

Ultimate Contributions (LEGACY)

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In this article I will review what is meant by ultimate contributions and begin to explore the whole realm of LEGACY. Remember, the question of legacy is, “*What do I leave behind me that matters?*”

Each of us has a chance to leave something behind us that will impact the next generation(s) and which we will be rewarded for in eternal life. We need to remember this at each and every stage of our lives and leadership. With that in mind, let’s take a look at ultimate contributions.

According to J. Robert Clinton (*Clinton’s Biblical Leadership Commentary*) ultimate contributions are “a lasting legacy of a Christian worker for which he or she is remembered and which furthers the cause of [Christ]...” (p. 404-405). Legacy (p. 512) is described in terms of the following general categories of influence:

- *Character* - setting standards for life and leadership.
- *Ministry [Leadership]* - impacting lives through evangelism and/or disciple-making (mentoring).
- *Catalytic* - serving as a change agent who helps make the world better.
- *Organizational* - leaving behind an organization, institution, or movement that will impact society in kingdom-advancing ways.
- *Ideation* - discovering, developing, describing, communicating, or promoting ideas that help others come to or grow in faith.

Clinton has identified 12 ultimate contributions in his research that relate to one or more of these legacy characteristics. They include (p. 512):

Character:

1. SAINT – a person who has a model life: not a perfect one, but a life others want to emulate.
 - Examples: Joseph, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, Ruth, Daniel, Jesus, John
2. STYLISTIC PRACTITIONER – a person who has a model ministry or organizational style that sets the pace for others and which others want to emulate.
 - Examples: Jethro, Debra, Nehemiah, Elijah, Jesus, Paul

Ministry [Leadership]:

3. MENTOR – a person who empowers others through individual and/or small group influence.
 - Examples: Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha, Jesus/Disciples, Barnabas/Paul, Paul/Timothy
4. PUBLIC RHETORICIAN – a person who empowers others through effective communication to large groups.
 - Examples: Aaron, Jesus, Peter, Paul

Catalytic:

5. PIONEER – a person who starts apostolic , missionary, or entrepreneurial organizations or enterprises.

- Examples: Abraham/Sarah, Moses, Nehemiah, Jesus, Paul

6. CHANGE PERSON – a person who is able to influence cultures to improve organizations or correct social injustice in society.

- Examples: Joseph, King Josiah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Esther, Jesus, Peter

7. ARTIST – a person who is able to impact organizations and/or cultures through innovation and creative breakthroughs.

- David, Solomon, Jesus

Organizational:

8. FOUNDER – a person who establishes a new organization to meet needs or capture the essence of cultural change.

- Examples: Abraham, Sarah, David, Mary, Jesus, Peter, Paul

9. STABILIZER – a person who can help fledgling organizations develop and move toward stability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

- Jethro, Joseph, Nehemiah, Jesus, James (Jewish church), Paul (Gentile church)

Ideation:

10. RESEARCHER – a person who develops new ideas or concepts from study or research.

- Examples: Moses, Daniel, Jesus, Luke, Paul

11. WRITER – a person who is able to conceptualize, contextualize, and communicate ideas effectively in a written format.

- Examples: Moses, David, Solomon, Matthew, Luke, John, Peter, Paul

12. PROMOTER – a person who is able to promote new ideas through motivation or networking strategies that expand exposure and buy in.

- Examples: Prophets, Moses, Joshua, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Paul

You may find the terms that Clinton uses a little difficult to understand or relate to, but his general categories and types of ultimate contributions are very helpful as we discover and develop our sense of legacy and attempt to become more focused and intentional in its fulfillment. I have given some examples from the Bible as references so that you can explore the concept of ultimate contributions more deeply on your own.