



THE NEXUS LEADERSHIP BRIEFING

BEYOND THE OIL

Why Anointing Alone Cannot Build the Organization



Calling begins the assignment.

**Leadership capacity determines
whether the organization can
carry it.**

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FROM STEPHEN'S DESK

The Oil Matters. So Does the Organization.

I believe in the anointing.

I have witnessed God use gifted pastors, preachers, and ministry leaders to change lives, strengthen families, and transform communities. Spiritual power matters. Prayer matters. Calling matters.

But after decades of leading organizations and advising pastors, I have also learned an uncomfortable truth:

Anointing may initiate the assignment, but it does not automatically build the organization required to sustain it.



Too many churches have a powerful vision resting on an underdeveloped leadership structure. The pastor is gifted, the people are sincere, and the mission is meaningful—but nearly everything still depends on one person.

When that happens, the problem is not necessarily a lack of faith. It may be a lack of capacity.

Oil and order are not enemies.

THE LEAD BRIEFING

The Leadership Tension

In many churches, we celebrate the oil placed upon the leader but pay too little attention to the organization that must carry the vision.

- We pray for growth without preparing leaders to manage growth.
- We ask God to send people without building systems to receive, develop, and retain them.
- We promote faithful individuals without determining whether they possess the capacity required for leadership.
- We celebrate vision but fail to create responsibility, accountability, and measurable execution.

Then, when progress stalls, we often interpret an organizational problem as a spiritual problem. We pray harder, hold another revival, preach about commitment, and ask the same exhausted people to sacrifice more.

Prayer should never be diminished. But prayer is not a substitute for leadership development, healthy systems, or organizational clarity.

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

David was anointed as a young man, but he did not immediately possess the maturity, relationships, judgment, or governing experience required to lead a nation. The oil identified his calling. The years that followed developed his capacity.

Moses was unquestionably called by God, yet Jethro warned him that his leadership model was unsustainable. Jethro did not question Moses' anointing. He questioned his structure: develop capable leaders, distribute responsibility, and stop building an organization that cannot function without you.

In Acts 6, the early church answered a serious distribution problem by establishing qualifications, selecting capable people, clarifying responsibility, and creating structure. The result was not less spirituality. The Word spread and the number of disciples increased.

Healthy structure supported spiritual expansion.

THE REAL DIAGNOSIS

Spiritually Alive. Organizationally Vulnerable.

A church can be spiritually alive and organizationally unhealthy at the same time. That condition often produces recognizable symptoms:

- The pastor must approve nearly every decision.
- A small group of dependable people carries most of the work.
- Ministries are built around personalities rather than repeatable processes.
- Titles are given without clearly defined responsibilities.
- Meetings produce conversation but little measurable execution.
- New ideas regularly begin but rarely become sustainable.
- The church has volunteers but lacks a genuine leadership pipeline.
- When a key person leaves, the ministry nearly collapses.

These symptoms are sometimes blamed on the size of the church. But smallness is not the real issue. A church of 75 can possess clarity, accountability, and a strong leadership culture. A church of 2,000 can remain dangerously dependent on its senior leader.

The better question is not, ‘How large is the ministry?’

It is, ‘How much of the vision can be carried without the pastor’s direct involvement?’

If the answer is ‘very little,’ the organization has reached a leadership-capacity ceiling.

THE NEXUS PERSPECTIVE

Volunteers Help. Leaders Carry Outcomes.

Leadership capacity is the ability of an organization to turn vision into coordinated, sustainable action through people other than the primary leader.

That requires more than recruiting volunteers.

VOLUNTEER	DEVELOPED LEADER
Fills a need	Accepts responsibility for an outcome
May wait for instructions	Understands the mission and makes sound decisions
Completes an assigned task	Develops people and improves the process
Is thanked for participation	Is supported, evaluated, and held accountable

Churches often have many willing workers but very few intentionally developed leaders. Consequently, the pastor remains the visionary, strategist, problem solver, quality-control department, and final point of execution.

