

AGAPE FIELD GUIDE

**JESUS.
MISSION.
COMMUNITY.**

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PROLOGUE

The Church has always flourished most when ordinary believers have embraced an extraordinary Gospel. From the streets of Thessalonica to the neighborhoods surrounding any military community, the pattern has remained the same: when men and women receive the Gospel deeply, they begin to live the Gospel visibly. And when the Gospel is lived visibly, it must inevitably be explained. This guide is built on a simple, apostolic rhythm of receive, imitate, and proclaim. It is a rhythm that transformed the ancient world and still forms the backbone of every genuine movement of God.

In this guide, you will be invited to slow down, observe the Scriptures with care, and allow the Spirit to confront and comfort you through the Word. Each passage has been selected because it reveals what kind of people we must become if we are to join God on His mission: people shaped by the Gospel, rooted in community, and compelled outward for the sake of others. Christopher Wright states clearly the church doesn't have a mission the mission has a church. It is sent into the world as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the Kingdom.

Our aim in this guide is not to add more information to your spiritual life, but to cultivate a kind of formation that results in imitation. Paul praised the Thessalonian believers because the “word of the Lord sounded forth” from them, not through programs, events, or personality-driven strategies, but through transformed lives woven deeply into the fabric of their city. In the same way, this guide calls you to examine your own reception of the Gospel, your own patterns of imitation, and your own readiness to proclaim the hope of Christ in the ordinary flow of your days.

1.

FAMILY OF SERVANT MISSIONARIES

1 Peter 2:9-12

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Peter writes to believers scattered across Asia Minor, isolated, misunderstood, facing cultural pressure, and wrestling with who they truly are. In this context, he does not begin with advice, strategy, or even warnings; he begins with identity. Before the church does anything, it must understand what God has already done and who God has already made them to be. This is critical for us at Agape Hood, especially in our revitalization work at Fort Hood. Identity fuels mission. Confused identity leads to confused

ministry. But a stable, biblical identity becomes a launching pad for multiplying leaders, communities, and gospel impact.

Peter gives the church three foundational identity markers. Each one answers the question: “Who are we?” Each one shapes how we engage the mission. And each one shows us what it means to be a Family of Servant Missionaries.

First, we are a **chosen race**, literally a genos, a family line, a shared genealogy. In Christ, God has created a new people not connected by blood but by faith. This is not a metaphor. It is a spiritual reality. When God calls you out of darkness and into His marvelous light, you are born into a new family. This means that at Agape, we must learn to live as a family. We treat one another as brothers and sisters. We treat outsiders as potential family, not as threats or strangers. A family grows, matures, and multiplies. A family takes responsibility for one another. A family welcomes. And even when our experience lags behind our identity, like Abraham being called a father before he ever held a child, God calls us to live into the family He has already declared us to be.

Second, we are a **royal priesthood**. In Exodus 19:6 God called Israel to be priests to the nations, mediating His presence to the world. Peter now applies that calling to the church. Priests stand between God and people; they bless, intercede, and carry God’s presence into the everyday world. This means that every believer has a priestly vocation. We are servants missionaries of the King, empowered by Christ and sent into our workplaces, neighborhoods, barracks, and units. Luther’s words speak to this: the kingdom is always in the midst of enemies, never isolated among roses and lilies. If Christ withdrew from sinners, none of us would be saved. So we follow Him into the broken spaces, bringing His compassion, His truth, and His presence. Our whole lives; work, play, conversations, PT, field problems, become priestly opportunities to represent God. A priest doesn’t bring people into a service; a priest brings people into a family.

Third, we are a **holy nation**, a people for His own possession. This identity clarifies our allegiance. Every person serves something; every heart crowns something as king. But Jesus is the only King who calls us to love others, not ourselves. To be a holy nation means we are set apart, distinct in character yet fully present in the world. To be God's possession means we belong to Him; we live for His mission. Holiness is not withdrawal; it is availability. As Paul writes, the vessel set apart is “useful to the Master, ready for every good work” (2 Tim 2:21). Holiness sends us into the harvest (Matt 9:37–38; Luke 10:2). Holiness positions us for the work God is already doing in the barracks, units, housing areas, and workplaces across Fort Hood.

Peter then moves from identity to ethics and mission. As God's beloved people, we abstain from passions that wage war against the soul. Internal holiness is spiritual warfare; our greatest threat is not cultural hostility but internal compromise. At the same time, holiness becomes public witness: “Keep your conduct honorable among the Gentiles.” Our visible goodness, integrity, and sacrificial service become the platform for evangelism. When the world sees our good deeds, the ordinary, everyday, consistent, they may one day glorify God when He visits in salvation.

This is God's design for His church. This is the “power sweep” of Christian identity. And this is the play we will run over and over at Agape Hood: We are a Family. We are Servants. We are Missionaries. This is who we are. This is the identity that will shape our revitalization effort and ignite a missional movement across Fort Hood.

KEY THEME FOR AGAPE

We are a Family of Servant Missionaries.

