplished His earthly mission, Christ is on the throne of God in the heavens (Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 22:1) administering the universe in order to continually carry out God's economy.

[10] Furthermore, Christ's human nature is the very nature of all people, making possible their full salvation and growth back into that image in which they were created. So we - as the Orthodox Church teaches - being in Christ, we live both in heaven and on earth at the same time.

Thus, our experience of God's economy has everything to do with receiving and enjoying the riches of the divine life: our salvation. The entire New Testament charges us to receive the Holy Spirit as our breath (John 20:22), drink the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), and eat and drink Christ (John 6:57). Such enjoyment of Christ in this way

causes us to grow in the divine life (1 Peter 2:2), thereby gradually transforming us into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

[11] The goal of God's economy is to transform us by Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and to conform us into His glorious image (Romans 8:29). Those in the process of this transformation constitute the church, the Body of Christ in the present age (Ephesians 1:22b-23; Colossians 1:18). Ultimately, God's economy will consummate in the New Jerusalem, which will exist throughout eternity as the complete expression of the Triune God in humanity.

[12] Getting back into our Word Study mode, we notice that Bible translators have employed a variety of English words in their attempts to translate the term *oikonomia*. In some instances, *oikonomia* has to do with God's overall plan.

But other verses refer not to God's economy in a general sense, but to **man's participation and service in God's economy**. In these latter cases, *oikonomia* is more accurately described as stewardship.

So we see that this same word *oikonomia* in the original text is used to express two quite different, yet closely related meanings. We've come to a place in our word study where we should examine some of the English words that have been used to translate *oikonomia* in several different scriptural contexts, but we would need more time than is available to us. So once again we've resorted to including materials in your 'Homework' so that you can study on your own why this word *oikonomia* sometimes refers to God's economy and at other times to our place as *Stewards* in His economy.

Table II in your packets compares variant English translations of the word *oikonomia* in verses referring to God's overall plan for creation generally. Table III

compares translations of the same word *oikonomia* in the verses that refer to **mankind's participation and service in God's economy – on Stewardship.**

[13] The term *oikonomia* can be found in the Gospel of St. Luke and Saint Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians and the Colossians. The related term *oikonomos*, meaning a steward, a freed-man or a slave of what God or others give us, or what we are trusted with, can also be found in those books, as well as in Saint Paul's letter to Titus. These words are used in the context of money, management, economy and stewardship.

The *oikonomia*, stewardship, described in the letter to the Ephesians refers to a distribution of Divine treasure which has been committed by God to chosen representatives so that they may be faithfully administered by them.

[14] *Ephesians 3:2, 9* "if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God that was given to me for you ... and to make all to see what is the stewardship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ".

To Paul was committed the 'stewardship' or the administration of God's grace. Paul's specific calling was to reveal this previously unknown grace, revealed to him through the Person of Christ, to the gentiles. The revelation of that secret is in effect, the world-wide distribution, through the steward of God, of the news and the blessings of the Gospel.

[15] *1 Peter 4:10* "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." -- We should be good stewards of what Peter calls *varied grace*, grace in different aspects and of different categories. As good stewards, by the gift we have received we should minister to the church and the saints such grace, not merely doctrine or any vain thing.

The exhortation by Peter (1 Peter 4:10) for one to minister (*diakoneo*) as good stewards (*oikonomos*) certainly recalls the Lord's word to Peter to feed His sheep/lambs (John 21:15-17). Peter in his epistle shows what is involved in being God's stewards. The word is preached and regeneration results (1 Peter 1:23); the newborn is fed by the milk of the word (2:2); and each believer is built up into a spiritual house with others (2:5). This is God's stewardship.

[16] Just who is the steward? Every apostle is a steward of God. As an apostle, Paul was a steward who dispensed the riches of God to His spiritual children. Here "stewardship" can be clearly distinguished from "economy": The stewardship is according to God's economy. With God it is a matter of economy; with us it is a matter of stewardship. All the saints, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, have a stewardship according to God's economy. This means that every saint – every one of us! - can instill Christ into others.

[17] These passages clearly indicate that stewardship is a reflection of our spiritual condition! And this makes it very clear that we should never separate money and finances from our spiritual life. The distinction that the material world is not for the Christian is an old heresy called *Gnosticism*. Just as the good news of the Gospel belongs to God, so does the material world! And we are the stewards, the caretakers, of it. So, how we allocate the resources that God places in our care is a primary Christian duty that has no separation from the spiritual depth of Biblical character and maturity. All of the areas in our life; our work, our learning, our relationships, our spiritual gifts, and our material resources will be either to God's glory through our obedience to Him, or through our disobedience or laziness, will ultimately come to nothing but waste.

