

Praise for Gospel Patrons

I read this book from cover to cover in two days. I couldn't put it down. The three stories of generous givers and their impact on the spread of the gospel in history are compelling. I am praying for thousands of similar Gospel Patrons for our generation!

Todd Harper

President of Generous Giving

This is a great read! I love the way these stories paint a picture of stewarding relationship, affluence and influence to lay up treasure in heaven. Sharing powerful stories like those found in Gospel Patrons is the most effective way to encourage the kind of kingdom engagement we are so excited to see today.

David Wills

President of the National Christian Foundation

As I read Gospel Patrons, I found myself weeping for joy. I was inspired by the men and women who invested their resources, influence, and time to strategically partner with those who were sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. May the Lord powerfully use this vision around the globe!

Howard Dayton

Founder of Compass--Finances God's Way

John Rinehart has given us a wonderfully stirring portrait of gospel partnerships used mightily by God at key turning points in evangelical history. This is a great model for Gospel Patronage today, for we urgently need new generations of courageous preachers. And they in turn need the sacrificial sponsorship and friendship of patrons who share the same burden for lost souls and love for the Saviour.

Colin Marshall

Author of “The Trellis and the Vine” and CEO of Vinegrowers

You could read this heart-warming book by John Rinehart and love the gospel. You could read it and long to spread the gospel. But if you read it and join that great line of “Gospel Patrons” — some are described in this book — the world will (seriously) not be the same again.

Simon Manchester

Senior Minister, St Thomas’ Anglican Church, North Sydney, Australia

We know the names William Tyndale and John Newton, but we don’t know the names Humphrey Monmouth and John Thornton, the men who under God earned the money that financed their great works. I was deeply moved by the heart and choices of these benefactors and have sent 20 copies of this book to men with means, who I pray will be similarly inspired.

Rico Tice

Senior Minister of All Souls, Langham Place and Founder of Christianity Explored

Gospel Patrons is one of the most important books I have seen this year! It's 100 years overdue and these untold stories urgently need to be told today.

George Verwer

Founder of Operation Mobilization

This is a stirring account of some of the great unsung heroes of the faith, whose hidden sacrificial giving has been so crucial in the work of evangelism. I pray the Lord will use it to inspire a new generation of Gospel Patrons.

Vaughan Roberts

Rector of St Ebbe's, Oxford, UK and Director of the Proclamation Trust

This splendid book provides great encouragement to Christians to maximise their resources for gospel ministry. It is not only challenging, but also inspiring. May God use it to raise up a generation of Gospel Patrons.

William Taylor

Rector of St Helen's Church Bishopsgate, London, UK

John Rinehart has dug deep and meticulously researched three unknown but truly remarkable people who remind us that generous people served and still serve God's kingdom in quiet, sacrificial and practical ways. A passion for the gospel joined with sacrificial generosity powerfully furthers God's kingdom!

Michael O'Neill

CEO of Stewardship, London

Gospel Patrons

Gospel Patrons

**People Whose Generosity
Changed the World**

John Rinehart



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For Jesus,
who wrote my name in His book!

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Foreword

By Bob Shank

Founder of The Master's Program

I have spent twenty five years trying to help people discover their “Kingdom Calling.” Many of them have been marketplace leaders and business and professional men and women. And what I’ve seen in the overlap of business and ministry is that both are team sports.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, a name was given to a category of investor that had long played a role in business, but had lacked a suitable moniker. The title “Angel Investor” was coined to describe an often-invisible contributor to entrepreneurial success. Angel Investors are a hybrid blend of financier and mentor. The financier dimension points toward the business plan and the product or service that defines the enterprise; the mentor relationship points toward the fledgling founder who has a dream, but lacks the discernment honed through years of real-life experience in the trenches. The Angel Investor provides enterprise funding and entrepreneurial finishing that helps the start-up reach levels of sustainability and

scalability that would have been unlikely otherwise.

The role of an Angel Investor is seldom spotlighted and not easily explained to a broad audience, but for the early-stage business creator, these investors are forever celebrated as a senior partner in the company's ultimate success. The marketplace hero seldom reaches the pinnacle alone; it takes a team to reach the summit.