This passage gives us three identity anchors that shape our entire revitalization effort at Fort Hood:

1. FAMILY — “a chosen race” (genos – shared genealogy in Christ)
2. SERVANTS — “a royal priesthood” (priests who carry God’s presence)
3. MISSIONARIES — “a holy nation, a people for His own possession” (sent into the harvest)

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

Effectual Calling — God’s sovereign call draws us from darkness to light.

Adoption — We are brought into God’s family as sons and daughters.

Priesthood of Believers — Every Christian shares in Christ’s priestly ministry.

Sanctification — We are set apart as God’s holy people.

Missional Ecclesiology — The church exists for proclamation, witness, and sending.

HISTORICAL & LITERARY NOTES

- Peter echoes Exodus 19:5–6 and Hosea 1–2, applying Israel’s covenant identity to the multinational church.
- Early Christians faced slander and suspicion; Peter instructs them to respond with visible goodness.
- “Day of visitation” likely refers to God’s saving intervention at the return of Christ.
- Peter intentionally uses Israel’s covenant language (Exodus 19:5–6; Hosea 1–2) to describe the multinational church in

Asia Minor. This move anchors the church's identity in the ongoing story of God's mission, from Abraham to Christ to the nations.

- Christopher Wright emphasizes that God's mission did not begin with the church but with God Himself, and God has always worked through a people set apart for the sake of the nations. Wright calls this the "missional identity of the people of God" a people chosen not for privilege but for purpose. Peter reflects this by describing the church not only as redeemed but as commissioned.
- 1 Peter reflects a church under social pressure, suspicion, and cultural marginalization. Early Christians were labeled as atheists, cannibals, and disloyal citizens. Peter instructs them not to retreat but to engage honorably.
 - Lesslie Newbigin argued that the church is always a "contrast community," living a distinct way of life before the watching world. He wrote that the church must demonstrate the gospel in such a way that it becomes a "hermeneutic of the gospel" a visible interpretation of God's reign. Peter's command to "keep your conduct honorable among the Gentiles" embodies Newbigin's vision: the church's life together interprets the gospel for outsiders.
- Peter's language of "sojourners and exiles" reflects the church's dual identity, distinct from the world yet embedded in it.
 - Newbigin calls this posture "resident aliens"—a community fully present in the culture while embodying an alternative story. Peter does not urge retreat but faithful presence. The church's marginality becomes missional positioning.

- The purpose clause (“that you may proclaim the excellencies...”) reveals the missionary nature of identity. God formed Israel, and now the church, to declare His saving acts to the world.
 - Wright writes that election is missional: “God’s people are chosen to be a blessing to all nations.” Peter echoes this theme as he portrays the church as God’s instrument of proclamation through both speech and lifestyle.
- The “day of visitation” points to God’s future intervention either in salvation or judgment. Early Christians believed their witness had eschatological significance: God uses their visible goodness to draw people to Himself.
 - This resonates with Newbigin’s conviction that the church exists as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the kingdom and points beyond itself to the ultimate reign of God.
- The corporate language of the passage (“race,” “priesthood,” “nation,” “people”) emphasizes shared identity rather than individual spirituality.
 - Wright argues that mission isn’t an individual calling before it is a communal identity. The church as a whole bears God’s mission. Peter’s language mirrors this: a people redeemed for a purpose

In summary, 1 Peter 2:9–12 fits squarely within the broader biblical and missional vision articulated by Newbigin and Wright:

- God forms a people.
- God gives them a distinctive identity.

- God sends them into the world as a visible, embodied witness to His reign.
- Their life together makes the gospel plausible.
- Their good works in the world point toward God's future renewal.

This is the missional imagination Peter gives the early church and the imagination we are seeking to cultivate at Agape Hood.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which identity (Family, Servant, or Missionary) feels most natural to you? Which feels most challenging?
2. How does your story of being called out of darkness shape your mission today?
3. What barriers keep us from treating one another as family?
4. Where has God placed you as a missionary this week (unit, work, neighborhood)?
5. What “good deeds” might God use to help an unbeliever “see and glorify God”? (Consider Gospel Rhythms)

MISSIONAL PRACTICES FOR THE WEEK

- Family Practice: Invite someone outside your normal circle into your home or into a meal.
- Servant Practice: Pray for one coworker, neighbor, or Soldier, then find a way to serve them.
- Missionary Practice: Identify a place (gym, motor pool, office, barracks) where you and friends from chapel can be intentionally present.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

- What part of my identity in Christ have I neglected?
- Who in my life this week needs family-like welcome?
- Where is God calling me to practice priestly presence?
- What passions of the flesh wage war within me?

2.

GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

“If Not Me, Then Who? If Not Now, Then When?”

The Great Commission is not a suggestion; it is the marching order of the resurrected King. Jesus gathers His disciples on a mountain in Galilee and declares, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Before Jesus tells us what to do, He tells us who He is: the cosmic King, the Daniel 7 Son of Man, the One who has been enthroned by the Father and now rules over every square inch of heaven and earth. Churches often imagine they’re doing fine spiritually because they’ve never stepped onto the actual ‘field’ of mission. They mistake activity for obedience and Sunday comfort for discipleship. But Jesus begins by confronting us with His Kingship so that there can be no confusion: His authority compels our obedience.