[18] The crucial concept that is missing from many Christians' understanding of Stewardship is that God does indeed own everything, including even what is in your name! To use the words of the original language in the metaphor to explain it: the Church is the *oikia* (that is, the house); the Church's members are the *oikeioi* (that is, the ones living in the house), the plan on which God distributes His blessings is called the *oikonomia* (that is, the great economy, the great Plan of God. God Himself is the great *oikonomos* (that is the owner, the dispenser of everything to those living in the house).

[19] *Titus 1:7 "For an overseer must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money"* -- Paul discusses in Titus the qualifications of an overseer, or elder. He mentions that one "of the qualifications of the elders" is that of "being the overseer as a steward of God." The "overseer" referred to here is, of course, the bishop. The commission of the *episcopos* (bishop) is, in the end, from God and not from man. He is God's steward, the steward of His mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1) and of His manifold grace (1 Peter 4:10). It is to God, not to man, that he is responsible for the due discharge of his office.

[20] **Toward a Definition of Stewardship**

What then is Stewardship? It seems the simplest answer to that question is that stewardship is *the care of someone else's resources*. All we have is Someone else's resources. My dear friends, in truth, we do not really own anything. God owns all and we are only stewards, caretakers of God's things.

Stewardship honors God with all of the relationships and resources in our life! Thus, we are able to give Him gratitude for what He did for us and recognize His sovereignty, which is His control and ownership of all things. In this way we can

honor Him with our worship as well as with the material goods and abilities that He has entrusted to us in this world.

[21] Stewardship is a **priority**! We need to take what we have and put it to the right use. Stewardship is exercising the gifts God gives, not letting them waste away. We are to find them and put them to use with joy. To do otherwise is a big waste and a travesty. Stewardship is being His faithful servant. It is the understanding of who we are in Him and being grateful for that. In addition, it is being willing to put forth the effort to please Him, even though we do not have to – He has given us free will, you know! Stewardship is recognizing that each one of us belongs to Him as a human being in His grace. It is recognizing that the Church is not the building, but the Body of Christ’s believers that not only gathers for worship, but leaves for worship at the end of the Liturgy! Stewardship is being wise to the ways of the world, so we do not fall prey to it. Stewardship is recognizing that we, as Christians, as well as everything in creation, belong to God.

[22] Stewardship is proportionate to what we are able to give. The poor person’s small gift is just as important as the rich person’s big gift! Sometimes, we cannot give as much as we would like to, maybe because of economic realities, job loss, business isn’t good, sickness, etc. So, we give honestly and efficiently whatever we can.

[23] Stewardship is the wise use of our material goods and abilities, as well as our time. Stewardship is a balance – of not being reckless with what we are entrusted with, but also of not hiding from our duty by being *too* cautious or frugal, either.

Stewardship is the comfort of knowing that everything comes from God. He gives us our clarity and the vision and character of what to be and what to do. We can trust in Him, and not in our materialistic goods.

Stewardship is the giving of ourselves and our resources with joy and gratitude for what we have been given. Stewardship is not something that results from a forced obligation or a bad attitude.

[24] Stewardship is not worrying, but rather, trusting in Christ. Stewardship is not just focusing on our self-interests, but on His interests and on the interests of others as well.

[25] Stewardship means knowing that God is concerned with us personally-- what we go through, what we deal with, and how we manage what He entrusts to us. Stewardship is focusing on God and not on material things in and of themselves. We are always to view the material world with the perspective of being God's caretaker of it, not with a view toward accumulating wealth, nor of wasting what is His.

[26] Stewardship is the attitude of gratitude, being thankful in all things, even when we do not feel gratitude or see it. Stewardship sees every purchase as an investment, from food and gas, to houses and cars.

[27] *FINALE* Stewardship is about being in community, working together and complementing one another's gifts and abilities with what we can offer. It is the way we use the gifts He has given us in order to benefit the people in our church as well as all of the people He places around us.

Stewardship, my dear friends, is precisely how we live out God's two greatest commandments: To love Him with all of our heart, soul and mind; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen!

[28] *Final Slide (Theotokos) – Leave this one up*] Thank you! May God bless you for your great patience! And much more importantly, may He bless all of us as we strive to become better stewards of the wonderful gifts that He uniquely entrusts to each of us!

