# REFLECTING HEAVEN
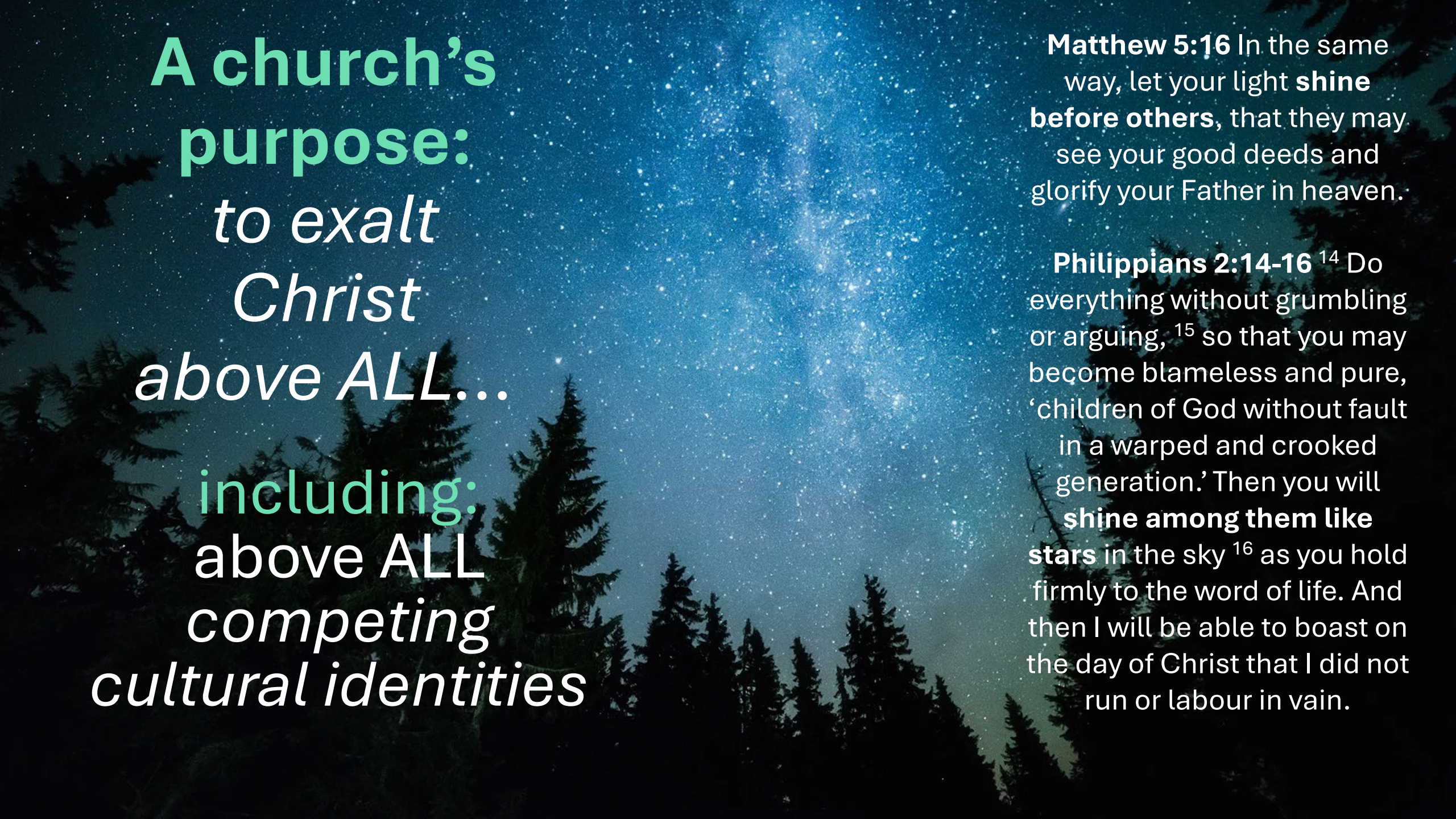
BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH WHERE YOU ARE

# What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?

*Working backwards … CHURCH, CULTURE, INTER-*

- **CHURCH (Greek *"ekklesia"*) is people meeting/gathering (*communing*) with a common *PURPOSE*.** What is a church's fundamental purpose? What defines its *identity*? (compare to other groupings (communities) – e.g., the UK as a whole, an ethnic people-group, a locality, a club, … )

- **What is CULTURE?**

- **How does culture AFFECT us?**

- **The IMPORTANCE of culture**

- **MONO- vs. MULTI- vs. INTER-cultural** – a spectrum

- **InterNATIONAL vs. InterCULTURAL** church – what's the difference? Does it matter how you describe a church?

**A church's purpose:**

*to exalt Christ above ALL…*

**including:**

*above ALL competing cultural identities*

**Matthew 5:16** In the same way, let your light **shine before others**, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Philippians 2:14-16** [14] Do everything without grumbling or arguing, [15] so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will **shine among them like stars** in the sky [16] as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour in vain.

