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**Article**

**The Emerging Leader**

by

Dr. J. Robert Clinton  
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## Abstract

This is a brief overview of leadership emergence theory concepts. It introduces the three major umbrella concepts: processing, time, and response. It describes briefly what processing is and gives several examples that illustrate what processing is all about. It also describes the notion of a time-line and gives a comparative time-line. Finally, it talks about patterns of response. These patterns help a leader pinpoint where he or she is in a certain kind of developmental issue. This quick overview allows one to understand the nature of leadership emergence theory and gives background which springboards one into **The Making of A Leader**, and **Leadership Emergence Theory**.

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## **What To Look For**

Answers to the following questions should focus your attention as you read this article.

1. What are the three umbrella concepts under which ideas about a leader's personal development can be grouped?
2. What does the first umbrella concept focus on?
3. What is the focus of the second umbrella concept?
4. What is the focus of the third umbrella concept?
5. In terms of your own development and length of time in ministry which of the three elements is most likely to be in focus for you?

## **Exercises**

1. For the process items given with a label and brief description, guess at (check off) which ones you think you may have experienced.
2. Look carefully at the time-line sub-phases. Estimate which one you are dominantly in at present, with your length of time in ministry.
3. For which of the patterns given have you experienced some of the stages?

## THE EMERGING LEADER

### Three Umbrella Concepts

by Dr. J. Robert Clinton

#### Introduction--The Leadership Mandate

Remember your former leaders. Think back on how they lived and ministered. Imitate those **excellent qualities** you see in their lives. For Jesus Christ is the same today, as He was in the past and as He will be in the future. What He did for them He will do for you to inspire and enable your leadership.

**Hebrews 13:7,8** (Personal Interpretive Paraphrase)

Many of us who are Christian leaders know full well how our lives have been significantly impacted by stirring examples of past missionaries or pastors or other Christian leaders. Early in my own development I was deeply challenged by reading about Hudson Taylor--particularly his many faith-challenging exploits. I learned that I could trust God in my ministry to supply funds and to open doors. I learned that I needed to listen to what God wanted to do through me and then to trust Him to do it. It is true. Jesus is the same. He is the source of leadership. What He did for past leaders He can do for today's leaders--and tomorrow's.

I like to interpret the command in this leadership mandate this way. "Think back on how they have lived and died and learn vicariously for your own lives." At the School of World Mission we have taken this leadership mandate very seriously. Studies in leadership at the School of World Mission go back twelve years. Numerous lives of Christian leaders--Biblical leaders, historical leaders and contemporary leaders have been examined. And we have learned lessons which have been transferable.

We have comparatively examined more than 900 case histories of leaders. Biblical cases include such characters as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Jephthah, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Barnabas, Paul, Peter and others. Many historical leaders have been studied including such giants as Hudson Taylor, Andrew Murray, A.B. Simpson, Phineas Bresee, Henrietta Mears, Charles Simeon, Sam Brelle, Adoniram Judson, Robert C. McQuilkin, Robert Jaffray, G. Campbell Morgan, A. J. Gordon, Mary Slessor, Maria Atkinson, J. O. Fraser, and many others. By far the majority of case studies have been of contemporary leaders--current missionaries and national leaders from around the world.

What have we learned? Several important items. One, our definition of a Christian leader is becoming clearer. A Christian leader is a person with God-given capacity and God-given responsibility who is influencing a specific group of God's people toward God's purposes. Two, leadership emergence is a lifetime process in which God intervenes throughout in crucial ways to shape that leader towards his purposes for the leader. Three, when viewed from a whole life perspective it can be seen that God's intervention or shaping is intentional. His processing develops the leader's capacity. It

moves the leader to operate at realized potential in terms of giftedness--that is, natural abilities, acquired skills and spiritual gifts. His shaping allows for a given leader's response to it. Leadership emergence can be thwarted. Four, we are beginning to get an overall picture of how a leader develops or fails to do so.