GOD’S ECONOMY – OUR STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Workshop – XXII Diocesan Council-Sobor
Christ the Saviour Educational Center

Monday, October 21, 2013

Your “Homework” Assignment

The following material supplements the 22nd Diocesan Council-Sobor stewardship workshop presentation entitled *God’s Economy – Our Stewardship*, a word study.

We hope that you will use this additional material to enrich your understanding of God’s Economy and Our Stewardship, His grand plan that offers mankind – you and I – a way back to the blessed life that we were created for, the way of life before the Fall.

The text and PowerPoint slides that were used in the Sobor presentation are available from the Stewardship area of the Diocesan web site:

<http://www.acrod.org/ministries/development/stewardship>.

The numbers in brackets [...] refer to the numbers of the PowerPoint slides from the Sobor presentation.

[7] The crucial focus of God’s economy is the provision of a way for man to return to the image in which he was created, to what mankind was before the Fall. God provides this way back through Himself as the Divine Trinity. God the Father is the Source, the Originator of all creation; He made all humans in His image and likeness. God the Son is the One through whom this plan is accomplished; and God the Spirit is the instrument through whom God’s economy is made possible in each of us.

[8] In God’s economy, Christ is everything. His person and work constitute the center as well as the circumference of the entire sphere of divine activity in the economy of God. Again according to St. Paul, before all time God made His eternal

purpose in Christ Jesus. Then, in the realm of time, Christ accomplished God’s economy through the processes of His incarnation, in the life that He lived on this earth, His death, resurrection, and ascension. In His incarnation, Christ brought the infinite God into the finite man. In His human living, Christ expressed the bountiful God in His rich attributes through Christ’s human virtues. In His death, Christ redeemed all of the good things created by God that had subsequently fallen through sin. He brought to an end all things of the old creation, and released the divine life. In His Resurrection, Christ was begotten by God in His humanity to be the Firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33), He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45b), and He regenerated the believers to become His body (1 Peter 1:3). In His ascension, Christ was officially inaugurated to be the Lord of all.

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Table I

Process	Accomplishments
Incarnation	Bringing the infinite God into the finite man (John 1:1), <i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.</i> (John 1:14) <i>And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.</i> (Colossians 2:9) <i>for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily</i>

Human Living	<p>Expressing the bountiful God in His rich attributes through Christ's human virtues - remember the widow of Nain whose only son had just died? (Luke 7:13-16) <i>And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people.</i></p>
Crucifixion	<p>Redeeming all the things created by God and fallen in sin (Colossians 1:20) <i>And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens</i> Terminating all things of the old creation (Romans 6:6) <i>knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin</i> Releasing the divine life (John 12:24) <i>Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.</i></p>
Resurrection	<p>Being begotten as the Firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33) <i>God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.</i>(Romans 8:29) <i>For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.</i>Becoming the life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45b) <i>The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.</i> Regenerating all the believers (1 Peter 1:3) <i>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his</i></p>

	<i>great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead</i>
Ascension	Being inaugurated to be the Lord of all (Acts 2:36) <i>Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.</i> Pouring out the Spirit of power upon His believers (Acts 2:2-4) <i>And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.</i>

Now, incarnated, resurrected, and ascended – having accomplished His earthly mission, Christ is on the throne of God in the heavens (Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 22:1) administering the universe in order to continually carry out God’s economy.

[10] Furthermore, Christ’s human nature is the very nature of all people, making possible their full salvation and growth back into that image in which they were created. So, as we Orthodox teach, in Christ, we live both in heaven and on earth at the same time.

Thus, our experience of God’s economy has everything to do with receiving and enjoying the riches of the divine life: our salvation. The entire New Testament charges us to receive the Holy Spirit as our breath (John 20:22), drink the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), and eat and drink Christ (John 6:57). Such enjoyment of Christ in this way causes us to grow in the divine life (1 Peter 2:2), thereby gradually transforming us into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

[11] The goal of God's economy is to transform us by Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and to conform us into His glorious image (Romans 8:29). Those in the process of this transformation constitute the church, the Body of Christ in the present age (Ephesians 1:22b-23; Colossians 1:18). Ultimately, God's economy will consummate in the New Jerusalem, which will exist throughout eternity as the complete expression of the Triune God in humanity.