**That is not evidence of exceptional leadership.
It is evidence that the organization has not yet
learned how to multiply leadership.**

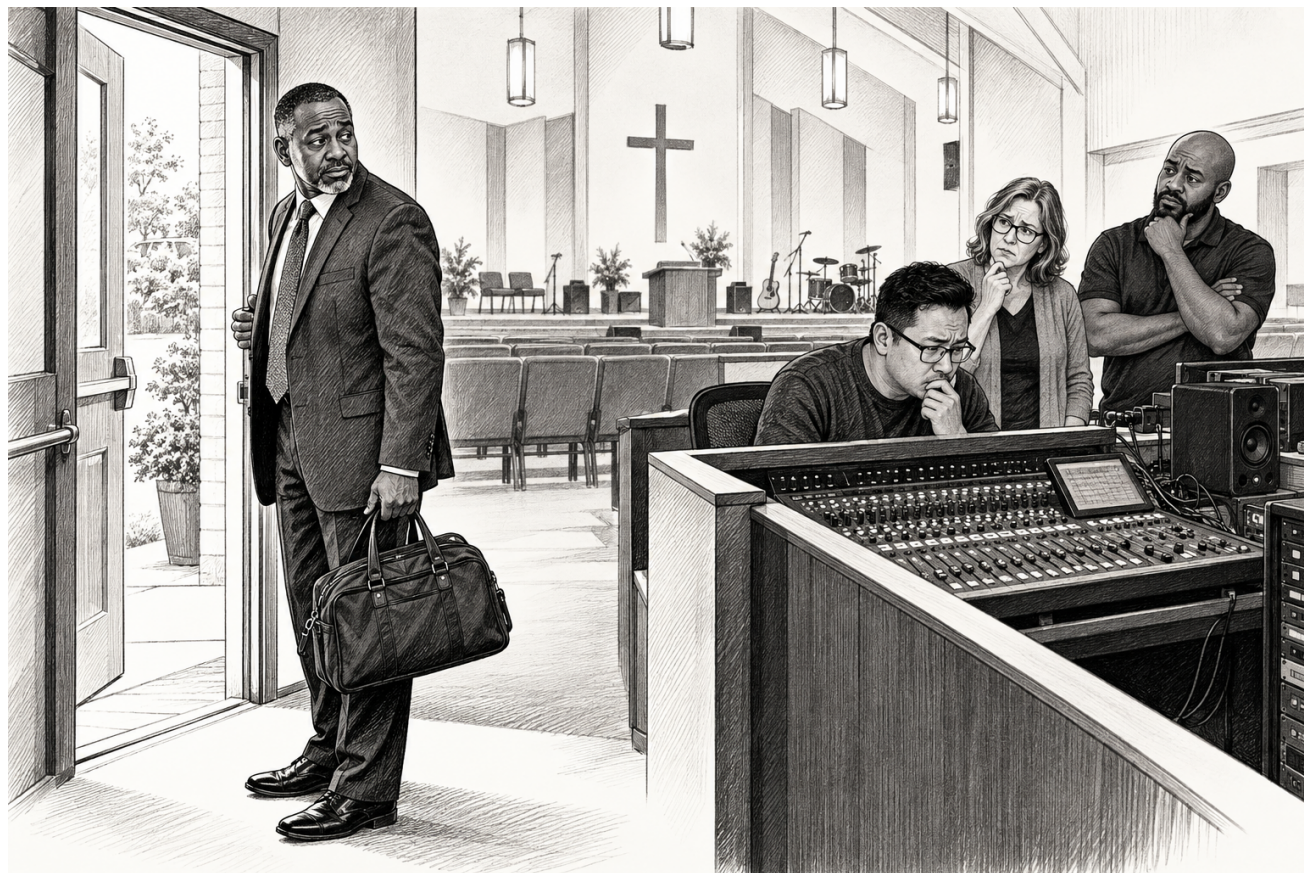
THE LEADERSHIP MOVE

Identify what only you can do. Define outcomes before assigning titles. Build a pipeline, not merely a roster. Every important ministry area should have someone serving, someone developing, and someone being prepared to develop others.

FROM THE FIELD

The Pastor Was Away—and the System Wasn't Ready

I know several pastors who are afraid to leave their churches for even one weekend. It is not because they never need rest. It is because they do not trust the organization to function properly in their absence.



I recently witnessed a simple example. I was visiting a church while its pastor was away. During the service, it became apparent that the person operating the sound system did not know how to use it properly. The problem was significant enough that I had to step in and help.

On the surface, this was a sound-system problem.