A theoretical framework for organizing, interpreting, and perhaps even predicting a leader's development is emerging. This framework looks promising as an aid to personal growth and the selection and development of Christian leaders.

### **Overview of the Leadership Emergence Framework**

God works in a leader's life. The explanation of that working, that is, the development or shaping of the leader, can be explained to a large extent by the use of and relationship between three important umbrella-like concepts: processing, time analysis and pattern of response.

### Processing

Processing describes the intervention incidents which God uses to shape leaders. Though each individual's processing is unique and situationally specific, there are common items shared with other leaders. We call those common items process items--items in the course of daily life which God uses to "process" or "shape" a leader toward development. To date, we have identified and labeled about 50 of these process items. Their descriptive labels suggest their intent or use by God in the shaping process.

Character is crucial in a leader. God uses many process items to work on the development of a leader's character. *Integrity checks*, that is tests of integrity, contribute to early character shaping. God often uses a life incident to test or check a leader's character regarding consistency with inner convictions. Sensitivity to this processing and a successful response usually leads to God's expansion of the leader's capabilities and responsibilities. Lack of sensitivity or an unwillingness to respond usually leads to remedial processing on the same issue.

A second example involves guidance processing. Leaders must learn to get guidance from God if they are to learn to influence God's people towards God's purposes. There are a number of guidance process items. Double confirmation is an unusual guidance process item for crucial decision-making moments in a leader's life. It is not a frequent process but a very important one as the whole direction of a career may hinge upon it. God directs a leader toward some specific direction in a spectacular way. He first gives the leader indications of the intended direction. This direction may be given in a variety of ways including personal use of the written Word, the use of the Word by some one else, inward conviction, circumstances or various combinations of these. God next gives someone else confirmation of this same guidance totally apart from the original person and situation. God then brings the two together so that the second person can *externally* confirm the direction given to the leader. This *double confirmation* (internally to the leader, externally confirmed by another) gives a firm basis for a life-changing decision. God double confirms his direction for Moses through Aaron (Exodus 3 and 4) and for Paul through Ananias (Acts 9).

Barnabas, Paul's mentor, recognized early on the first missionary journey to Cyprus that Paul needed to be released in order to develop his God-given potential. The *leadership switch* from *Barnabas and Paul* on Cyprus to *Paul and his companions* at Perga is one of the great illustrations of a *relationship insight*. This relationship insight concerns leadership transition. Few leaders seem to catch this important lesson of releasing a talented and perhaps threatening emerging leader. It is only one of many kinds of relationship insights that leaders must learn if they are to be effective. The majority of early ministry problems concern the leader's attempts to influence followers.

*Relationship insights* refer to life incidents in which a leader learns a valuable lesson concerning working with people--either followers or other leaders. This lesson can be learned through either a negative or positive situation. The end result of a *relationship insight* is a tool, or attitude, or guideline which becomes part of a leader's

arsenal and value system for future leadership. Barnabas' selfless mentoring attitude was at least partially responsible for Paul's on-going development as a leader. The three process items just introduced--integrity check, double confirmation, and relationship insights are typical of many that have been identified and described. In addition, to simply identifying and labeling we have also in many cases pinpointed how they are used to develop leaders--we give lists of purposes or uses or values that many of these process items do. Having labels to describe one's experience is in itself a step forward in development and often gives reassurance and affirmation to a developing leader. Knowing ahead of time how some of these process items are used to shape a life allows us to be more proactive in participating in the shaping process. Further, knowledge of the wide variety of process items and how they have been used in the past carries an exhortive punch for the present. This knowledge often sensitizes leaders in both their personal lives and in their leading others to grow.

Process items can be analyzed individually. Then these special God-interventions can be correlated to the development of each of the concepts of a Biblical leader. Some process items focus on identifying and developing God-given capacity. Some relate more directly to the instilling of God-given responsibility to lead. Others relate to expansion of influence means. Still others can be seen to direct the leader toward the specific groups of followers. And some refer to guidance that reveals God's purposes for leadership.