[12] Bible translators have employed a variety of English words in their attempts to translate the term *oikonomia*. In some instances, such as 1 Timothy 1:4 and Ephesians 1:10 and 3:9, *oikonomia* has to do with God's overall plan.

Other verses, such as 1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 3:2, and Colossians 1:25 refer not to God's economy in a general sense, but to **man's participation and service in God's economy**. In such cases, *oikonomia* is more accurately described as stewardship.

Once again we would like to have more time than is available to us. We've come to a place in our word study where it would be good to compare the English words used to translate *oikonomia* in different scriptural contexts. So once again we've resorted to including materials in your 'Homework' so that you can study on your own why this word *oikonomia* sometimes refers to God's economy and at other times to our place as *Stewards* in His economy.

Table II in your packets compares variant English translations of the word *oikonomia* in the first three of the six verses mentioned above; that is, referring to God's overall plan for creation generally. Table III compares translations of the same word *oikonomia* in the second three verses mentioned above – that is, on **mankind's participation and service in God's economy – on Stewardship**.

Table II – Translating ‘God’s Economy’ – In His Overall Plan

Key: NIV	New International Version	RSV	Revised Standard Version
KJV	King James Version	NKJV/OSB	New King James Version/ Orthodox Study Bible
DBY	Darby Version	YLT	Young’s Literal Translation
NASB	New American Standard Bible	AMP	Amplified Bible

oikonomia: <i>economy</i>			
Translation	1 Timothy 1:4	Ephesians 1:10	Ephesians 3:9
NIV	work	put into effect	administration
RSV	training	plan	plan
KJV	edifying	dispensation	fellowship
NKJV/OSB	edification	dispensation	fellowship
DBY	dispensation	administration	administration
YLT	building up	dispensation	fellowship
NASB	administration	administration	administration
AMP	administration	planned	plan

I Timothy 1:4...

Translation	Text
NIV	nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's <i>work</i> —which is by faith.
RSV	nor to occupy themselves with myths and genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine <i>training</i> that is in faith
KJV	Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly <i>edifying</i> which is in faith
NKJV/OSB	nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than

	godly <i>edification</i> which is in faith
Darby	nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly <i>edification</i> which is in faith
YLT	nor to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, that cause questions rather than the <i>building up</i> of God that is in faith
NASB	nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the <i>administration</i> of God which is by faith
AMP	Nor to give importance to or occupy themselves with legends (fables, myths) and endless genealogies, which foster and promote useless speculations and questionings rather than acceptance in faith of God's <i>administration</i> and the divine training that is in faith

Ephesians 1:10...

Translation	Text
NIV	to be <i>put into effect</i> when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ
RSV	as a <i>plan</i> for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
KJV	That in the <i>dispensation</i> of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him
NKJV/OSB	that in the <i>dispensation</i> of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both ^[a] which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.
Darby	for [the] <i>administration</i> of the fullness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him,
YLT	in regard to the <i>dispensation</i> of the fullness of the times, to bring into one the whole in the Christ, both the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth - - in him
NASB	with a view to an <i>administration</i> suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him
AMP	[He <i>planned</i>] for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ, [both] things in heaven and things on the earth.

Ephesians 3:9...

Translation	Text
NIV	and to make plain to everyone the <i>administration</i> of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things
RSV	and to make all men see what is the <i>plan</i> of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things

KJV	And to make all men see what is the <i>fellowship</i> of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ
NKJV/OSB	and to make all see what <i>is</i> the <i>fellowship</i> of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ
Darby	and to enlighten all [with the knowledge of] what is the <i>administration</i> of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things
YLT	and to cause all to see what [is] the <i>fellowship</i> of the secret that hath been hid from the ages in God, who the all things did create by Jesus Christ
NASB	and to bring to light what is the <i>administration</i> of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;
AMP	Also to enlighten all men and make plain to them what is the <i>plan</i> [regarding the Gentiles and providing for the salvation of all men] of the mystery kept hidden through the ages and concealed until now in [the mind of] God Who created all things by Christ Jesus.

Table III – Translating *Man’s Participation* in ‘God’s Economy’

Key:	NIV	New International Version	RSV	Revised Standard Version
	KJV	King James Version	NKJV/OSB	New King James Version/ Orthodox Study Bible
	DBY	Darby Version	YLT	Young’s Literal Translation
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oikonomia: <i>economy</i>			
Translation	1 Corinthians 9:17	Ephesians 3:2	Colossians 1:25
NIV	committed	administration	commission
RSV	commission	stewardship	divine office
KJV	committed	dispensation	dispensation

NKJV/OSB	stewardship	dispensation	stewardship
DBY	administration	administration	dispensation
YLT	stewardship	dispensation	dispensation
NASB	stewardship	stewardship	stewardship
AMP	trusteeship and commission	stewardship	stewardship

I Corinthians 9:17...