Ministry is the same. God loves to do great things, but most of His work He does through people, and it is His design for people to thrive when matched with other people who bring their unique capability to the effort. In a culture of individuality that's obsessed with heroes, it's easy to forget that God works through the Body of Christ: the collection of collaborators who each offer their unique gifts, talents and distinctions to the effort that results in the glory of God and the expansion of His kingdom. Ministry—by God's design—is a team sport.

You could revisit the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul and imagine him working alone, but the contemporaries who experienced his ministry to the Gentiles saw him alongside his early-stage partner, Barnabas. In fact, when the polytheists in the city of Lystra saw the power of God manifested in their midst, they mistook Barnabas as Zeus—the “father of gods and men” to the Greco/Roman religious observer—and they presumed Paul to be Hermes—the son of Zeus, and the spokesman for that more powerful deity. Clearly, Barnabas was no incidental part of the missional partnership who had arrived with the gospel (Acts 14:8–14).

Barnabas' role in the early church made him aware of the unusual financial challenges in supporting the Pentecost pilgrims who had come to the city for their festival and had found faith in the Messiah. They stayed with their travel possessions that were exhausted and then became dependent on the hospitality of the local believers. Barnabas was not simply an observer or verbalizer. He acted to meet the extraordinary need with extraordinary generosity. He sold a piece of property that he owned and transferred the funds to the apostles for immediate assistance in caring for the new Christians.

Paul is the celebrated champion of the first-century faith, but his story would have unfolded far differently without the significant involvement of Barnabas alongside him. Barnabas may be one of the earliest examples of a Gospel Patron. The investment his time, his gifts and talents, his relationships and reputation, and his involvement in Paul's unfolding ministry life and leadership is a powerful picture of a Gospel Patron's engagement in the big picture of God's plan.

But let's not simply look back in history to marvel at the unsung heroes who played an integral part in some of the massive milestones of God's kingdom on earth. Instead, let's look to the future and ask ourselves how God might have us place our discretionary time, talents, growing influence and generous giving alongside a Gideon, a David, a Daniel, a Paul, a Tyndale, a Whitefield, or a Newton? How might our mentoring and our investing join forces to cause a beneficent breakthrough that would not happen without a Gospel Patron? As the stories in

this short but powerful account will show, Gospel Patrons demonstrate a commitment to another leader that links them at the calling level.

There are many people who pray that God will raise up leaders for His Kingdom in our generation who could be used by Him to accelerate the completion of the Great Commission. After considering the stories in this book, you may feel called to pray that God will raise up Gospel Patrons—to align with the more obvious and outspoken leaders—who will add the catalytic spark that brings astounding works of God into the flow of human history.

I hope you enjoy this retelling of the people whose bold bets on God's champions gave us the Christian faith we share today!

And through his faith,
though he died, he still speaks.

HEBREWS 11:4

1 The Discovery



**John
Rinehart**

Sometimes we need to read history so that we don't repeat it. Other times we need to read it so that we do.

I'm writing this book because I believe our generation's greatest need is for history to be repeated. Five hundred years ago a mighty reformation shook Europe, and subsequently, the world. Two hundred and fifty years ago a powerful evangelical revival awakened millions in the colonies that would become the United States of America. Today, in the twenty-first century, I pray God will again touch down and give the masses a fresh sense that He's real and true.

I dream of seeing churches overflow with crowds of people who are hungry to learn the Bible. I envision businessmen strategizing together about how to advance the gospel because their greatest passion is Jesus. I imagine college students gathering to talk about our great salvation and how they can spend their lives extending it to others.

I picture Christians being marked by radical generosity and risk-taking action to see more lives changed, more souls saved, and more people sent around the world to reach the unreached. I envision more preachers proclaiming the great doctrines of the Bible with unstoppable courage, while God draws many to the Savior. I dream of thousands of people discovering their

calling in God's eternal kingdom and then running hard to play their part well.

How would our world be different if we lived like the real business of life was to love God and help as many people as possible learn to love Him too? What if we recaptured a sense of urgency to live for eternity?

I desire this. I long to see God revive our generation.

