

Thinking about Change...Again!

By Bob Young

I like Hofstadter's Law. Perhaps you have heard of it, perhaps not. You have probably heard something similar. (Douglas) Hofstadter's Law says, "It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law."

Robert Clinton wrote something similar, "Change takes longer than you think even when you think it will take longer." Most of us who work with churches would like to see the churches make a transition to focus more on the kind of evangelism that develops disciples and builds authentic faith communities. And most of us want that to happen now, or yesterday if possible!

Transitions occur because people are prepared and ready for the change. If we do not take time for the necessary preparations, whatever change we push will not last and some of the best members in the church will be frustrated.

The story of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17 may provide an illustration of this principle. In the third year of his reign the king sent teachers across Judah to teach the Book of the Law. He set up military leaders and organized the soldiers. Why "in the third year"? Did he wait three years? Or did it take three years to get things ready? Perhaps it required three years to get the teachers and the people ready. What do you think? The Bible doesn't say.

Most of us want to move fast and as a result we do not experience a healthy transition. If a church is dying, we must take quick action. If spiritual forces are attacking, we must get ready for battle quickly. More often, however, we need to consider the truth of Hofstadter's Law.

Will you heed this advice, or are you in too big a hurry?