

# THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS AUDIT

*Before any external framework is introduced, what do your own documents say?*

*"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences."  
Proverbs 22:3 (NLT)*

## THE LOGIC

In Romans 3, Paul assembles a chain of Old Testament texts to establish a universal indictment. The move is deliberate: he draws testimony from inside the covenant community's own founding documents rather than importing an external standard. The indictment lands on the insiders first.

The organizational principle is direct. The most credible diagnostic of a culture is not an outside assessment. It is the gap between what the organization already says it believes and what actual practice demonstrates. You do not need a consultant or a framework to begin. You need your own documents and honest eyes.

## THREE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

01

### Where does practice diverge from your stated beliefs?

*Pull your mission statement, bylaws, staff covenant, or founding documents. Read them as if you are reading them for the first time. Then ask: where does what we actually do diverge from what we say we believe? The gap is not a compliance problem. It is a structural one. It will not close by reminding people what the documents say.*

02

### Which interior processes cannot survive being made visible?

*The most important structural elements in any organization are frequently the least visible: the actual decision-making process versus the formal one, the real basis on which senior leaders are evaluated, the genuine reason people leave. An organization whose most important processes cannot withstand visibility has not built on integrity. It has built on restriction. Identify which processes live in the most restricted location in your structure and ask whether that restriction is architecturally necessary or whether it is a control mechanism that has outlived its function.*

**What recurring condition has been acknowledged and carried forward without genuine resolution?**

*There is a difference between forgiveness and deferral. Deferral feels like grace in the moment. Over time it functions as a compounding liability. The same conflict reopened. The same structural problem surfaced at every transition. The same capacity failure named and noted and not addressed. Name the recurring condition your organization has been passing over. Then ask: what would genuine resolution require, and what has made it easier to defer than to settle?*

**THE AUDIT TABLE**

Use the table below as a working document. Pull two or three statements directly from your founding documents in the first column. Record what current practice actually looks like in the second. Name the gap plainly in the third.

| WHAT WE SAY WE BELIEVE | WHAT PRACTICE DEMONSTRATES | THE GAP |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
|                        |                            |         |
|                        |                            |         |
|                        |                            |         |
|                        |                            |         |

**A NOTE ON WHAT THIS IS NOT**

*This audit is not pessimism. The diagnostic that surfaces a gap between stated belief and actual practice is not an argument against the founding commitments. It is the means of actually fulfilling them. The organization that resists honest internal examination in order to protect its culture has confused the founding documents with the current practice. A genuine commitment to the founding mission is the reason to pursue the diagnostic, not the reason to avoid it.*