

The Making of a Leader: Book Review
by Bob Young
August 2008

How does God develop leaders?
What does it take to be a leader?
When does leadership begin?

The answers to these questions may surprise you. Leadership is not a position, title, or training. Nor is it limited by experience. In fact, these things sometimes blur the real issue of leadership.

The patterns God uses to develop leaders can be seen in the study of the lives of historical, biblical, and contemporary leaders. Understanding the process of leadership development can revolutionize one's view of leadership. Couple this insight with a biblical perspective and one begins to appreciate the value of Robert Clinton's book, The Making of a Leader.

This book is a must-read for those interested in developing and mentoring leaders. It is equally valuable for those who are striving to become leaders. The book provides insights for personal and leadership development. The principles work in a variety of cultural contexts.

In The Making of a Leader, Clinton shares the results of his research which included hundreds of leaders. He identifies a general time-line consisting of six developmental phases in leadership development: 1) sovereign foundations, 2) inner-life growth, 3) ministry maturing, 4) life maturing, 5) convergence, and 6) afterglow. Identifying these phases gives leaders the capacity to track progress in their development and clarifies insights and lessons. Armed with these patterns, leaders have the ability to identify the unique needs and experiences of their leadership development and to build leadership skills, relational skills, character, vision, and values. What separates this book from other books about leadership is that this book provides tools to develop leaders rather than just surveying what leaders are or do.

Each chapter covers roughly one development phase. Specific types of challenges and processes leaders typically experience during each phase are included. By identifying these items, leaders are enabled to see beyond their immediate circumstances and to identify underlying developmental needs.