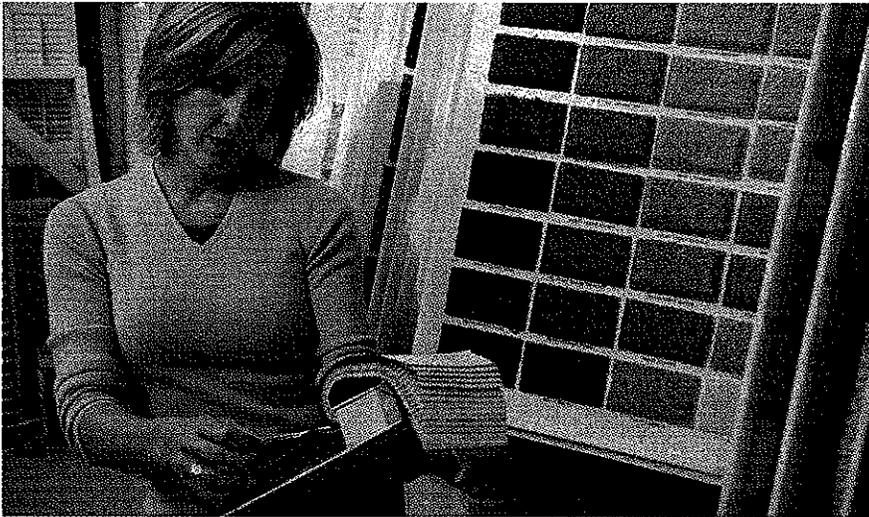


Buying Carpet

Avoid these three mistakes and you won't get taken for a ride.

by John Stahlman



Why is it that church committee jokes seem to revolve around choosing the color of carpet? If you or your committee are responsible for the selection and purchase of carpeting, you realize the task is no laughing matter. And while choosing the "wrong" color can get you in trouble with some people, choosing the wrong carpet will cause trouble for the entire church.

Experts tell us that a church's dissatisfaction with their choice of carpeting is often rooted in three common mistakes: two that occur when purchasing, and one when cleaning.

Mistake #1: Wrong Store

Many churches make their first mistake by following their inclination to buy carpet from a local retailer. While this may seem a reasonable step for supporting a local business, most retail carpet stores sell only residential carpeting.

They lack experience in the unique characteristics of commercial-grade carpeting required for the high traffic areas found in

churches, where hundreds and even thousands of people walk the same paths week after week.

Even residential carpet retailers that carry commercial lines will have limited selections, says Beverly Friesen, sales project manager at Thomas Kay Flooring and Interiors. And because they sell relatively little commercial carpet, residential carpet retailers do not have the volume pricing advantage of large commercial suppliers.

To avoid this mistake, work with companies that specialize in the sale of commercial carpeting. An added bonus is to find companies like Thomas Kay Flooring and Interiors, Shaw Industries, and Carpets for Christ that specialize in selling commercial carpet directly to churches. All three of these companies have national sales representatives.

Thomas Kay Flooring and Interiors has been in business since 1889 and founded Pendleton Mills when the company manufactured woolen textiles.

Shaw Industries, a Berkshire-Hathaway

Company, has recently introduced a Worship Collection of carpeting targeted specifically for faith-based organizations. Paul Cleveland is senior account manager for Shaw's faith-based market.

Carpets for Christ's mission statement clearly describes who they are: "...to glorify Christ through the ethical supply of flooring." Todd Wilcox is one of the company founders.

Mistake #2: Wrong Fiber

The second mistake commonly made is to purchase carpet with the wrong fiber.

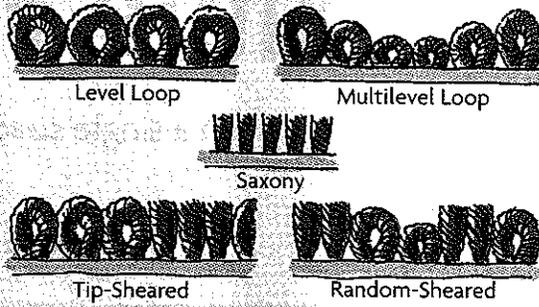
Nylon is the most common fiber used in commercial carpeting because it is incredibly wear resistant and easy to clean. These two characteristics make nylon ideal carpeting for churches. Although it is not naturally stain resistant, it can be easily treated with a stain-resistant preparation.

