

## **Key Control in Churches**

**Rev. Charles Sinclair**

Key control is a basic issue for churches. There are numerous electronic access control systems and combination systems on the market. For this article, we are assuming the church is using locks with metal keys. In order to have minimal control of who comes and goes in the church, you must have some method of key control.

Engage the services of a locksmith and ask that all the locks in the church be changed to the same brand of lock and with the same key way. The key way is the milling on the side of the key that allows it to slide into the cylinder. It is usually indicated with a letter on the side of the key. Choose a locking system that uses pins to set the depth of the key cuts, like Schlage.

A good locksmith can help you set up a system where certain keys will open all doors, and certain keys will open only the outside doors, and a number of combinations in between. Not everyone should be able to get in the church office and certainly the pastor's study should be restricted. Have the locksmith stamp a number on each key cut, and indicate what area it will allow access. If you can get a "DO NOT DUPLICATE" stamp on the keys, all the better.

**DO NOT ATTACH ANY TAG PERMANENTLY ON THE KEY THAT INDICATES WHAT DOOR THE KEYS WILL OPEN OR THE NAME OF THE CHURCH!!** If a key is lost on the street, no one will know where it belongs.

Make a chart and issue the keys by number and have the recipient sign for the key. Keys are issued to the office the person holds, such as pastor and not to a person. When that person leaves his or her office, they will turn in their key. Do not issue the original key, because you need to keep them in a safe place in case you need to duplicate keys later. Cutting machines are not perfect and each time they cut a key from a copy they amplify the probability the key may not work. So keep the originals for future copies. The original will have five numbers stamped on the side. Duplicates do not have these numbers.

Follow these steps to add a measure of security to your Church facilities!