Authority → Mission → Presence. That is the structure of the Great Commission. On the basis of His sovereign authority, Jesus issues a command that defines the identity and calling of the church for all ages: “Therefore, make disciples of all nations.” The grammar is important. In the Greek, the one command is “make disciples.” The phrases “go,” “baptize,” and “teach” describe how disciple-making happens. Mission is not an optional program for a few spiritual elites; it is the essential identity of every follower of Jesus. If not you, then who? If not now, then when?

The Apostolic Calling Belongs to the Whole Church

Some Christians assume the Great Commission was only for the eleven gathered on that mountain. But Paul demolishes that misconception. In Ephesians 2, the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” meaning the whole people of God share the apostolic mission. In Ephesians 3, Paul says the church would display the wisdom of God to the nations. In Ephesians 4, the ascended Christ gives apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints so that every Christian engages in ministry and grows into Christ likeness. And in Ephesians 6, Paul asks the whole church to pray for him so the gospel would advance, signaling that the apostolic mission is the burden of the entire community.

In other words: The Great Commission is not for the “special ” of Christianity. It is for the Church. It is for you.

What Is a Disciple? What Is Discipleship?

Jesus does not say “make converts.” He says “make disciples.” **A disciple is someone who is increasingly bringing all of life under the lordship and empowering presence of Jesus Christ.** Discipleship is the ongoing process by which someone grows in their worship of Jesus, their transformation by Jesus, their obedience to Jesus, and teaches others to do the same.

This happens through life on life, life in community, and life on mission.

Avoid silos. Avoid living a “quiet Christian life” disconnected from the real world. Also avoid dabbling in multiple Christian circles and communities. Commit to a church. There your time, resources, and energy are devoted holistically with a singular purpose. We love to receive religious goods and services as consumer and connoisseur of Christian products but fail to live all of our life with missional purpose. When we participate in multiple disconnected Christian events we may look committed to Christ on the surface. However, we have created sphere where no one can actually see all of our life. One can memorize Scripture, meet all of the demands of a bible study group and still fail as a disciple. You can attend a men’s ministry but not love your wife day in and out and no one will know. You can attend that women’s bible study and live in resentment toward your husband and never be accountable. Jesus demands obedience to all His commands, and the Great Commandment, loving God and loving neighbor, is the heart of the curriculum and living in community and on mission is the field it is practiced and lived out upon. Discipleship, therefore, happens on mission and in community.

Baptismal Identity and the Trinity

Jesus then gives the means: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Notice the singular word —“name”—one essence, three persons. Baptism is covenantal identification with the Triune God. Particular Baptists long observed that baptism is not simply a ritual but a public pledge of allegiance to Christ, a visible entrance into the new covenant community. It marks the beginning of a life shaped by the Father who adopts us, the Son who redeems us, and the Spirit who renews us and forms us into righteous servants.

We are a family of missionary servants, with repentance as our rhythm and the Trinity as our identity.

Teaching Obedience and Embodying the Gospel

Jesus continues: “teaching them to observe all I have commanded you.” Not teaching information but teaching obedience.

Christianity is not measured by what we know but by how we live. Newbigin reminds us that the gospel of reconciliation can only be proclaimed by a reconciled fellowship. As emphasized earlier, our lives must embody the message we proclaim.

Presence: The Engine of the Mission

Finally, the promise: “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Mission is not heroic self-exertion. It is participation in Christ’s own mission. We are ambassadors of His presence. By the Spirit, the risen Jesus continues His work through us.

The church does not drift into mission; it drifts into maintenance. But the King of the universe has spoken. He has all authority. He has given us a clear command. He has promised His presence

KEY THEMES

1. Authority — Jesus possesses universal, cosmic authority.
2. Apostolic Mission — The whole Church inherits the apostolic calling.
3. Disciple-Making — The central command: form apprentices of Jesus.
4. Trinitarian Identity — Baptism into the name of Father, Son, Spirit.

5. Obedience — Discipleship means observing all Jesus commanded.
6. Presence — Christ is with His church until the final day.
7. Urgency — “If not me, then who? If not now, then when?”
8. Community — Mission is lived through life-on-life, life-in-community, life-on-mission.

HISTORICAL-LITERARY NOTES

1. Setting

- The scene occurs after the resurrection, in Galilee, on a mountain, a repeated location of divine revelation in Matthew.
- The eleven disciples come in weakness: some worship, some doubt.

2. Structure of the Passage

The passage follows a deliberate sequence:

- Authority (v.18) → Mission (v.19) → Means (v.19–20a) → Presence (v.20b).

3. Grammatical Movement

- One main command: “Make disciples.”
- Three participles showing how: going, baptizing, teaching.
- Repetition of “all”: all authority, all nations, all commands, all days.

4. Covenant & Kingdom Background

- Jesus' claim to "all authority" echoes Daniel 7—He is the enthroned Son of Man.
- The promise "I am with you" echoes covenant presence (Exod 3:12; Josh 1:5).

