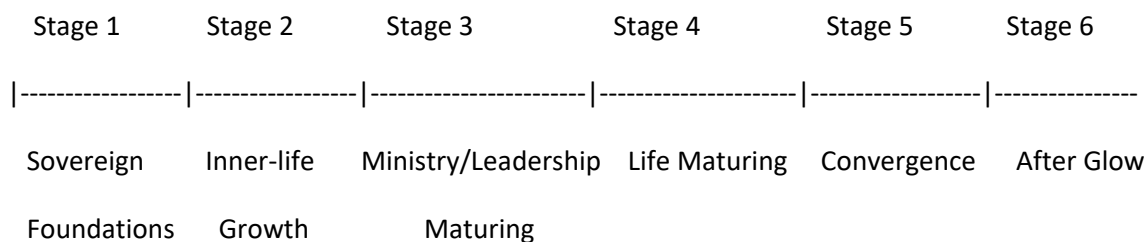


Leadership Emergence Theory (LET) Stage Development

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J. Robert Clinton's leadership emergence theory (LET) involves six stages (Diagram 1: General Time Line) that build on one another as the Christian 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: General 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 which 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. God initiates development throughout a lifetime so that we will become more Christ-like.
2. We can respond positively or negatively to God's sovereign initiation through circumstances in our life.
3. If we respond positively, we grow in Christ-like character, maturity, influence, and effectiveness; 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 Christian leaders. There is no guarantee that we will progress in our leadership development through all six stages. But it is God's intention that each one of us develop into complete maturity. He has given us His Son, His word, His Spirit, the church, as well as a

host of Biblical, historical, and contemporary examples to learn from. He wants us to learn to appropriate all that He has done for us and given us so that we might "run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (see Hebrews 12:1-3). Let's take a brief look at each of these stages.

Stage 1 - Sovereign Foundations

The first stage is called sovereign foundations. This stage involves God sovereignly laying a foundation for a person's life through his/her family, social, and historical context. God places each of us in a relational and historical context that will maximize our opportunities to know Him and to develop into the person whom He desires us to become.

Stage 2 - Inner-Life Growth

The second stage is called inner-life growth. This stage involves developing a foundational relationship with God out of which Christ-like character and maturity develop. During inner-life growth 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 – Ministry/Leadership Maturing

The third stage is called ministry/leadership maturing. This stage involves developing and maturing in effective leadership through the identification and application of one's gift mix and ministry/leadership skills. This process can take place in vocational, lay ministry, and/or marketplace contexts where one can be challenged to respond positively to leadership tasks, relationships, conflicts, and authority issues. It is in this initial phase of ministry/leadership involvement that a person begins to discover their giftedness.

Stage 4 - Life Maturing

The fourth stage of development is life maturing. This stage involves gaining greater clarity on life calling and developing an integrated, personal Biblical philosophy of ministry. By integrated, I mean that it is consistent with gift mix, calling, role, and methodologies of leadership. Success in this and subsequent stages is foundational for convergence.

Stage 5: Convergence

The fifth stage of development is convergence. This stage involves the mature coming together or integration of inner-life preparation, ministry/leadership maturing, and ministry/leadership calling and philosophy to fulfill one's destiny or ultimate purpose(s). The major factors involved in convergence include dependence upon God, giftedness, ministry 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 at the maximum potential for leadership that God desires for him or her.

Stage 6 - Afterglow

The final stage is afterglow. This stage is characterized by the enjoyment and influence available to a person who has substantially completed their life calling or destiny. This stage is rarely attained, but when convergence has been realized and God grants additional years to a Christian leader's life, they can continue to have a major influence through their relationship with others. The establishing of a lasting legacy and the mentoring others through their life challenges is very important in this stage.