

MISSIONS: How the Local Church Goes Global by Andy Johnson, Crossway, Wheaton, IL 2017. (31 Quotes selected by Paul Tautges.)

MISSIONS: How the Local Church Goes Global is the latest release in the little hardcover series from 9Marks and Crossway, “Building Healthy Churches.” To say this book is a welcome sight is an understatement. It is the most refreshing book on missions in the local church that I’ve read in a long time. Andy Johnson clearly lays out the biblical foundation for missions, its priorities, and the local church’s responsibility to support and send missionaries well. He challenges churches to get our houses in order, build healthy missionary partnerships, reform our approach to short-term missions, and open our eyes to how the Holy Spirit is bringing the nations to our doorstep. This is a great read. Here are some of the sentences that I highlighted.

1. Missions Is the Work of the Whole Church.

“Imagine a local church where the congregation’s mission to the nations is clear and agreed upon. Elders guide the congregation toward strategic missions. Missions is held up as a concern for all Christians, not just the niche “missions club.” The tyranny of new trends and demands for immediate, visible results hold no sway. Members see missions as the work of the church together rather than the personal, private activity of the individual.”

2. First Priority in Missions.

“Evangelism and establishing Christ’s church is our first priority in missions.”

3. Changing Missions is Robbing God.

“Any effort on our part to change or broaden the mission, or to substitute our ideas for God’s, runs the risk of trying to rob God of his rightful glory. And trying to rob an all-knowing and all-powerful God of the thing he is most passionate about in all the universe is breathtakingly stupid and ultimately pointless.”

4. Missions Is for God's glory.

“Our confidence in missions and our joy in salvation flow from a knowledge that God's mission of mercy finds its origin in his desire for his glory, not in our ability or desirability.”

5. Mission Agencies Are the Bridesmaids Not the Bride.

Concerning para-church mission agencies, “any humanly invented organizations that assist in missions must remember that they are the bridesmaids, not the bride.”

6. Joy in the Gospel.

“The heart for God-glorifying missions starts with joy in the gospel. Our churches must first cherish the God who sent his own Son to save sinners like us.”

7. Excitement for Both Missions and the Gospel.

“I've seen churches that have tried to get their members excited about missions without being excited about the gospel. The result was pitiful.”

8. Churches Must Cherish the Gospel.

“Churches won't extend themselves to commend the gospel until they deeply cherish the gospel.”

9. Gospel is the Fuel for Missions.

“The glory of the gospel—not the neediness of mankind—is the self-sustaining fuel for global missions.”

10. Missionaries Needed until Christ's Return. “Despite globalization and mobility, until Christ returns, there will always be a need for churches to train, send, and financially support intentional missionaries.”

11. Missionaries Accountable to a Local Church. “Missionaries are not just self-styled free agents. They should be accountable to a specific local church.”

12. Missionaries and Local Churches Have Always Been Connected.

“Biblical missionaries are connected to a local church. It’s always been that way.”

13. Giving Missionaries Too Much.

“Concerns about giving missionaries too much may just show we have done a poor job vetting those we send.”

14. Urgent but Not Frantic.

“God’s mission is urgent...Yet God’s mission is not frantic or in danger of failing.”

15. Sending the Wrong People.

“Sending the wrong people overseas isn’t just poor stewardship. It can encumber the fruitfulness of other workers.”

16. The Mark of a Good Missionary.

“A trail of conspicuous fruitfulness in other’s lives is one of the grand marks of a good prospective missionary.”

17. Missionaries Made in Churches.

“Churches are where faithful missionaries are made.”

18. Missions Preparation.

The core of missions preparation is not missions studies. It is godliness, Bible knowledge, evangelistic zeal, love for Christ’s church, and passion to see Christ glorified.

19. Missions Prerequisites.

“Extensive travel and international experience are not prerequisites to missionary work. A love for the gospel, a faithful life, an affirming church, and a willingness to go are.”

20. Poor Does Not Mean Godly. “I don’t know how the notion of equating poor missionaries with godly missionaries got started.”

21. Sending Helpful Short-term Teams.

“The best way to make sure short-term work is genuinely helpful is to send teams that your overseas workers request.”

22. Breadth Versus Depth of Missions.

“Too many churches view the breadth of their missions commitments, rather than the depth, as the measure of their love for the nations.”

23. Goal of Missions.

“The goal of missions is to gather churches that plant other churches.”

24. Putting Churches in Biblical Order.

“Putting churches into better biblical order also was high on Paul’s agenda, and it should probably be higher on our agenda too.”

25. Don’t Neglect flocks Already Gathered.

“We shouldn’t let our good passion to find lost sheep in new pastures fool us into neglecting flocks that have already been gathered, purchased by Christ’s precious blood.”

26. Evaluating Theology.

“Often churches and individuals seem hesitant to evaluate too deeply the theology and quality of the workers they might support. This seems entirely wrongheaded to me. If a worker is offended that you want to explore the contours of his or her theology, that should be a huge red flag.”

27. Lying about the Work.

“The cause of the gospel is seldom served by missionaries who lie about their work in order to gain access for the truth.”

28. Called to Faithfulness Not Success.

“Whether great things happen in our time or not is in God’s control. We are called to be faithful in both fruitful and lean times. Success is in the hands of God.”

29. Fueling a Passion for Missions.

“The gospel is for all people everywhere. Understanding both the urgency of the task—“How will they hear unless someone is sent?”—and the greatness and worthiness of God will fuel a passion that touches a whole congregation. Preaching like this is in fact the most foundational thing a pastor can do to lead his congregation in missions.”

30. Increase in Short-term Mission Trips.

“It’s estimated that more than a million North Americans participate in short-term mission trips overseas each year, up from an estimated twenty-five thousand in 1980. During this same period, long-term missionaries from North America have only increased slightly, if at all.”

31. Engaging Other Nations within America.

“Many of us don’t have to board international flights to reach people from other religions and cultures. We just need to open our eyes, look around, and engage the nations in our own cities and towns....80 percent of international students never see the inside of an American home during their stay.”

Pastor, elder, missions team leader, get a copy and read it. I think you’ll be glad you did.