

Texas pastor launches website for clergy fashionistas

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By Ken Chitwood

There was a time when clergy were known for clerical collars and ornate liturgical vestments. However, since the rise of Evangelicalism in the 20th century, pastors are better known for baggy business suits than for unique spiritual garb. Certainly, pastors are not known for their sense of style.

Well-known, outspoken and arguably fashion-forward, Pastor Ed Young Jr. of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, TX is aiming to change this fact with the launch of his new website, PastorFashion.com.

“Most people don’t think of the runway leading up to the pulpit,” said Young, “but why not?”

It is Pastor Young’s hope that the site, and the movement, will motivate and empower pastors and church leaders to not only set the standards in faith, but the trends in fashion as well.

The website, live since early 2012, features fashion tips for the faithful, videos on how to tie a tie and answers to vexing questions about pant rolls and hoodie etiquette. One video includes a discussion of collars, but not of the clerical kind.

“This is a site where pastors can go to get tips on looking their best,” said Young.

“Pastors represent and communicate the message of Jesus, we ought to look as good as we can,” he said. “When you look good, you feel good and when you feel good, you stand up and stand out in the world.”

Young himself is quite the dapper deacon, with his own sense of personal style. He claimed his smart style emerged at a young age, but don’t believe that his father Dr. Ed Young of Houston Second Baptist fame is the source of Young Jr.’s debonair dress.

“Dad looks excellent in suits, but casually, Dad needs some fashion help,” laughed Young, “My mother is highly creative, she’s an artist and very well dressed. She is where I get my fashion sense.”

In his quest to qualify pastors as trendsetters, Young hopes to get regional representation with pastors across the US offering various fashion tips via the website. There is even [a page to submit your own fashion question](#) to Pastor Young and his fellow fashionistas of the cloth.

Known for his outlandish acts, such as his recent [Sexperiment](#), Young is already drawing ire from clergy who do not see the pastoral role including haute couture.

Rev. Matt Popovits, of [Crosspoint Community Church](#) in Katy, considered a fast-growing progressive and culturally relevant church, shared some concerns about Pastor Young’s approach.

“At Crosspoint we try to reflect and redeem culture so we can change it,” he said, “we do this for God’s glory and to bless others.”

“When a pastor dresses appropriately it can augment that effort, but fashion isn’t the point,” he said. “If the aim is to get pastors to start setting fashion trends that’s a bit like majoring in the minors, if you know what I mean.”

Yet, according to Pastor Young the emphasis is on relating to the world, being “in” but not “of” it, and seeking to set the trends as a means of connecting with, and changing, culture.

Young said, “We need to be conscious of our culture; conscious of things people connect with, like fashion, faith and fashion do intersect.”

“So many pastors look out of date, which tells people that God is out of date too...looking godly is not looking goofy,” he said.

Nonetheless, individuals like Popovits remain unimpressed.

He said, “When I see a pastor making a video about fashion I think to myself, ‘there are people dying and you are teaching us how to tie ties,’ please tell me how Jesus wins and Satan loses in that situation.”

“It’s not just about fashion,” said Young, prescient of his naysayers, “it’s about looking presentable as we present the timeless message of Christ. It’s about having a healthy self-esteem, which starts with God. That’s why we’re doing this.”