

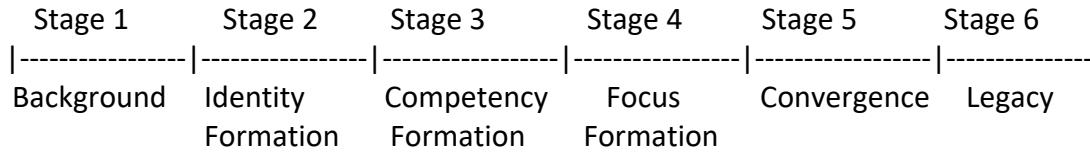
## **Leadership Emergence Theory (LET) – MARKETPALCE EDITION**

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I have adapted J. Robert Clinton's leadership emergence theory (LET) for use with pre-Christian and Christian "marketplace" leaders. Marketplace leaders make their living working in a variety of situations and organizations outside the "walls" of the local church, denominations, missions, and para-church ministries.

I have renamed the six stages of LET (Diagram 1: Marketplace Leader Time Line) to help marketplace leaders gain access to this important leadership development paradigm without the overt biblical and Christian language that they may not be familiar or comfortable with. Each stage builds on the previous one as the leader grows and matures towards fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose for his/her life. Each stage is unique in its focus and forms the basis for advancement and effectiveness in the next stage. Each stage involves processing God ordained circumstances in ways that lead to growth of character, maturity, and expansion of leadership capacity and effectiveness.

**Diagram 1: Marketplace Leader Time Line**



Each of these stages provides unique challenges and opportunities to experience God in deeper ways and to grow and mature as disciples and leaders. This model of leadership development emphasizes both character (being) and competency (doing) development. We can either cooperate with God in life circumstances that lead to growth in character, maturity, and effectiveness; or we can resist God and stagnate in our growth and development as leaders. Three basic elements are involved in the process:

1. Mature (character) and effective (competencies) leadership is developed throughout a lifetime.
2. We can respond positively or negatively to the circumstances in our life.
3. If we respond positively, we grow in character and competency; but if we respond negatively, we will stagnate until we respond positively to that issue.

These three elements form the basis for our growth, maturity, influence, and effectiveness as we progress from stage to stage in our development as leaders. There is no guarantee that we will progress in our leadership development through all six stages but we can make progress. We cannot always control our circumstances but we can control our attitude and learn from our mistakes. We can grow in character and competency even though our circumstances may be difficult and we may have to endure injustice. With this in mind, let's take a brief look at each of the six stages.

### **Stage 1 - Background**

The first stage is called background. This stage involves understanding one's background as foundation for a person's life through issues like our gender, race, personality, intelligence, family, social, and historical context. God places each of us in a personal, relational, and historical context that can maximize our opportunities to know him and to develop into the person whom he desires us to become.

### **Stage 2 – Identity Formation**

The second stage is called identity formation. This stage involves developing a foundational sense of who we are and who we want to become. During this timeframe, which corresponds to late adolescents/early adulthood in the West, an emerging leader needs to explore questions of identity, meaning, and purpose (CRISIS) and make initial decisions (COMMITMENT) about one's worldview.<sup>1</sup> For those who consider themselves "Christ followers" we make our initial commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord and begin to learn to relate to him in intimacy, integrity, and faithfulness (I Timothy 1: 5). In this stage, He begins to transform us.

### **Stage 3 – Competency Formation**

The third stage is called competency formation. This stage involves developing and maturing in effective leadership through the identification and application of one's gift mix and leadership skills. Gift mix involves natural abilities and acquired skills (and spiritual gifts for the Christ follower). The process of discovering and developing one's gift mix can take place in a variety of marketplace (as well as vocational Christian leadership) contexts where one can be challenged to respond positively to leadership tasks, relationships, conflicts, and authority issues.

### **Stage 4 – Focus Formation**

The fourth stage of development is focus formation. This stage involves gaining greater clarity on life purpose and developing an integrated, personal philosophy of leadership.

By integrated, I mean that it is consistent with gift mix, purpose, role, and methodologies of leadership. Success in this stage is foundational for convergence.

### **Stage 5: Convergence**

The fifth stage of development is convergence. This stage involves the mature coming together or integration of our background, identity formation, leadership formation, and focus formation. This stage tends to be our most productive time of leadership influence and seldom comes before mid-life and beyond. For the Christ follower, the major factors

involved in convergence include dependence upon God, giftedness, leadership philosophy, role, and influence. In convergence, the Christian leader has the sense that things have come together in such a way that he or she is operating near their maximum potential for leadership that God has destined them for.

### **Stage 6 - Legacy**

The final stage is legacy. This stage is characterized by the enjoyment and influence available to a person who has substantially completed their life purpose. This stage is rarely attained, but when convergence has been realized and the leader moves successfully into, they can continue to have a major influence through their relationship with others. The establishing of a lasting legacy and the mentoring of others through their life challenges is very important in this stage. Leaders in this stage can profoundly effect the next generation of emerging leaders by valuing them and being a resource for them as they develop character and competencies through their own developmental stages.

1. James Marcia's theory of adolescent identity development