

A dramatic scene with a beam of golden light shining through prison bars onto a musical staff with notes.

At Midnight

Turning Crisis into Worship
& Prison into Purpose

Based on the sermon by Dr. Andrew King | Director of Compassionate Ministries, Ontario Conference

The Work Happens Outside the Gate

The narrative of Acts 16 begins with the “Macedonian Call.” Paul and Silas bypassed the synagogue to go to the riverside—outside the city walls.



Inside

KEY INSIGHT: They met Lydia, a seller of purple goods. Her conversion influenced her entire household.



Outside

Evangelism is community service. It starts with influence in the unlikely places.

Disruption of Profit Leads to Persecution



The Narrative

Paul and Silas encountered a slave girl possessed by a spirit of divination. She spoke truth, but her bondage was a revenue stream for her owners.

The Conflict

When Paul cast out the spirit, he destroyed their profit. The owners cared more about money than her well-being.

The Result

They were dragged to the marketplace, stripped, and beaten.

The Inner Prison



The Reality:

- **Location:** The 'Inner Prison' (Maximum Security)
- **Restraint:** Feet fastened in stocks (Immobile)
- **Physical State:** Bleeding from untreated wounds

*In this position, the natural human response is "Why, God?"
It is the definition of a hopeless situation.*

The Atmosphere Shift



**“God needs some worshippers.
Someone who is going to praise the Lord
no matter what their situation.”**

At midnight, instead of complaining, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns. They didn't wait for the situation to change; they worshipped in the midst of the trouble.

The Audience in the Dark



- **Scripture Notes:** “The prisoners were listening to them.”
- **Context:** A jail is a small community. The inmates knew Paul and Silas had been beaten. They expected groans of pain, but they heard hymns of praise.
- **Key Insight:** Your reaction to pressure is your greatest testimony. The world wants to know the God who gives you a song when you have nothing to sing about.

The Breakthrough



The Event: A sudden, violent earthquake shook the foundations.

- **The Miracle:**
 1. Immediately, all doors were opened.
 2. Everyone's bonds were unfastened—not just Paul and Silas's.
- **The Lesson:** Your spiritual resilience can lead to freedom for those around you. When you worship in “midnight” moments, chains fall off your neighbors too.

A Divine Appointment



- **The Crisis:** The Jailer, fearing the prisoners had escaped, drew his sword to take his own life.
- **The Intervention:** Paul shouted, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”
- **Reframing:** The prison was not a punishment; it was a **setup**. It was the only place Paul could meet this jailer and save his family.

Modern Application: The Call to Prison Ministry

Matthew 25: “I was in prison, and you came to me.”



- **The Reality of Fear:** Dr. King admits, “I was **afraid** of prison.” It is natural to fear the environment.
- **The Reality of Ministry:** Inside those walls are people who **know** the Bible, people who made **mistakes**, and people who desperately need to know they **matter**.
- **Our Mandate:** To treat the “least of these” as if they were **Christ himself**.

Christ's Method Alone



- True success comes from:
 1. **Mingling** with people
 2. **Sympathizing** with them
 3. **Winning** their confidence
 4. **Bidding** them to follow

“You can help to turn someone’s life around just by the fact that you cared enough to come in.”

The best part about going in is you get to leave. You represent hope from the outside.

More Than Just Visitation



Visitation: Going inside, mingling, sharing the Word.



Angel Tree: Supporting the children and families of inmates.



Pen Pals: Writing letters to combat isolation.



Literature & Prayer: Supplying reading materials and interceding.

Insight: Incarceration affects the **whole family**.
Ministry must address the **whole family**.