Translation	Text
NIV	If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust <i>committed</i> to me.
RSV	For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a <i>commission</i> .
KJV	For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is <i>committed</i> unto me.
NKJV/OSB	For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a <i>stewardship</i> .
Darby	For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with an <i>administration</i> .
YLT	For if willing I do this, I have a reward; and if unwillingly – with a <i>stewardship</i> I have been entrusted!
NASB	For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a <i>stewardship</i> entrusted to me.
AMP	For if I do this work of my own free will, then I have my pay (my reward); but if it is not of my own will, but is done reluctantly and under compulsion, I am [still] entrusted with a [sacred] <i>trusteeship and commission</i> .

Ephesians 3:2...

Translation	Text
NIV	Surely you have heard about the <i>administration</i> of God's grace that was given to me for you
RSV	Assuming that you have heard of the <i>stewardship</i> of God's grace that was given to me for you
KJV	If ye have heard of the <i>dispensation</i> of the grace of God which is given to me you-ward
NKJV/OSB	If indeed you have heard of the <i>dispensation</i> of the grace of God that was given to me for you
Darby	if indeed ye have heard of the <i>administration</i> of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you

YLT	If, indeed, ye did hear of the <i>dispensation</i> of the grace of God that was given to me in regard to you
NASB	If indeed you have heard of the <i>stewardship</i> of God's grace which was given to me for you
AMP	Assuming that you have heard of the <i>stewardship</i> of God's grace (His unmerited favor) that was entrusted to me [to dispense to you] for your benefit

Colossians 1:25...

Translation	Text
NIV	I have become its servant by the <i>commission</i> God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness
RSV	Of which I became a minister according to the <i>divine office</i> which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known
KJV	Whereof I am made a minister, according to the <i>dispensation</i> of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God
NKJV/OSB	Of which I became a minister according to the <i>stewardship</i> from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.
Darby	Of which I became minister, according to the <i>dispensation</i> of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God
YLT	Of which I – I did become a ministrant according to the <i>dispensation</i> of God, that was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God
NASB	Of this church I was made a minister according to the <i>stewardship</i> from God bestowed on me for you benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God
AMP	In it I became a minister in accordance with the divine <i>stewardship</i> which was entrusted to me for you [as its object and for your benefit], to make the Word of God fully know [among you]

A Bible Study - Answers and Questions on Stewardship

Read each Bible passage (or series of passages) below, and use what you find there to answer the corresponding question:

Matt. 25:14-30: What is the meaning of unfaithfulness?

Psalm 24:1; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:7; James 1:17: What are the standards for stewardship we are to have?

Matthew 6: 25-34: How are worry and the ability to give, tied together?

Ephesians 5:15-21: For introspective inspection, write a list of the priorities in your life. Then, with the above verses in mind, ask yourself, "How do my priorities line up with God's?" What can you do to line your up your priorities to be more like God's?

Romans 12:3-8; and 1 Peter 4:10: What are the gifts and abilities you have? How are you using them for the Body and the glory of Christ? How can you use them for the Body and for Christ's glory? Why does our Lord so often cite the use of money as an illustration?

Hebrews 6:10; 13:16: When we serve God and when we give, it is never in vain. It is never forgotten by the One Who counts! Why would God be pleased when we sacrifice? Why do most people, including Christians, hate to sacrifice? What can you do to be a person who sacrifices so it pleases God, and one who is mindful of the responsibly to be wise in doing so?

Proverbs 20:10; 22:7; Luke 12:15; 16: 10-11; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:10: Why is money important to you? Why and how is it important to the Lord?

2 Corinthians 9:6-15: What are the principles of giving cited here?

Mark 12: 41-44; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 3 John 2: What does it mean to you that God considers you His temple? With this information in mind, how are you going to respond to Him, and with the time, treasures, and talent in your life? How can you take better control and care of your body?

Psalm 50: 14-15; Proverbs 22:9, 28:13; Job 36:11; Isaiah. 48:17; Luke 6:38; Philippians 4:19: What are God's promises regarding stewardship?