5. Apostolic Inheritance

From Ephesians 2–6, the apostolic mission belongs to the whole church, not just to the Twelve.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS (REFORMED SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY)

1. Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

Jesus is the risen and exalted King whose authority extends over all creation. He alone can command the nations and empower the church's mission.

2. Doctrine of the Trinity

The singular "name" with three persons is foundational for Trinitarian theology. We are baptized into the Triune God, Father (adopter), Son (Redeemer), Spirit (Renewer).

3. Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

The church exists for disciple-making. The apostolic mission belongs to the whole people of God. The church is a reconciled community embodying the gospel it proclaims.

4. Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

Mission is not "extra credit" it is the reflex of covenant salvation. We are saved into a people with a mission: calling the nations to Christ.

5. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

The Spirit applies Christ's presence to the church. The church becomes the Spirit-filled temple advancing God's redemptive purposes.

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP INTEGRATION

What is a Disciple?

A disciple is someone increasingly bringing all of life under the lordship and empowering presence of Jesus Christ.

What is Discipleship?

The process of being transformed in worship, character, obedience, and mission, and teaching others to do the same.

Three Rhythms of Discipleship

1. Life on Life — Relational proximity, accountability, modeling obedience.
2. Life in Community — Learning forgiveness, repentance, unity, and love.
3. Life on Mission — Engaging neighbors, coworkers, Soldiers; embodying Christ.

Avoid silos. Discipleship is not academic; it is life-shaping.

VI. MISSIONAL COMMUNITY APPLICATION

1. Missional Identity:

You are a missionary. Not by vocation, but by baptism. You have been baptized into the name of the missionary God.

2. Apostolic Calling:
As part of the church, you inherit the apostolic work of proclaiming Christ.
3. Baptismal Community:
We are a family of missionary servants formed by repentance and the Spirit's renewal.
4. Presence as Motivation:
Mission isn't heroic striving; it is Christ continuing His work through His people.
5. Urgency:
The Great Commission is not tomorrow's task, it is today's obedience.
If not you, then who? If not now, then when?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Identity & Authority

1. What does Jesus' claim to "all authority" reveal about Him?
2. How does His authority give you confidence in mission?

Discipleship

3. Based on the definitions, where is Jesus bringing your life under His lordship?
4. Where do you resist obedience? What needs to change?

Community

5. Do you have true life-on-life relationships? Who sees your obedience?

6. How can our Missional Communities become reconciled fellowships?

Mission

7. Who is one person you can intentionally disciple or invite this month?
8. What would it look like to live as if mission is your default identity?

“LIVE IT OUT” PRACTICES FOR THE WEEK

- Pray daily: “Lord, bring someone today under Your authority through me.”
- Invite someone into your life this week; meal, gym, conversation.
- Consider of one area of siloed Christian living.
- Engage one neighbor, Soldier, coworker intentionally.
- Practice obedience: identify one of Jesus’ commands to implement this week.

KEY TERMS

- Authority (ἐξουσία): The right and power to rule.
- Disciple (μαθητής): Learner, apprentice, follower.
- Baptize (βαπτίζω): Covenant identification with the Triune God.
- Observe (τηρέω): To keep, obey, practice.
- Nations (ἔθνη): Ethnic peoples, the whole world.

- Presence ($\mu\epsilon\theta'$ ὑμῶν): The abiding nearness of Christ by the Spirit.

3.

MULTIPLY

1 Thessalonians 1 (ESV)

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,

3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1 is a powerful snapshots of early Christian mission because it reveals how the gospel does more than save individual people. The Gospel builds a community whose very life becomes the missionary strategy. Paul's words are not simply sentimental encouragement; they are a theological and pastoral analysis of a movement that spread faster than his team could travel. What happened in Thessalonica is what every church longs for: qualitative belief producing quantitative expansion.

The chapter begins by grounding the Thessalonian church in its true identity: “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Before Paul says anything about their activity, he anchors them in their union with God. This is the pattern: identity precedes mission, belonging precedes doing, and being in Christ produces the impulse to make Christ known. This is not organizational momentum; it is spiritual vitality.

Paul then moves to thanksgiving. He remembers their “work of faith,” “labor of love,” and “steadfastness of hope.” These are not generic virtues, rather they are gospel-shaped responses. Their faith works, their love labors, and their hope holds. The gospel did not land among them as a set of ideas but as a transforming power that reordered their whole lives. This is why Paul is confident they are chosen by God: not because of abstract doctrine but because of the clear evidence of God’s power among them.

Paul explains that their reception of the gospel came “not only in word, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.” This tri-layered experience explained as word, power, Spirit created a church that was not merely informed but transformed. They did not merely hear Paul; they imitated him. And through imitating Paul, they were imitating the Lord Himself.

The Thessalonian believers “received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (v. 6). They imitated Paul’s reception of the Gospel in suffering and Christ’s steadfastness. Their discipleship was marked not by comfort but by costly joy. And this imitation became the engine of multiplication.