Olefin (polypropylene) has several qualities in its favor. It is amazingly resistant to stains, fading, and moisture and costs considerably less than other carpet fibers. However, its characteristic low melting point makes it inappropriate for most church uses, since even the simple act of sliding a table, play pen, or piano across the carpeting can cause enough friction to melt the fibers, leaving a permanent scar on the carpeting.

Polyester is growing in popularity because of its ease of cleaning and natural stain resistance. But Wilcox of Carpets for Christ calls polyester a "stupid" carpet because it has no "memory." This means that a footprint or indentation left by furniture remains even after the pressure and weight are removed. The carpet "forgets" what it looked like before the footprint or furniture depressed the pile. It does not bounce back to its original condition.

Quick Fact

Carpet is made by sewing strands of yarn on a backing material creating thousands of loops above the backing. This is called loop carpet. Loops can be all the same height (level loop), or different heights (textured loop or multi-level loop). If all the loops are cut, the result is cut pile or plush carpeting. Using a mixture of loops and cut loops creates other types of textured and multi-level carpets.



Mistake #3: Poor Maintenance

"Carpeting doesn't wear out, it 'uglies out,'" says Wilcox, referring to the third mistake churches make regarding their carpet—poor maintenance.

The "ugly out" process is best slowed by preventative maintenance, and the best preventative maintenance for carpeting is an absorbent, high relief doormat between the entrance and the carpeted area. Cleveland of Shaw Industries says that for a mat to be effective in trapping dirt, it must be six to ten feet long to assure that each foot contacts the mat at least three times.

And don't make the mistake of neglecting your mats. A dirty mat can be worse than no mat at all. When the mat is full of dirt and grime, it converts simple wetness into mud. Periodic cleaning or replacement of doormats is essential for proper maintenance of church carpeting.

When it is time to clean your carpets, don't fall for the lie that if a little shampoo is good, more is better. What is true is that what goes in must come out. Wilcox says only a small amount of detergent is needed to loosen grime and dirt in a carpet. And a small amount of detergent is much easier to rinse out, leaving a clean, dry carpet.

Cleveland says most carpet stains are caused by food spills—items that are either sugar- or grease-based. Because dishwasher detergent is formulated for removing sugar and grease, he says it makes a good cleaning agent for carpet stains. A solution of five to ten percent detergent is usually adequate.



John Stahlman is a freelance writer living in Springfield, Illinois.

CHOIR ROBES
EXPERT TAILORING **\$31⁹⁵** & UP

Finest fabrics including permanent press and wash & wear. Superior quality. Free color catalog and fabric swatches on request.

GUARANTEED SATISFACTION

Call Toll Free:
1-800-826-8612

REGENCY
CAP & GOWN CO.
www.rcgown.com

P.O. Box 8988-CH Jacksonville, FL 32211

Circle #068 on Response Card

CHURCH FINANCING!

**5.0-5.5% RATE ON
\$2,000,000 OR MORE!**

**PURCHASE, REFINANCE,
ADDITION & CONSTRUCTION**



**JOHNSON
MORTGAGE
SERVICES,
(513) 793-5000**

www.johnsonmortgage.net

Circle #040 on Response Card

MILL-DIRECT PRICING & DIRECT SHIPMENT FLOORING

Since 1940. Shipped to more than 3,000 churches nationwide.

Flooring materials for sanctuaries, gymnasiums, multipurpose rooms, classrooms, senior care facilities. Awana Circles also available.

Call today!

800-992-6700

Representing all major carpet mills.

Free samples of flooring materials provided.
Interior design services available.

TK
**Thomas Kay
Textiles, Inc.**



Circle #197 on Response Card