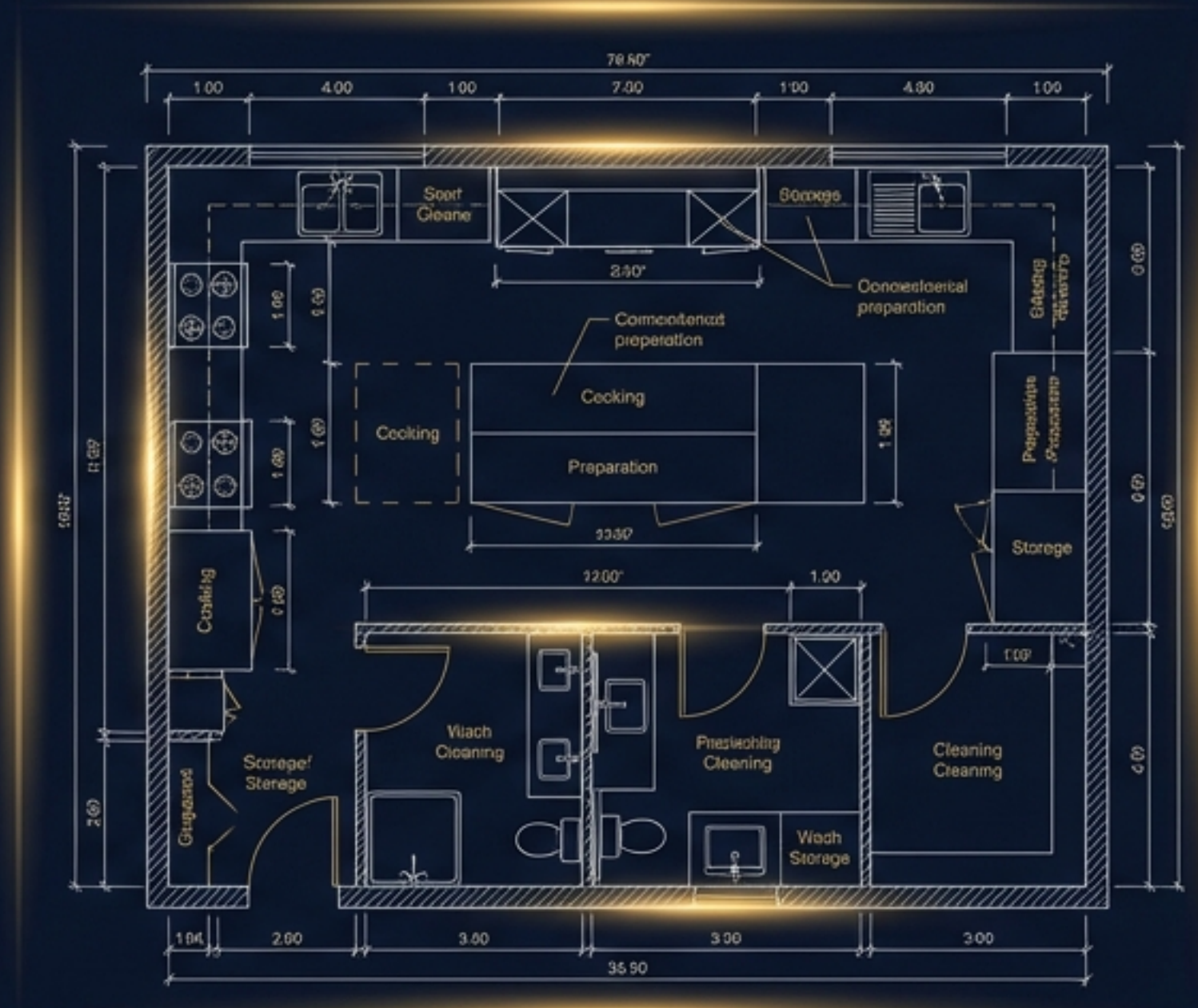
The Vision: Reintegration

The Challenge: Approximately 1,500 inmates are released annually in Ontario. They need skills, support, and a place to restart.

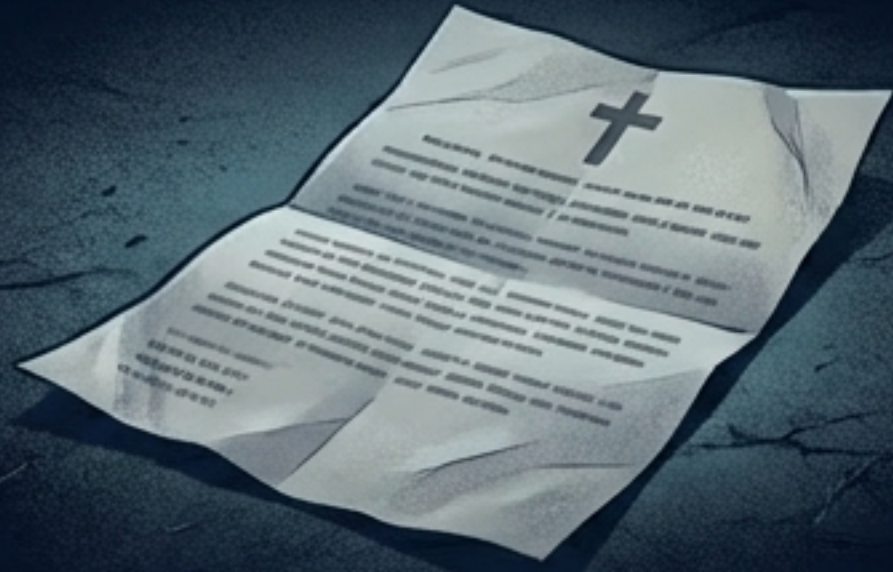
The Project: Transforming the Community Service Center at Bentworth into a Reintegration Center.

The Plan: Building a commercial kitchen to feed the community and provide skills training.

Goal: To be the second reintegration center in the GTA, serving the west side.



Evangelism is Community Service



Scenario A: Give a hungry person a flyer. They remain hungry.



Scenario B: Give a hungry person a meal and a blanket. They ask, "Where are you from?"

Core Philosophy: People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
We must be Jesus's hands and feet before we can be His voice.

Step Out of Your Comfort Zone



The Challenge: “Get off your seat, stand up, and make a difference.”

Overcoming Barriers:

- Fear of the environment
- Fear of not knowing what to say
- Fear of making mistakes

Reassurance:

God equips the called. Pastors and leaders are ready to train you. You just need to be **willing to say “Yes.”**

The Ultimate Freedom



Jesus came to proclaim liberty to the **captives**—both physically and spiritually.

Prison isn't just four walls; we often make our own prisons. But **worship** and **service** hold the keys to the exit.

Do not harm yourself; we are all here.