Paul writes, “You became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia” (v. 7). The word “example” (*typos*) refers to a stamp or mold—something that can impress its shape onto others. Their life together became a reproducible pattern. This is the core insight of disciple-making movements: disciples reproduce after their own kind. LeRoy Eims famously wrote, “Disciples are made, not born.” Thessalonica proves this. The missionary team made disciples, and those disciples—formed by imitation—not only grew in maturity but became a model community capable of reproducing itself.

Then Paul makes the astonishing claim:

“The word of the Lord has sounded forth from you... in every place.”

This is missiologically explosive. The gospel travelled faster through the Thessalonian believers than through Paul’s missionary team. The missionary band planted seeds, but the Thessalonian church became the wildfire. Natural networks, household relationships, merchant connections, and everyday social patterns allowed the gospel to move rapidly through the region.

The verb “sounded forth” (execheō) evokes the image of a trumpet blast echoing outward. Thessalonica became an echo chamber for the gospel. This was not programmatic strategy; it was qualitative transformation producing quantitative expansion.

Why did their influence spread so rapidly?

Because they embodied the gospel. They did not merely speak it; they lived it. They turned “from idols to serve the living and true God” (v. 9). Their repentance was visible. Their loyalty to Jesus was public. Their endurance in persecution was talked about. Transformation creates testimony. As in many movements throughout church history, people talked about the change before missionaries could report it.

Paul says, “So that we need not say anything.” In other words: Your life is preaching the gospel faster than we can.

This is the dream of every pastor and leader: a community so gripped by Jesus, so formed in character, so courageous in witness, that it becomes self-propagating.

Finally, the Thessalonians are described as people who “wait for His Son from heaven... who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Their hope is not escapist rather it fuels endurance, clarity, and mission. Hope anchors them in the future and empowers them in the present.

A church becomes a missionary force not by adopting sophisticated strategies but by embracing deep gospel belief. Qualitative depth produces quantitative breadth. The Thessalonian model shows:

- Disciples are formed through imitation.
- Communities reproduce what they are.
- Conviction fuels courage; courage accelerates mission.
- The Spirit uses ordinary relational networks for extraordinary expansion.
- A transformed church becomes the strategy.

The missionary team planted. The Thessalonian believers echoed. And the gospel outran the apostles.

Key Themes & Participant Reflection

Gospel Reception That Becomes Imitation (v. 5–6)

The Thessalonians didn't simply believe the gospel, they received it in a way that reshaped their whole lives.

Reflection Questions

- How do I receive the gospel each daily, weekly?
- What does joyful, Spirit-filled reception look like in my life?
- Who around me can see evidence of gospel transformation?

Gospel Reception That Requires Explanation (v. 8–10)

Lives changed by the gospel demand explanation. Transformation creates curiosity.

Reflection Questions

- Does my life require a gospel explanation?

- When was the last time an unbeliever asked me why I live differently?
- What habits could I adopt that would display gospel grace more clearly?

A Community That Echoes the Gospel (v. 7–8)

The Thessalonian church became a “gospel echo chamber” that sent the message outward naturally.

Reflection Questions

- Do I see my neighborhood, workplace, or unit as a place for gospel echo?
- What barriers keep me from living as a public witness?
- How can Agape Hood become a community that “sounds forth” the gospel?

Congregational Strategy: Events or Transformation?

Paul never points to big programs. Instead, he highlights:

- transformed hearts
- daily faithfulness
- embodied repentance
- public joy in suffering
- relational evangelism
- communities practicing gospel-shaped love

Programs can be helpful but they rarely reproduce faster than missionary teams. Transformed disciples can.

Reflection Questions.

- Are we relying on events to reach unbelievers—or on everyday missionaries?
- What would shift if Agape Hood trusted transformed people more than programs?
- How can I live in a way that makes mission unavoidable, not optional?

Practices for the Week

Receive the Gospel Deeply

- Scripture before phone
- Repentance instead of hiding
- Joy instead of cynicism
- Obedience instead of convenience

Live Missionally in Ordinary Places

- Bless neighbors: As a neighborhood missional community look for ways to uniquely serve a neighbor and genuinely bless them.
- Eat with someone. Mission starts around the table. Invite people to your home, host with kindness and look for ways to bless a neighbor. If this does not come naturally start small.
- Serve someone in need.

- Ask good questions: When we talk to others we often get caught up telling them about us in an effort to be transparent and honest. However, a great communicator draws out from others and speaks the Gospel into their lives but answering question they are actually asking.
- Share your story naturally. Remember rule number 1.. Don't be weird.

Live in Community That Echoes the Gospel

- Pray with someone in Agape Hood
- Serve together
- Practice generosity together.
- Encourage someone suffering
- Invite someone into your home or reshape your scheduled to live lives in relationship with your community.

6. Final Question for the Week

“Am I receiving the gospel in a way that others can imitate what they see?”

Because when we receive well, we imitate well, and when we imitate well, the gospel spreads faster than our programs, faster than our pastors, and faster than anything we can organize.