The conviction driving this book is that God works through people to change the world—and He's not done yet. I believe our world can be different, and I believe God wants to work through us to make it different.

The aim of this book is to ask and answer two very important questions: First, *How has God worked through people to change the world?* And second, *How do we become those kind of people?*

I began to find my way toward answering these questions on a sunny November morning in Sydney, Australia.

The Story of Gospel Patronage

My wife and I stepped into an elevator filled with people dressed in blue and black suits, pushed the circular button for floor 31, and waited. When the doors opened we approached the receptionist and stated our names. A few minutes later a silver-haired businessman named Simon emerged through the double doors.

"John and Renée, lovely to meet you," he said. "Shall we head downstairs for a cup of coffee?"

Our meeting with Simon had been arranged by a mutual friend who thought I might be interested to learn about some-

thing called Gospel Patronage. I had no idea what that term meant, so as we chatted, I asked him directly, “Simon, I was told I should ask you about Gospel Patronage. What is it?”

“My own story,” Simon said, “began several years ago as I was about to launch a new company. I realized that if the business succeeded then I stood to make a lot of money. I also knew I needed a strategy in place to be able to prosper financially without failing spiritually. So I began to look for examples in history and soon found that when God raised up preachers and missionaries to lead the great movements of the gospel, He also raised up patrons to come alongside those leaders as partners in the work.

“For example,” Simon continued, “in the 1500s an Englishman named William Tyndale wanted to translate the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew into English. For 1,000 years the Bible had been locked in Latin, but most Englishmen couldn’t read Latin and therefore did not know the Bible. Tyndale wanted to change that. He wanted his countrymen to meet the God of the Bible, a God they had heard about but never known. The problem was Bible translation was illegal; you could be killed for it. But God intervened through a godly businessman named Humphrey Monmouth. Monmouth protected Tyndale, he provided for him, and he even used his merchant ships to smuggle the first English New Testaments throughout England. Very few people have ever heard of Monmouth, but his partnership with Tyndale changed the world.”

I was spellbound and couldn’t wait to learn more about these backstage VIPs, whom Simon called “Gospel Patrons.”

Humphrey Monmouth called Tyndale off the bench and put him in the game. What drove people like that? What made them so different from the average church-goers of their day and ours? They weren't content to be spectators; instead, they engaged. Simon's stories painted a picture I had never seen, and I was eager to share it with others.

An Electric Response

After a week's vacation in Sydney, we left to be home for Christmas in Seattle. Once among family and friends, I repeated everything I could remember about Monmouth and another patron named John Thornton. The responses shocked me.

"Can you tell my wife those stories," a friend asked, "and a few of my business partners too?"

"What was the name of that thing you talked about?" my sister questioned, "I want to tell my friends about it."

My father-in-law listened intently and returned to the subject days later. Gospel Patronage was electric.

I began to dig a little deeper and soon found that Gospel Patronage has a look-a-like that has also been electric. The special thirtieth anniversary issue of *Forbes* magazine trumpeted "The Titans of Philanthropy." Philanthropy has found its way onto many magazine covers and television screens in recent years—and for good reason.

In 2000, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was launched with an asset base of \$16 billion. In 2005, former U.S. President Bill Clinton established the Clinton Global Initiative, which has received billions of dollars in commitments from government

leaders, leading CEOs, and major philanthropists. In 2006, the second-richest man in the United States, Warren Buffett, announced his plan to give away the vast majority of his fortune of more than \$40 billion to philanthropic causes. Lately, Gates and Buffett have teamed up to challenge the wealthiest 400 Americans, all billionaires, “to pledge...at least 50% of their net worth to charity during their lifetimes or at death.”¹ Executives, celebrities, and politicians all want to change the world, and some are willing to pay for it.

On the surface, philanthropists sound a lot like Gospel Patrons. Both emphasize giving. Both want to make a difference in the world. Both would acknowledge that a great life is not built on what you gain, but on what you give your life to accomplish.² But philanthropists and Gospel Patrons aim at very different targets.

