

Dennis Sanders: Church planting, venture capitalists and generational shifts

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March 14, 2012

If you're a regular reader of this blog, you know that we talk a lot about the future of the church--how we need to move into a time of innovation as well as transformation. [Dennis Sanders](#) recently reflected on [this post](#) and I asked him if I could put his comments here:

I work full time as the Communications Specialist at a local Presbytery (in addition to being a part-time Associate Pastor at a church in Minneapolis), I have the chance to see how Presbyterians do church planting, at least in the Upper Midwest. The presbytery has a committee that oversees the new church plant we have in the Northern Twin Cities. While I think the committee does a good job and the church plant is doing remarkably well, the pace of church planting may need to pick up the pace to replace all the churches that are closing or dismissed.

I don't think this is unique to the PC(USA); my own Disciples is also not planting churches fast enough either. I think that if we want to plant churches, then local church planting teams will have to act less like a committee circa 1955 and become more like venture capitalists, supporting and funding several projects at once.

Which leads to another issue: mainline/progressive denominations are aging and one way to reverse that is new churches. However, that also means that the younger people who are in the pews need to start serving on committees such as those that plant churches. In our presbytery, the chief person excited about new churches is 80 years old. I'm thankful for his passion and energy, but if an 80 year old can do it, couldn't someone half their age?

I know that young folks are busy with jobs and all of that. But part of the way things will change is when folks step up and get involved, and that means we need some younger blood willing to take the church as it is, but energetic and loving enough to not leave it that way.

What do you think? Can we begin to think like venture capitalists? Can we get younger people on our committees?