APPENDIX

MOVEMENTS



Appendix: The Renewal of Movement Ministry

Reactivating Apostolic, Prophetic, and Evangelistic Intelligence for Chapel Revitalization at Fort Hood

The crisis facing the contemporary church, and by extension, the Army chapel system, is not only organizational, budgetary, or structural. It is spiritual, theological, and missional. Many congregations who are generally healthy in administration, competent in teaching, and strong in pastoral care, are stagnant in mission, weak in evangelistic energy, and incapable of pioneering new work. This imbalance mirrors the historic neglect of the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic functions within the body of Christ. Alan Hirsch's diagnosis, while occasionally overstated, touches a real tension: churches and chapels often operate with only a fragment of the missional intelligence Christ intended.

Ephesians 4:7–16 offers a corrective. In this passage, the ascended Christ gives gifted persons, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build up the body into maturity. The argument emerging from Jenkins, Hoehner, Lincoln, Hirsch, and others is that Paul is not listing offices but gifted persons given for the ongoing flourishing of the Church. Nothing in the text warrants the conclusion that any of these gifts have ceased (nor can the text sustain the claim that every believer receives one of the five as Hirsch claims). Rather, “each one” receives a gift (4:7), and “some” are given these five equipping gifts (4:11). These are those

whose ministry equips the wider community for mission and maturity.

This has direct implications for revitalization, especially within the Army chapel environment. Chapel communities and churches, especially in a military context, often function as Shepherd/Teacher-heavy systems. They excel at care, counseling, and instruction but struggle to pioneer new outward oriented ministries, challenge cultural drift, or engage the unchurched population living, working, and training around them. The result is predictable: inward drift, declining participation, and a growing gap between the chapel's presence and the installation's needs

The Biblical and Theological Foundation

The Gifts Are People, Not Offices

Paul lists people whom Christ gives to the Church. These are not institutional roles requiring ordination or formal appointment. They are divinely gifted people whose ministry is essential to the body's health.

The Gifts Are Ongoing

Though Calvin believed the apostolic office was temporary, he paradoxically acknowledged that God occasionally raised apostles and evangelists “when the necessity of the times requires”—including in his own day. Calvin’s ambivalence leaves open a door that Hirsch and others walk through: God continues to raise apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic leaders.

The Gifts Are Missional in Purpose

Ephesians 4 is not primarily about leadership; it is about the equipping of the saints for ministry. The gifted individuals do not represent a hierarchy but a distributed system of gifts given to mobilize the church.

The Goal Is Maturity and Mission

Paul’s vision is that the body “grow up into Christ,” becoming unified, doctrinally grounded, relationally healthy, and missionally fruitful. When the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic gifts are suppressed or ignored, the church becomes lopsided—rich in care and teaching but thin in movement, discernment, and outreach.

Missional Intelligence

Hirsch describes APEST (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Sherpherd and Teacher gifts) as the “fivefold intelligence” of the Body of Christ, the full set of capacities that Jesus embodied and now distributes to His people. This framework, when applied properly, becomes an engine for movement. Here is how each gift functions according to Hirsch:

Apostle – The Architect of Movement

Apostolic leaders extend the gospel into new spaces, build systems, and pioneer new work. They see potential, design pathways, and mobilize people. In an Army context, they are the chaplains or individuals who create reproducible new ministries in barracks, motor pools, battalion footprints, and field environments. Apostolic leaders refuse to let the chapel become the terminal point of ministry; they treat it as a launchpad.

Prophet – The Guardian of Identity and Fidelity

Prophetic leaders call the community back to theological clarity and moral courage. They safeguard identity, expose idolatry, and re-center the church on the voice of God. In our environment, prophetic leaders strengthen moral advisement, protect doctrinal depth, and challenge complacency.

Evangelist – The Connector and Gathered

Evangelistic leaders engage outsiders with the gospel, build networks, invite, and gather. They pull the community outward, ensuring that mission remains primary. On an installation, they drive newcomer engagement, outreach rhythms, and relational evangelism across the rank spectrum.

Shepherd – The Nurturer and Stabilizer

Shepherds care for people, heal wounds, and build community stability. Chapels typically excel here, and it is crucial, but it cannot be the only gift in operation.

Teacher – The Guide into Truth

Teachers ground the community in Scripture, doctrine, and wisdom. They establish theological depth and form disciples who can articulate and live their faith.

Individually, each gift matters. Together, they form the missional ecosystem of the church. When any part of this ecosystem collapses, the whole body suffers.

The Challenge: The Exile of the APEs

In our context the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic functions have been historically neglected in favor of pastoral care and teaching. This imbalance could be rooted in Calvin's ecclesiology, which shaped Protestant tradition for centuries. His conclusion that the apostolic office was temporary (despite recognizing ongoing apostolic-type work) influenced church structures that prioritized stability over expansion. However, in the military context the role of the chaplain lends to a therapeutic pastoral model and many entrepreneurial leaders run into significant hurdles.