The titans of philanthropy will be remembered for giving to good causes; Gospel Patrons will be remembered for giving to eternal ones. Where philanthropists aim to nourish people’s bodies and train their minds, Gospel Patrons prioritize people’s souls. Gospel Patrons treat symptoms, but ultimately they go after the disease.

And to cure any disease you must begin with a correct diagnosis. God’s diagnosis is that humanity’s fundamental problem is not poverty or lack of education. It’s not drugs or disease. It’s

1 Carol J. Loomis, “The \$600 Billion Challenge” CNN.com (June 16, 2010), <http://features.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2010/06/16/gates-buffett-600-billion-dollar-philanthropy-challenge/>.

2 Bob Shank, *Life Mastery: Discover the Timeless Secrets to Living Life as Jesus Did* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2012), 37.

not capitalism or communism, politics or religion. Our core problem, the Bible says, is that we're all sinners, guilty before God and headed for God's righteous judgment. Like our first parents, Adam and Eve, we turn to our own ways, focus on ourselves, and ignore, neglect, and reject the God who made us. Our relationship with God is broken because of our sin, and the punishment awaiting us is death and hell. That's the bad news—the true diagnosis.

The good news is that God knows we can't save ourselves, and He doesn't ask us to. Even though we act like His enemies, God loves us so much that He sent His son Jesus to die on the cross for us. Jesus exchanged His life for yours and mine. He died in our place for our sins, taking our punishment on Himself, and rescuing us from the judgment we deserve. He is our substitute, our sacrifice, and our savior. And everyone who turns away from their sins and trusts in Jesus will be saved. You don't have to fix yourself or try harder or do better; you simply have to humble yourself, believe that Jesus paid it all and receive His forgiveness and eternal life. This is the cure.

Understanding our true diagnosis and its one remedy leads us to the most loving and lasting cause we can give our lives to. Whether we run a company, lead a department, or answer the phone, our mission is the same: to advance the message that Jesus saves people who are lost in sin. God is not looking for philanthropists who can write big checks, but for people who love Him and live to spread the news of His son, Jesus.

The Danger of Success

Simon's caution about success was right on target. The pattern we see in the Bible is that success in life often leads to spiritual failure. For example, Noah successfully believed God, built the ark and survived the storm, but then when life was comfortable he drank too much wine and became drunk. Abraham heard God's call to leave his homeland, and he successfully obeyed in faith, but afterward got scared and lied about Sarah, saying she was his sister.

By faith Gideon won an impossible battle with only 300 men, but after his success he made a golden ephod that he, his family, and his country worshiped instead of God. David was a man after God's own heart, and the Lord gave him victory wherever he went. But comfortable in his success David stayed home when he ought to have gone out to battle with his men, and he ended up committing adultery with Bathsheba and ordering the murder of her husband.

We experience success, become comfortable, then forgetful of God, and finally disobedient to Him.³ Like the Israelites, we eat and are full; we build good houses and live in them; our possessions multiply and our wealth increases, and then we "forget the LORD our God."⁴ Success inflates our pride and quietly derails our focus on God.

Thankfully, there is another way, an approach which puts both God and success in their rightful places. The Bible and history show us that our prosperity is not a curse, but an

³ See also Ezekiel 28.

⁴ Deuteronomy 8:11-14.

opportunity—an opportunity I believe many people miss out on.

This book looks to the Bible and church history to reclaim beautiful examples of people who learned to worship and serve God while experiencing prosperity and success. We need the stories of men and women who walked the balance beam of blessing without falling off into self-indulgence or self-righteousness. We need to see how they found the narrow way that leads to life, so we can find it too.

The Real Stories of Real People

I can imagine some of you asking, “But why history? History can be so dry—dates and facts, wars and maps, stuff we don’t care about and can’t remember anyway.”

My eighth-grade history teacher Mr. Martin knew many of us thought this way about history, so he spiced up his lectures with mythical tales about his six-foot-six-inch wife who weighed 300 pounds, thundered when she walked, and would come sit on us if we acted up. For the record, I loved those stories, but since the days of the monstrous Mrs. Martin I have come to see history sing, dance, and even fly on its own wings, when I can see that the people who shaped the ideas and won the battles were real people like me. History becomes powerful when we see that the main characters were not outdated, dusty saints, but rather modern men and women in their time like we are in ours.