Process items should also be viewed cumulatively, that is, the effect of all of the process items taken together over a lifetime. This type of overall analysis of processing yields a three-fold result. Overall analysis suggests that processing moves toward three major leadership development goals:

1. spiritual formation,
2. ministerial formation and
3. strategic formation.

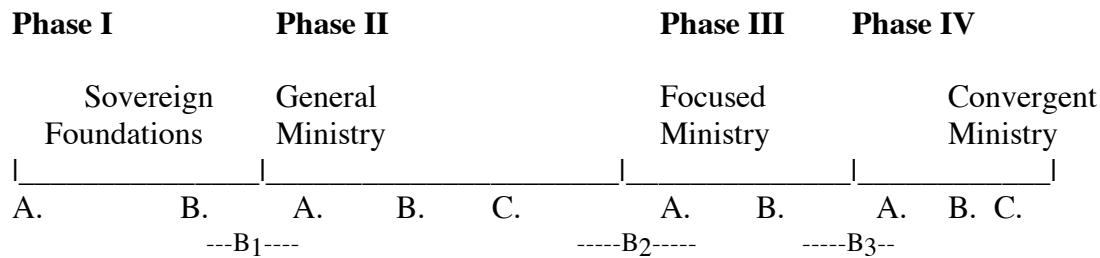
Spiritual formation essentially refers to the development of leadership character. Ministerial formation has as its essence the development of influence and ministry skills. Strategic formation focuses on development of leadership values which culminate in a ministry philosophy, developed over a lifetime and compels the leader to an ultimate contribution in accordance with the purposes of God.

### **Time Analysis**

*Time analysis*, the second of the umbrella-like concepts that helps explain the development of a leader, refers to chronological analysis of the processing of a leader. Time analysis does three things. It forces the emerging leader to see present processing in terms of a larger picture. It also allows a means for integrating the processing experienced to date into some sort of coherent overall picture. Finally, it sets expectations. A coherent picture of a leader can be compared to a common time analysis synthesized from comparative study of many unique timelines.

Every leader may analyze his/her development over time. This results in a unique time-line, that is, an analysis of development which recognizes natural time increments of development called development phases. Identification of one's time-line allows a means of integrating the processing experienced to date. Process items can be located as to when they happened on the time-line. An orderly presentation of processing along a time-line is the prelude to obtaining a more comprehensive view of the leader's development. Patterns begin to emerge. Overall lessons can be seen.

Comparison of a leader's unique time-line with a generalized *ministry time-line* allows for orientation and evaluation of a leader's development. Further it sets future expectations. Briefly, from a comparative study of many unique time-lines of individual full time Christian leaders, a general time-line, called the *ministry time-line*, has been synthesized. Figure 1 displays it and a brief table-like form of explanation.



Where the capital letters A, B, etc. are called **sub-phases**, that is, smaller divisions of the larger **Phases**. These sub-phases are briefly explained below.

#### Phase I

- A. Sovereign Foundations -- (13-20 years)--early shaping of character/ personality
- B. Leadership Transition (3-6 years)--a time in which first steps in ministry are done

#### Phase II

- A. Provisional Ministry (2-6 years) --the first attempts at full time ministry assignments; it is provisional because it might not last
- B. Growth Ministry (6-8 years)--ministry utilizing known giftedness with efficiency; giftedness and role issues are learned; this sub-phase is more for developing the leader than the ministry which is accomplished.
- C. Competent Ministry-- (2-6 years) -->operating out of giftedness in roles that fit that giftedness produces excellent results; still to be determined is the influence-mix profile.