In chapel systems today, this has produced:

- Maintenance-based cultures rather than mission-based ones
- High care but low reach
- Good teaching but weak disciple-making
- Strong internal community but limited external impact

APEST as a Framework for Chapel Revitalization

Revitalization is not simply about new programs or better hospitality. It is about recovering the movemental architecture of the early church. Three revitalization imperatives emerge:

Rebuild Apostolic Capacity (Movement)

- Launch micro-ministries in new spaces.
- Re-engage barracks and remote units.
- Create decentralized hubs of discipleship.

Movement begins at the edges, not the center.

Recover Prophetic Voice (Identity)

- Clarify theological identity for each chapel.
- Reinforce doctrinal boundaries that shape culture.
- Speak into ethical challenges across the installation.

Identity fuels integrity.

Reignite Evangelistic Energy (Growth)

- Build a culture of invitation.

- Reinforce hospitality, follow-up, and newcomer pathways.
- Equip every congregant to articulate the gospel.

These three functions give the chapel its outward orientation and movement. Shepherds and teachers give it depth and stability. All five together create the conditions for sustainable revitalization.

APEST as an Organizational Strategy for III Corps

In the Power Sweep Guide, the core metaphor is Lombardi's power sweep: disciplined, unified, executed with precision, and requiring every player's contribution. APEST gift utilization is the spiritual equivalent. It is the team architecture Christ gave to accomplish His mission. Therefore, we recommend:

Ministry teams be built with balanced APEST representation

A team of Shepherds cannot revitalize a chapel.

A team of Apostles cannot sustain one.

Balance is the key.

Revitalization efforts be assessed through an APEST rubric

- Are we pioneering new work? (A)
- Are we protecting identity? (P)
- Are we reaching outsiders? (E)
- Are we caring for our people? (S)
- Are we teaching and forming disciples? (T)

The healthiest ministries engage all five.

Conclusion: APEST and the Power Sweep Vision

The Power Sweep Guide exists to re-center the chapel community around a movemental identity; family, holiness, mission, and unity. This aims to provide the biblical and theological scaffolding for that identity. It reminds us that Christ Himself has given every gift needed for chapels to flourish, and that revitalization is not a desperate attempt to reinvent the wheel but a faithful return to the architecture of the early church.

By reactivating apostolic imagination, prophetic clarity, and evangelistic energy alongside shepherding care and teaching depth, the Army chapel can once again become a missional outpost within the military community. The Power Sweep Guide, therefore, is strengthened when rooted in this vision: every gift activated, every member equipped, every chapel advancing the gospel.

When these gifts work together, the chapel becomes what it was always meant to be: a movement, not a meeting; a body, not a building; a mission, not a museum. Christ gave the gifts.

APPENDIX

ASSESSMENT

Below is a complete APEST Assessment Tool .

It includes:

- A 40-item diagnostic inventory
- A scoring rubric
- Gift profile interpretation
- Team application guide
- Leader reflection questions

This is not scientific. Any gift identification is not a ‘right’ and must be affirmed in community and developed on mission over years.

APEST LEADER ASSESSMENT TOOL

Diagnosing Apostolic, Prophetic, Evangelistic, Shepherding, and Teaching Gift Patterns Among Chapel Leaders

I. Instructions

This assessment helps identify the primary equipping gifts Christ may have given you for ministry (Eph. 4:7–16). It is not a personality test. It reveals how you naturally function within the Body to build, strengthen, and mobilize the Church.

- Read each statement carefully.
- Rate how true it is of you most of the time, in your actual ministry practice.
- Use the following scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral / Sometimes

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

Record your scores in a notebook or print this out, then use the scoring rubric to determine your profile.

Assessment Inventory (40 Items)

Apostolic Statements (A) – Items 1–8

1. I naturally create new ministries, ideas, or structures without being asked.
2. I am energized by starting new initiatives more than maintaining existing ones.
3. I quickly identify gaps, needs, or opportunities in the ministry environment.
4. I often think in terms of systems, networks, and long-range movement.
5. I enjoy deploying others into new ministry opportunities.

6. I am comfortable operating in unclear, pioneering environments.
7. I push teams toward mission expansion rather than internal focus.
8. I frequently ask, “Where are we not yet present at..., and why?”

B. Prophetic Statements (P) – Items 9–16

9. I sense spiritual drift in people or communities before others notice it.
10. I feel compelled to speak truth in moments of moral or doctrinal compromise.
11. I prioritize holiness, integrity, and fidelity to Scripture.
12. I easily discern when something is “off” spiritually or ethically.
13. I call people toward repentance, renewal, or deeper obedience.
14. I am often burdened for the spiritual health and purity of the community.
15. I challenge leaders when the mission is being diluted or distorted.
16. I feel a responsibility to guard theological clarity.

C. Evangelistic Statements (E) – Items 17–24

17. I regularly have meaningful spiritual conversations with non-believers.

18. I enjoy connecting new people into the life of the community.
19. I naturally build relationships beyond the existing congregation.
20. I think often about those who have never heard or understood the gospel.
21. I easily invite others to gatherings, studies, or ministry events.
22. I am energized by newcomer engagement and outreach opportunities.
23. I instinctively communicate the gospel clearly and simply.
24. I look for ways to build bridges to people far from faith.