My job has been to bring history close and show it as something that really did happen and really does mean something

for us. For this reason, I have sought to clear the debris of academic articles, old letters, and 600-page biographies to give you a smooth run down the mountain. The histories in this book are not dry essays or even cradle-to-grave biographies. Instead, they are stories of friendships between real people who thought and spoke much like we do. I have chosen to record dialogue in contemporary English because modern speech helps close the gap between us and history like nothing else.⁵ Where possible, I have preserved exact words, using verbatim quotations from letters, journals, and sermons; while in other situations I've filled real historical scenes with dialogue that seems consistent with what I've learned of the personality, beliefs, and circumstances of the characters.

I hope to reclaim our forgotten history and reintroduce it to you in a way that's both accessible and inspiring. I believe that when you and I can imagine ourselves on the inside of history's great movements, then we are on our way to discovering our place in the stories yet to be written.

"Is this book only for the rich?" some have asked. No. God wants to see our faithful stewardship in little or much. Remember Jesus' parable of the talents? The person who originally received five talents and the one who had two talents received equal praise for their good stewardship. They each heard their master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."⁶ The Bible

5 My inspiration for this approach comes largely from Dorothy Sayers' approach to retelling the life of Jesus in her series of BBC radio plays *The Man Born To Be King*.

6 Matthew 25:14–23.

tells us that God cares less about how much we have and more about what we do with it.

This message of Gospel Patronage is not something new for a select few, but a focused application of the gospel for all of us. The truth is no matter how much or how little you have been given, there is eternity to think about what you did with it, and hearing Jesus say, “Well done” will be the only thing that matters.

Biblical Patrons

“Yes, but is Gospel Patronage even biblical?” you ask. Good question. Allow me to point out a few examples that for years have been right under our noses— in the Bible.

First, how did Jesus and his disciples fund three years of preaching tours from town to town and village to village after they had all left their jobs? Surely every lunch wasn’t a miracle meal of fishes and loaves. The Bible tells us, in Luke 8:1-3, that three generous women named Mary, Joanna, and Susanna came alongside Jesus and the disciples to provide for their ministry:

Soon afterward he [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of

Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

These three women who were “with Him” also “provided for them out of their means.” They were involved and invested in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus Christ had Gospel Patrons.

In the book of Acts we meet Priscilla and Aquila, a married couple in the early church, who were business people. But that did not stop them from engaging in God’s business to advance the gospel. They hosted a church in their house, came alongside a well-known preacher named Apollos and helped him with his theology, and partnered with the apostle Paul at the risk of their own lives. (See these stories in Acts 18:1–3, 26 and 1 Cor. 16:19). Priscilla and Aquila may never have addressed a crowd or preached a sermon, but their calling to support the church and spread the gospel earned them the thanks of “all the churches.” Paul says: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.”⁷

Interestingly, the only reason we know the story of Priscilla and Aquila 2,000 years later is due to another patron, an influential Greek man mentioned in the opening lines of the books Luke and Acts. In Luke 1:3 we read: “It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus” and in

7 Romans 16:3–4.

Acts 1:1-2 we find: “In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up.”

It is very likely that Luke researched and wrote about Jesus’ life and the spread of Christianity because Theophilus funded him to do it.⁸ Theophilus could never have imagined at the time that through his patronage of Luke he was underwriting two books of the Bible!

Lastly, a woman named Phoebe used her home to host missionaries as well as the church in her city. She even assisted the apostle Paul and many others with their financial needs. Phoebe’s greatest ministry responsibility was likely to hand-carry Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome. For these reasons, Paul described her with the title *patron*: “Welcome her [Phoebe] in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.”⁹

The Bible and history confirm that Gospel Patronage is not something new. It’s not a fad. Instead it’s a flag. This book is my attempt to wave it for a new generation.

8 This is one of several interpretations of Theophilus. I am aware of the other views, but I see the patron relationship as the most plausible.

9 Romans 16:2.

gos • pel pa • trons, *noun*. **1.** people who resource and come alongside others to help them proclaim the gospel.