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What Jesus Started

The World-Changing Power of the Local Church

Ellen Vaughn

Reignite your faith in the power of the gospel through remarkable stories of God's work in the global church. Discover how the church that Jesus started over 2,000 years ago continues today: around the world, in your church and in your life!

Join bestselling storyteller Ellen Vaughn on a global journey to uncover compelling accounts of the gospel's power in everyday life. You'll be reinvigorated as you see, with fresh eyes, God's present work in the world through his people.

Vaughn invites you into the stories of a former would-be suicide bomber who now pastors in Turkey, Christians in war-weary Ukraine bringing hope to their neighbors, a Rwandan pastor who forgave the man who killed his family, and many more.

As you encounter each story, you will...

- Be re-energized by the power of the gospel to transform lives
- Marvel at the work of the Spirit in the church from the book of Acts to the present day
- Experience renewed excitement for your local community as you ask God who he would have you be and what he would have you do in your church

Through this powerful book, ordinary brothers and sisters in Christ from the East and Global South refresh and remind you of what is true and good about the gospel and God's people.



About the Author

Ellen Vaughn is a New York Times bestselling author and speaker who has written or co-written 27 books. Formerly Vice President of Executive Communications at Prison Fellowship, she collaborated with the late Chuck Colson on a number of his seminal works. She speaks at conferences, often travels to interview Christ-followers in hostile parts of the world and serves on the board of directors for ICM, the global church developer. Ellen's book *Jesus Revolution*, coauthored with Greg Laurie, was released by Lionsgate as a major motion picture. Her authorized biographies of Elisabeth Elliot were released in 2020 and 2023. She enjoys reading, hiking, drinking coffee and staring pensively at the ocean.

Endorsements

“When we consider God’s way of changing the world, we may imagine movements that sweep a continent or Christian ministries large enough to impact a nation. But my friend Ellen Vaughn tells a different story in her newest and most profound work, *What Jesus Started*. Relaying the true-life accounts of simple believers who labor in small, dark corners of the earth, Ellen shows us once again how ‘weakness and humility’ open the way for God to perform his most powerful, kingdom-shaping work. The faith-forging stories you will read in this exceptional book will stir you—as they’ve stirred me—to roll up our sleeves and do the hard, modest labor that will impact our communities for Christ.”

Joni Eareckson Tada

Joni and Friends International
Disability Center

“The Apostle Paul said that God’s promises are ‘yes and amen.’ One of his promises was to build the church and, as Ellen Vaughn describes in these pages, he has. The stories she tells should inspire and encourage us to be the church where he has placed us, resting in the promise that ‘the gates of hell will not prevail,’ but the church certainly will.”

John Stonestreet

President of The Colson Center

Suggested Interview Questions

1. What was the inspiration behind the stories, conversations, and journeys featured in this book?
2. Why do you describe the gospel as a “living story” that is inherently “dangerous”?
3. How can a healthy understanding of the “Church Universal” encourage believers who feel isolated or weary in their “Church Particular”?
4. Why is being physically present in a local body essential for authentic Christian growth and human connection?
5. How do you think secularly-minded people in the West react to the word, “church”?
6. What commonalities did you observe in how the gospel takes root in “hard soil,” such as regions dominated by radical ideologies?
7. How does a physical church building serve as a “distribution point” for total community transformation in developing nations?
8. What did your journeys reveal about the faith-filled commitment of indigenous leaders?
9. Looking at the end of the story, what is the ultimate hope you want readers to walk away with regarding the church?
10. You state the purpose of these stories is to communicate that Jesus started something “counter-intuitively powerful, persuasive, and satisfying.” What do you hope this specific “counter-intuitive” perspective offers readers?
11. You mention that many Christians in the West have “forgotten the main thing” regarding the mystery and power of the gospel. How is the purpose of this book designed to help readers “reconnect to the old” and remember what began 2,000 years ago?
12. You describe the current cultural moment in the West as one of “great weariness, dullness, and complacency.” How will highlighting stories from other parts of the world hopefully refresh and challenge the faith of your Western readers?
13. In what ways does a healthy local church function as a “radical alternative” to a polarized culture?
14. In your final chapters, you point toward “the end of the story.” How does the book’s ultimate purpose connect these current global stories to the eternal, “magnificent, glorious, cosmic” Church that will one day be fully revealed?