

# The Formation Gap Assessment

*A diagnostic for leaders whose community has been sorted rather than formed*

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Romans 14 does not address a community with a formation problem. It addresses a community that has solved its formation problem in the wrong direction. The easiest response to mixed-formation tension is to sort it. Remove the friction. Separate the strong from the weak. Build an environment where everyone is at the same level and the tension disappears.

*"Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong." Romans 14:1 (NLT)*

Paul's word for the welcome that holds a mixed-formation community together is *proslambanesthe*: active, full reception into the inner household. Not tolerance. Not managed coexistence. Incorporation. The sorted organization is efficient. The formation it forgoes is not recoverable by any program it deploys instead. This assessment surfaces whether your community is being formed or sorted.

## The two failure modes operate simultaneously.

*Romans 14:3,10 — Paul names both in the same chapter without softening either one.*

Center for Creative Leadership research found that leaders derail from dismissing less-experienced voices and from using principled language as political positioning at almost exactly equal rates. Romans 14 named both failure modes two thousand years earlier.

### THE TWO FAILURE MODES THIS ASSESSMENT EXAMINES

#### FAILURE MODE 1

##### Exouthenito

*"Treat as nothing"*

Dismisses less-experienced voices before they are genuinely heard.

Signal: "They're not ready yet."

Origin: Competence pride.

Cost: Lost formation depth and suppressed honest reporting.

#### FAILURE MODE 2

##### Krino

*"Render verdict"*

Uses principled language as a bid for positional influence.

Signal: "This is a matter of conscience." Origin: Status bid.

Cost: Weaponized formation language and a polarized community.

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## THE SORTING PATTERN: IS YOUR COMMUNITY BEING SORTED OR FORMED?

### DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

**Describe who is in the room for your most important conversations. Who is consistently absent, and why?**

Sorting is rarely deliberate. It accumulates through small decisions: who gets invited to the planning meeting, whose objection gets heard before the decision is made, which voices receive the most conversational air. If the people in the room for your most consequential conversations are all at the same formation level, the sorting is already underway. Name who is present and who is consistently not.

#### WHO IS IN THE ROOM AND WHO IS NOT

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### FOLLOW-UP

**What formation work was only possible because of the tension a mixed community produces, and when did you last see it happen?**

The *proslambanesthe* welcome is not an act of charity toward the less-formed. It is an architectural decision about what kind of formation environment the community will sustain. A community sorted by formation level loses the friction that produces genuine growth in both directions. Name the last time genuine formation happened in your context because of mixed-level tension rather than in spite of it.

#### LAST INSTANCE OF FORMATION THROUGH TENSION

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## 2 FAILURE MODE 1: WHERE EXOUTHENITO IS OPERATING IN YOUR CONTEXT

### DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

**Where in your organization are less-experienced voices being counted as nothing before they have been genuinely heard?**

Exouthenito is the word Paul uses in Romans 14:3 for what the strong person does to the weak one. It appears in Psalm 22:24 for what God refused to do to the suffering servant. It does not mean mild dismissal. It means treated as zero. In an organizational context it looks like: the new team member whose concern is processed as inexperience before its content is examined, the less-tenured voice whose objection is heard as insecurity rather than signal, the person whose formation level is used to explain away what they are actually saying. Name where this pattern is operating.

#### WHERE LESS-EXPERIENCED VOICES ARE BEING COUNTED AS ZERO

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### FOLLOW-UP

**What has your organization missed or gotten wrong because the exouthenito pattern was operating before the signal could land?**

The cost of exouthenito is not primarily relational. It is informational. The voice that gets counted as zero before it is heard carries signal the organization needs. Name a specific instance where the dismissal pattern produced a blind spot, a delayed correction, or a missed decision.

#### A SPECIFIC COST THE PATTERN HAS PRODUCED

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## 3 FAILURE MODE 2: WHERE KRINO IS BEING USED AS A POSITION BID

### DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

**Where in your organization is principled language being used to advance a positional agenda rather than to serve the community's formation?**

Paul pivots the word krino deliberately in Romans 14:13, from the forbidden verdict rendered against a fellow member to the required judgment about what will cause a brother to stumble. The same word. Two entirely different orientations. The krino failure mode in an organizational context looks like: the conscience objection that reliably surfaces whenever the objector's position is threatened, the principled stance that produces influence rather than formation, the values language that functions as a power move dressed in theological vocabulary. Name where this pattern is present.

#### WHERE PRINCIPLED LANGUAGE IS FUNCTIONING AS A POSITION BID

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### FOLLOW-UP

**What structural condition in your organization makes the krino failure mode more attractive than genuine formation work?**

The krino pattern does not arise from nowhere. It is produced by an environment where positional influence is the primary available currency, where genuine formation pathways are unclear or inaccessible, or where the community's accountability structures have no functional weight. Name the structural condition that is making the position bid more rational than the formation investment.

## THE STRUCTURAL CONDITION PRODUCING THE PATTERN

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## THE PLEROPHORESITHO DEFICIT: BORROWED CONVICTION THAT WILL NOT HOLD

### DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

#### Where in your community are people performing convictions they have not genuinely arrived at?

Plerophoreitho is Paul's word in Romans 14:5 for the full-cargo condition of genuine interior conviction. The opposite is not uncertainty. It is borrowed conviction: the position held because the community holds it, the stance performed because the leader holds it, the value stated because the culture requires it. Borrowed conviction looks identical to genuine conviction under normal conditions. It fails under pressure. Name where your community is running on borrowed rather than genuine conviction.

#### WHERE BORROWED CONVICTION IS PRESENT

### FOLLOW-UP

#### What does your community's response to pressure or transition reveal about where genuine conviction ends and performed alignment begins?

Borrowed conviction does not hold under sustained pressure. The formation gap it represents only becomes visible when the conditions that supported the performance change: a key leader departs, a decision costs something real, a season of difficulty extends past the point where social commitment alone sustains the posture. Name what your community's most recent pressure season revealed about where genuine conviction was present and where it was not.

#### WHAT PRESSURE REVEALED ABOUT GENUINE VS. BORROWED CONVICTION

## WHAT TO DO WITH THIS ASSESSMENT

The sorted organization is not a failed organization. It is an efficient one that has optimized for something other than formation. The Formation Gap Assessment is not an argument against healthy boundaries or appropriate structure. It is a diagnostic for whether the architecture you have built is producing the formation you say you are after.

The proslambanesthe welcome and the plerophoreitho conviction are not in tension. A community that genuinely incorporates across formation levels, names both failure modes honestly, and builds structures that produce genuine rather than borrowed conviction is the most resilient organizational architecture the New Testament describes. That is what this assessment is aimed at building.

If this assessment surfaced gaps you cannot address with the instruments currently available to you, the diagnostic conversation at Kingdom Planning is the right next step.

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Anchored in Romans 14:1-19. Proverbs 22:3 (NLT): "A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions."

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