D. Shepherding Statements (S) – Items 25–32

25. I naturally care for people in crisis or distress.
26. I enjoy creating a sense of family, belonging, and unity.
27. I invest significant time in counseling, mentoring, or pastoral care.
28. I am drawn to the needs of the hurting and vulnerable.
29. I focus on relational health and community flourishing.
30. I intuitively sense how people are doing emotionally.
31. I prioritize the long-term well-being of the community.
32. I am protective of people who are struggling or spiritually fragile.

E. Teaching Statements (T) – Items 33–40

33. I love studying Scripture and explaining it to others.
34. I organize ideas clearly and communicate them in structured ways.
35. I feel responsible to ensure doctrinal accuracy in the community.
36. I enjoy training others to understand and practice biblical truth.
37. I think systematically about theology and ministry.
38. I often develop curricula, training plans, or discipleship pathways.
39. I help others connect biblical truth to real-life decisions.
40. I am energized by environments where learning and growth occur.

III. Scoring Rubric

1. Add the numbers for each category:
 - Apostle: Items 1–8
 - Prophet: Items 9–16
 - Evangelist: Items 17–24
 - Shepherd: Items 25–32
 - Teacher: Items 33–40

2. Each category will score between 8 (minimum) and 40 (maximum).

IV. Profile Interpretation

Use the following ranges to determine your gift strength:

36–40: Dominant Gift

- This gift strongly shapes how you lead, minister, and think.
- You should be activated in this role for the benefit of the body.

30–35: Strong Gift

- You function well in this gift and can grow deeper through use.

22–29: Moderate Gift

- This gift is present, but not dominant; you may function in it situationally.

8–21: Weak Gift

- This is not a natural area of giftedness.
- It likely represents team gaps you should partner with others to fill.

V. Leadership Implications for Each Gift Type

1. Apostolic Leaders (A)

- Pioneer new ministries and expand the footprint.
- Identify missional gaps across the installation.

- Build systems, networks, and decentralized teams.
- Lead revitalization efforts, launches, and new initiatives.

Warning: Can frustrate teams focused on stability or tradition.

2. Prophetic Leaders (P)

- Guard theological clarity and moral integrity.
- Speak into identity, culture, and ethical advisement.
- Call communities to repentance, renewal, and holiness.
- Ensure fidelity to Scripture and mission.

Warning: Can be perceived as confrontational or inflexible if unbalanced.

3. Evangelistic Leaders (E)

- Drive newcomer engagement and outreach rhythms.
- Build relational bridges to Soldiers, Families, and unchurched audiences.
- Lead hospitality, assimilation, and invitation ministries.
- Champion evangelism training and gospel clarity.

Warning: May underemphasize depth or long-term formation.

4. Shepherding Leaders (S)

- Strengthen pastoral care, counseling, and relational cohesion.

- Build warm, healthy, resilient communities.
- Guide people through crises and transitions.
- Ensure long-term stability and belonging.

Warning: Can unintentionally move toward maintenance over movement.

5. Teaching Leaders (T)

- Build doctrinal depth and biblical literacy.
- Develop classes, discipleship pathways, and training plans.
- Explain truth clearly and train others for competency.
- Protect sound doctrine and theological foundation.

Warning: Can overemphasize information over incarnation.

VI. Team Application Guide

Every healthy ministry team should strive for APEST balance.

Below is a diagnostic for team health:

1. Apostolic Check – Movement

- Are we starting new things?
- Are we moving into new populations and spaces?
- Do we have pioneering leaders?

2. Prophetic Check – Identity

- Is our doctrine clear?

- Are we addressing moral and spiritual drift?
- Are we guarding culture?

3. Evangelistic Check – Reach

- Are we engaging the unchurched?
- Are newcomers being integrated?
- Are Soldiers hearing the gospel

4. Shepherding Check – Care

- Are people known, loved, and supported?
- Are small groups, counseling, and presence healthy?
- Is the community stable?

5. Teaching Check – Formation

- Are disciples being formed and trained?
- Is Scripture shaping people's lives?
- Are we producing mature leaders?

Where a category is weak, strengthen the team by:

- Recruiting leaders gifted in that area
- Realigning roles and responsibilities
- Adding training or development
- Adjusting ministry strategy so each gift has expression

VII. Leader Reflection Questions

These questions help leaders interpret results and integrate them into their ministry footprint:

1. Which gift scored highest for you? Does this match how others experience you?
2. Are you operating in your primary gift in your current role? Where are you underutilized?
3. Which gift scored lowest? How does this limitation impact your ministry environment?
4. Who on your team complements your weak gifts? Do they have space to operate?
5. What specific adjustments can you make this quarter to align your role with your gift?
6. In your ministry footprint (MC, Chapel, Installation), which APEST functions are missing?
7. How can you develop emerging leaders in the APEST categories most needed for revitalization?
8. How can APEST help you lead change in your chapel community using movement principles?