#### Phase III

- A. Role Transition--There is movement toward compatibility between role, giftedness and influence-mix profile. There is shaping of a role more ideally suited to giftedness and challenge toward influence-mix.
- B. Unique Ministry--ministering effectively as well as efficiently with giftedness. (Role plus unique may last 3-12 years)

#### Phase IV

- A. Special Guidance--movement toward a role focusing on ultimate contribution
- B. Convergent Ministry--fulfilling a sense of destiny/ ultimate contribution
- C. Afterglow--fall out effects of a life well lived; spiritual authority dominant

And the boundaries, that is the transitions between phases, are called: B<sub>1</sub> the logistics barrier, B<sub>2</sub> the strategic barrier/ Doing to Being, B<sub>3</sub> The Convergence Springboard. The times in parenthesis are at best approximate and will vary from leader to leader.

**Figure 1. THE MINISTRY TIME-LINE**

All the processing that precedes actual entry into full-time Christian ministry is located in Phase I called ministry foundations. Note that there are the formative years in which foundations are laid as to character and early attitudes and approaches to life followed by first steps in transitioning into leadership.

Phase II has three sub-phases. Some leaders will drop out in the provisional phase. This occurs due to many reasons, not the least of which is an over emphasis on ministry activity and a corresponding negligence of personal spiritual need in the inner life. During the growth ministry subphase, the leader is doing ministry but the primary thrust of the ministry is for growth of the leader not on ministry accomplishments, though many great things may in fact be accomplished. Hence, the term Growth Ministry. God

primarily teaches the leader about leadership--leadership character, leadership skills, and leadership values. Exploration of giftedness occurs as various ministry activities are attempted. The emphasis on development in both the first two sub-phases is primarily for the leader. Much of what happens is to develop the leader and not so much to develop the followers being influenced by that leader. Of course, this shifts somewhat toward the latter part of the growth sub-phase. As the leader begins to know and operate in terms of giftedness there is an increase in competency which eventually will lead on to the boundary that transitions to focused ministry. Toward the latter end of this phase, the leader will usually come to a point of questioning about ministry. The leader know that he/she can do things fairly efficiently but there is a questioning as to its ultimate worth. Usually this questioning leads to a deepening relationship with God in which beingness and not doingness becomes the under lying *raison d'être*. Prior to this paradigm shift, doingness or achievement has been the major driving force.

Phase III the focused ministry sees the leader not only operating efficiently in terms of giftedness, i.e. doing things right, but increasingly effective--that is, doing the right things. The leader begins to focus on those things that flow out of being and are part of his/her destiny. There is more and more a prioritization of ministry effort.

Finally, some leaders move into Phase IV, Convergence, a special fulfilling time of ministry which builds on all past experience, giftedness, destiny processing, and leads to a focused concentration on ultimate contribution and the impact of a life well lived.

### Response Patterns

Comparative study of processing integrated along many unique time-lines has also resulted in the identification of patterns describing various aspects of a leader's development. These *response patterns* make up the third of the three umbrella-like concepts which help explain how a leader develops. About twenty-five patterns have been clearly identified. Another ten have been suggested but need further confirming data.

Four foundational patterns describe the backgrounds of which most leaders emerge. Three transitional training patterns correlate to these foundational patterns. These foundational and transitional training patterns give a framework from which one can assess current emerging leaders. These patterns describe generally the flow of early emergence. Each of these early foundational patterns and transitional training patterns has advantages and disadvantages. Knowledge of these advantages and disadvantages is helpful to mature leaders in assessing and counseling young potential leaders.

Two early testing patterns focus on character. Two early patterns indicate giftedness. Specific ministry situations require various kinds of entry patterns. A giftedness development pattern which spans the leadership transition, provision, and growth time periods describes how a leader discovers and uses spiritual gifts from the first use of one spiritual gift to the identification of a gift-mix and finally the development of the gift-mix into a gift cluster.

A faithfulness pattern occurs through the provisional and growth ministry time periods. Faithfulness in ministry tasks and ministry assignments along with positive response to the testing element of many of the ministry process items leads to expanded ministry and re-testing of faithfulness at that new ministry level. This pattern along with overall comparisons of many entire life analyses as led to the hypothesis of the faithfulness pattern shown below.

