

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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Nine Hats of a Pastor

What do pastors actually do? While the answer to many may seem obvious, others ask such a question with honest curiosity.

It really is difficult to explain to people what a pastor does all week. From the viewpoint of some, the pastor only works on Sunday. In point of fact, of course, the pastor does no such thing. However, what a pastor actually does is complex, subtle, and hard to get at.

It is certainly an engaging job at once supported by over

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two thousand years of tradition and challenged by the changing face of culture. Advancing technology opens doors of innovation; new philosophies call for new approaches to preaching; changing generations bring new expectations.

Pastors can, do, and must wear many different hats in their work. Each hat represents a role. Pastors shift roles in a matter of a few minutes. One moment they are teachers, the next counselors, and the next managers. It is a fascinating job with endless opportunities to do good.

The hats cover a multitude of approaches, challenges, and opportunities unique to each person. But hats are made to be worn, and successful pastors wear them. The following hats are part of every pastor's wardrobe.

Captain's Hat

Pastors wear the captain's hat when pointing the church in the right direction. Casting vision for the future cannot be delegated to any other person. Others are invited to sit at the captain's table to give input and advice, but the captain's hat is the first one on the rack, and is the basic item in the pastor's apparel.

Chief Executive's Hat

As chief executive, the pastor evaluates people, programs, and expenditures. The pastor judges whether or not the church is reaching its goals, and makes the hard calls regarding where to invest or withhold resources. The buck truly stops at the pastor's desk, and decision-making is a primary role.

Pioneer's Hat

The fur caps worn by America's early pioneers declared a desire and willingness to conquer the wilderness. In a similar manner the Pioneer's Hat, when worn by the pastor, declares a desire and willingness to move into new territory by doing ministry in new ways. Pastors determine whether a church will innovate or vegetate.

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Pastors determine if the church will innovate or vegetate.

Worshippers only see the pastor wearing the Speaker's Hat.

Producer's Hat

Some might call this the Impresario's Hat. However, whatever it is called, the pastor is a mover of ideas, people, and resources. Successful pastors provide an environment that motivates people to give, serve, and participate. Without micromanaging people and resources, they empower movement toward the church's mission.

Conductor's Hat

Closely aligned with the Producer's Hat is the role of conductor. The pastor wears the Conductor's Hat by working with people of numerous talents, abilities, and skills. Directing people so that they work together in unity, brings out the best in the church. The pastor orchestrates the body so that harmony flows out of action.

Student's Hat

The truly successful pastor never graduates, but is a perpetual student. By wearing the Student's Hat, pastors illustrate that leaders are learners. They know they must continually upgrade their knowledge, skills, and abilities on a regular basis. What got them to where they are today, will not get them to where they want to be tomorrow.

Reporter's Hat

Pastors put on the Reporter's Hat when they represent the church in the larger community. As churches partner more and more with other churches and non-religious agencies, they become the face of the congregation to the community. The Hat of the Reporter is one of the more important items in the pastor's wardrobe today.

Coach's Hat

In almost any endeavor the responsibility of the coach is to get others to play the game as well as possible. The pastor's role is not to

play the game as much as to get others to play and to play well! When wearing the Coach's Hat, a pastor observes, corrects, explains, questions, encourages, and inspires others to be the best they can be in ministry. They know how to build a fire under people without getting burned.

Speaker's Hat

This may be the most visible hat put on by all pastors. The Speaker's Hat is worn every time a pastor preaches, speaks at events, or in some way addresses people. For many people, perhaps most, this is the only hat they ever see the pastor wearing. Because they primarily see pastors in this hat, they tend to judge them by their ability to communicate. The larger a church grows, the more important this hat becomes.

Consider:

What other hats have you seen pastors wearing?

What hats do pastors tend to wear well? Not so well?

Which hats should be primary? Secondary?



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