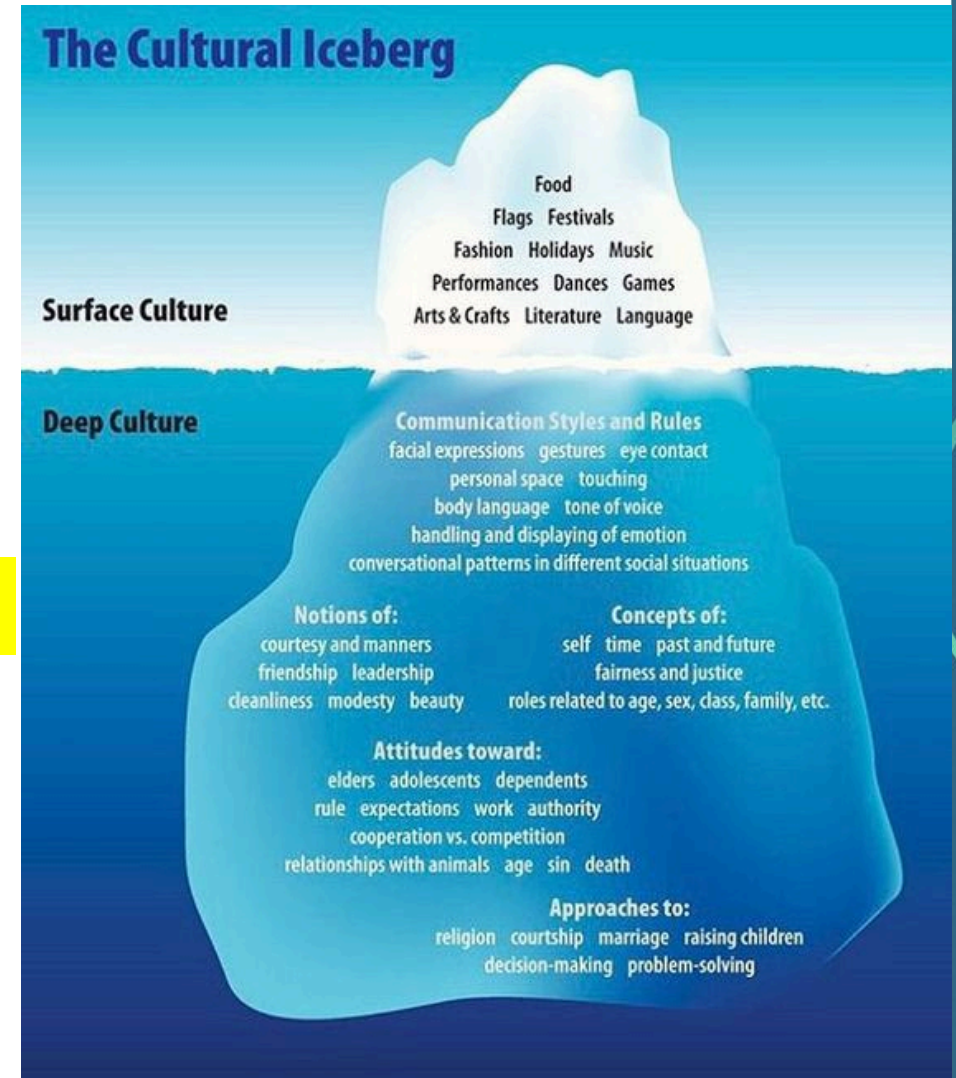Like stars, **each church is unique**. Its light ("glory") is affected by...