It was not. It was a leadership-capacity problem.

FROM THE FIELD: THE DIAGNOSIS

The Absence Revealed the Truth

The church had equipment. Someone had been placed at the sound station. A service had been planned. But the knowledge required to perform an essential function had not been sufficiently transferred, tested, or documented.

Someone may have been given the position without receiving the preparation required to succeed in it.

This is how organizational dependence develops. One person knows how the system works. One person knows the passwords. One person understands the schedule. One person knows whom to call when something fails. One person has the relationships, history, and authority required to keep everything moving.

As long as that person is present, the organization appears functional. Their absence reveals the truth.

The test of leadership is not merely what happens when the leader is in the room.

The test is what continues when the leader leaves the room.

A church does not possess a dependable system simply because a task is being completed every week. It possesses a dependable system when trained people can produce the required outcome consistently—even when the primary leader or most experienced volunteer is absent.

The sound system may be only the visible symptom. The same vulnerability could exist in finances, security, children's ministry, communications, building access, pastoral care, or Sunday-service coordination.

WHAT I WOULD DO

Strengthen the System Before Blaming the Person

If I were assessing this church, I would not begin by blaming the person at the soundboard. Placing an unprepared person in an essential role is first a leadership and systems failure.

I would ask:

- Who is fully trained to operate the sound system?
- Who serves as the trained backup?
- Is there a simple checklist for opening, operating, troubleshooting, and shutting down the equipment?
- Has the backup operator ever managed an entire service without assistance?
- Who has authority to make decisions when the ministry leader or pastor is absent?
- Which other areas depend on knowledge held by only one person?

THE FIVE-PART RELIABILITY STANDARD

1. A clearly responsible leader
2. A documented process
3. At least one trained backup
4. A defined standard for success
5. Periodic testing without the primary person's intervention

A pastor should not have to choose between personal renewal and organizational stability.

THE LEADERSHIP TOOL

The Seven-Day Absence Test

Imagine leaving your church for seven days without answering your telephone. Mark each statement Yes, Partly, or No. Score Yes = 2, Partly = 1, and No = 0. Answer based on demonstrated performance, not intention.

STATEMENT	YES	PARTLY	NO
Our essential Sunday functions have a trained primary leader and backup.	☐	☐	☐
Key procedures are written clearly enough for another person to follow.	☐	☐	☐
Leaders know which decisions they can make without pastoral approval.	☐	☐	☐
Passwords, codes, contacts, and emergency information are securely available.	☐	☐	☐
Ministry leaders are accountable for outcomes, not merely activity.	☐	☐	☐
Backups have performed the full responsibility without intervention.	☐	☐	☐
A clear leader coordinates the service when the pastor is absent.	☐	☐	☐
Financial, security, children’s, care, and communications processes have redundancy.	☐	☐	☐
Problems are documented and used to improve the process.	☐	☐	☐
The pastor can disengage without secretly monitoring the organization.	☐	☐	☐

16-20	Meaningful operating resilience. Continue testing and developing successors.
10-15	Some capacity exists, but important single points of failure remain.
0-9	High dependence on particular people. Prioritize documentation, cross-training, and delegated authority.

THE FINAL WORD

Build What Can Continue Without You

The future of your church will not be determined solely by the power of your vision. It will also be shaped by the capacity of the people and systems entrusted to carry it.

The oil matters.

But if we intend to build ministries that outlive moments, personalities, and individual leaders, we must go beyond the oil.

We must develop people. We must clarify responsibility. We must strengthen systems. And we must build organizations capable of sustaining what we have been praying to receive.

THE NEXUS INVITATION

NEXUS Leadership Group helps pastors and organizational leaders diagnose leadership gaps, develop stronger teams, establish healthier systems, and turn vision into sustainable execution.

If this briefing exposed an area of concern in your church or organization, you do not have to solve it alone.

**CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION**

Explore NEXUS services, schedule a conversation, or submit a Strategic Inquiry.

nexusleadership.group/contact

Call: 689-200-9619

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The NEXUS Leadership Briefing is a complimentary monthly publication for pastors, nonprofit executives, and organizational leaders committed to building healthy people, effective systems, and sustainable impact.

Forward this issue to a leader who needs it. Every copy includes a direct path to connect with NEXUS.

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