CPTED stands apart from traditional security measures because it focuses on **how spaces are designed**, not just on target-hardening tools like locks, bars, cameras, or alarms. Its core principles - **territoriality, natural surveillance, natural access control, space management, and maintenance**—offer churches a way to enhance safety without creating an oppressive or overly "high-security" environment.

Churches face unique challenges: varied hours, diverse activities, and a desire to remain welcoming. Even if we had no influence on the original building design, we can still improve what exists today through thoughtful CPTED practices.

Natural Access Control

- Make the **main entrance obvious and clearly marked**. Reduce the number of entry and exit points for both the building and parking lots.
- Ensure visitors naturally pass a **staffed checkpoint;** a greeter or safety team member. Use stanchions, tables, or gates to block off areas where people should not wander.
- Keep offices and **restricted areas locked.**
- Consider **locking exterior doors during services**, with a friendly greeter posted to welcome late arrivals.

Natural Surveillance

- Keep entrance windows **clear of posters and clutter** so you can easily see people approaching.
- **Maintain open sightlines** from the parking lot and street to doors and windows.

Territorial Reinforcement

- Maintain parking lots with **clean surfaces and clearly marked spaces** to convey order and ownership.
- **Use signage** that clearly identifies the church and communicates that the property is actively cared for.

Maintenance

- Remove graffiti within 24 hours.
- **Trim or remove landscaping that blocks views** of doors or windows; eliminate hiding spots by cutting underbrush.

- **Remove rocks or objects that could be used to break windows**—many break-ins are crimes of opportunity.
- **Lock up ladders** and keep maintenance sheds secured.
- **Maintain bright, functional lighting** around the building, especially at doors. Aim for strong illumination without spilling light into neighboring homes; add deflectors if needed.
- Inspect lighting at night to **eliminate shadowed areas** where someone could hide. Landscape and accent lighting can help.

Management

- Ensure all employees and volunteers understand the security system to reduce false alarms.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of everyone with keys or fobs.