**THE TIME OF DEVELOPMENT OF A LEADER DEPENDS TO  
SOME EXTENT UPON RESPONSE TO PROCESSING. RAPID  
RECOGNITION AND POSITIVE RESPONSE TO GOD'S  
PROCESSING SPEEDS UP DEVELOPMENT. SLOWER  
RECOGNITION OR NEGATIVE RESPONSE DELAYS  
DEVELOPMENT.**

This hypothesis, if it can be shown to be true, gives added impetus to the leadership mandate of Hebrews 13:7,8.

Several later patterns describe various stages of character maturity and convergence toward effective ministry. A destiny pattern spans an entire lifetime and increasingly ties in God's plans and purposes for a leader beginning with the time of destiny preparation until the time of destiny revelation and finally culminating in destiny fulfillment. The identification of these patterns has given power to the whole explanatory framework of leadership emergence. Current leaders can see where they are presently in terms of many of these patterns. The patterns may also predict and help set expectations for leaders. When leaders can see their own development in terms of how God has developed previous leaders there is that compulsion to follow the leadership mandate and *imitate their faith*. Such a desire must rest on the fact that Jesus will respond to such obedience and supply the divine element that will bring fulfillment of one's leadership efforts.

### **Some Specific Findings That Can Be Applied**

One can readily apply these concepts, especially some of the more common process items, the ministry time-line, and the early response patterns.

Some of the process items serve to explain and help leaders respond to God's present processing. Current data indicate that more than half of the fifty process items identified thus far will occur in more than seventy percent of leaders. Table 1 points out the ten most common process items and the central thrust of their definition or use.

<b>PROCESS ITEM</b>	<b>CENTRAL THRUST</b>
Ministry Task	Early test of faithfulness and ministry potential
Integrity Check	Early test of character
Obedience Check	Early test of volition and response to God
Word Check	Early test of sensitivity to God's speaking
Family Influence	Early formation of character or values
Literary	Vicarious learning of leadership lessons from written information
Isolation	A setting aside from ministry which deepens one's relationship with God
Conflict	Negative processing that may affect character, skills or values
Relational Insights	Interpersonal lessons which influence skills and attitudes in the future
Leadership Committal	A calling to serve in leadership

**Table 1. Some of the Common Process Items**

The ministry time-line can prove useful as a means for orienting one's counseling with an emerging leader. Most leaders go through a provisional time in which they struggle to learn early ministry lessons, find their giftedness profile, and find a role which suits them as to personality and giftedness. This awareness can pave the way for corrective advice and suggestions for the future.

Suggestive patterns which can be utilized right away include the *positive and negative testing patterns*, the *like-attracts-like gift pattern* and the *giftedness drift pattern*.

The positive testing pattern points out that God often tests a leader in order to build character. This is true early in a leader's development, particularly in the transition from non-leadership to leadership. There is the incident that tests, the recognition that the test is from God, and the positive response which deepens the character. Expanded leadership usually follows a positive test. The *negative testing pattern* is similar but ends with different results. There is the incident that tests, the refusal of the test, and the lack

of character formation. The negative test almost always requires repeated remedial testing to correct the deficient character element.

Frequently, an emerging leader is attracted to the ministry of a more developed leader. Often those so attracted have one or more embryonic gifts corresponding to an important gift already developed in the mature leader. This pattern may be called the *like-attracts-like* pattern.

### **Using The Framework**

I have only briefly introduced the notions underlying the framework for analyzing emergence of a leader. While one can use some of the concepts almost immediately as described in the previous section, extended study is needed if one wants to carefully mentor others. A detailed grasp of the theoretical framework allows one a personal orientation that can significantly affect a career track. Such an understanding gives a basis for counseling mid-career leaders. It is particularly useful in early selection and development of potential leaders.

Several course and much written material including several manuals and books and several dissertations attest to the fact that in the School of World Mission the leadership mandate of Hebrews 13:7,8 has been taken seriously.