it's **size**, and, **what it's made of**
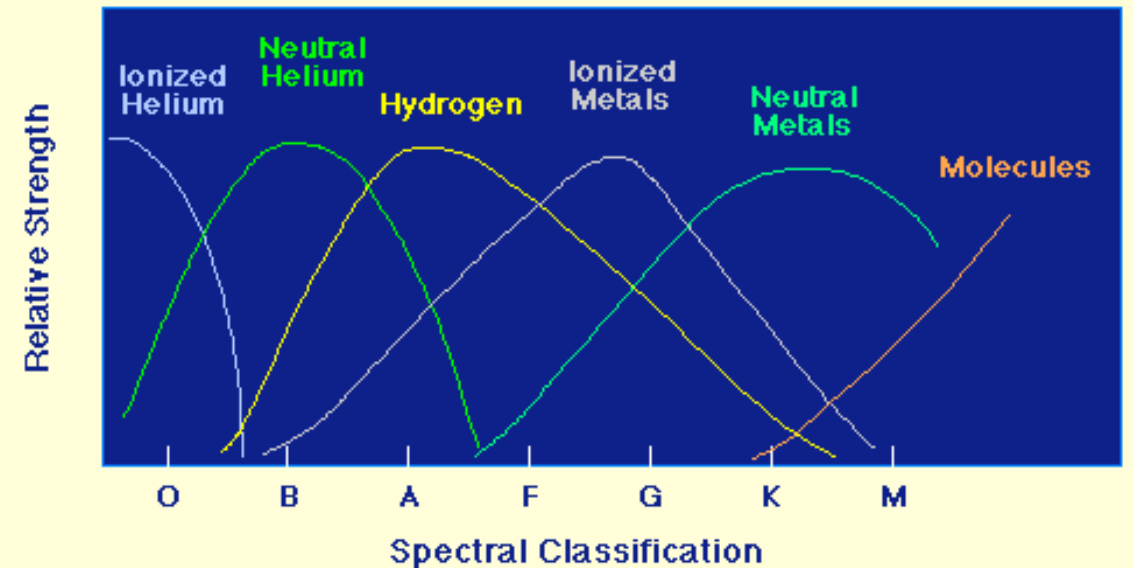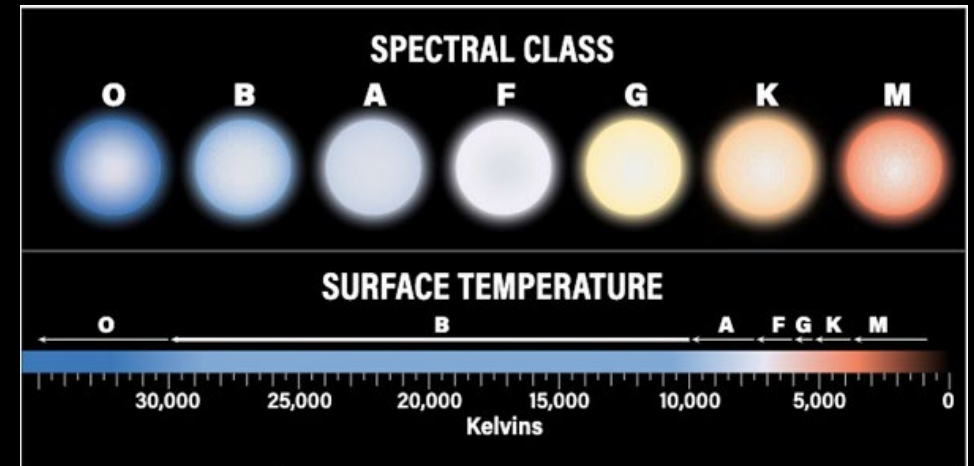
# What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?
# What is CULTURE?

- **CULTURE** – ***shared patterns*** …

- **Patterns** – the cultural iceberg

- **Shared** – groups with *commonality*. Although some difference is inevitable, the greater the diversity in a grouping, the less commonality is shared. E.g., your church's values cf. 'British' values → promoting Christ vs. tolerance.

- *NOTE: We participate in <mark>multiple overlapping cultures</mark>. An* **umbrella culture** *has the minimum necessary shared values to allow coexistence of multiple differing sub-cultures. The more extensive the umbrella, the less extensive the agreed values* (e.g., the shared values of your church vs. your locality vs. the whole UK)



**The Cultural Iceberg**

**Surface Culture**
Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

**Deep Culture**
**Communication Styles and Rules**
facial expressions gestures eye contact
personal space touching
body language tone of voice
handling and displaying of emotion
conversational patterns in different social situations

**Notions of:**
courtesy and manners
friendship leadership
cleanliness modesty beauty

**Concepts of:**
self time past and future
fairness and justice
roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

**Attitudes toward:**
elders adolescents dependents
rule expectations work authority
cooperation vs. competition
relationships with animals age sin death

**Approaches to:**
religion courtship marriage raising children
decision-making problem-solving

## What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?

# How does culture AFFECT us?

- **CULTURE** – *shared patterns* tied to *identity*

- **Automatic** – we default to these patterns *automatically* – we are typically *not* thought-through in the moment (or as a big picture!)

- ***Felt* rather then thought** – *feels* right/wrong (value judgement) When we experience something different to our own culture, we feel ***discomfort*** *(varying degrees – surprised, ashamed, disgust)* Unless we have a *higher affection* → we will naturally *seek to regain* ***comfort*** – bolstered by those who feel similarly

- **Tied to identity** – When we experience something different to our own culture, it can *feel* like an *existential threat* – ***fear*** *(+ loss/grief, anger)*. Unless we have a *higher identity* that trumps our cultural identity, and *higher confidence* that there can be a good outcome despite our personal powerlessness → we will naturally *seek to regain* ***control*** – bolstered by those who feel similarly

REFLECTING
HEAVEN

# What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?
# The IMPORTANCE of culture

- **CULTURE** – *shared patterns* tied to *identity*

- **Essential** – expresses our Godlikeness as His image bearers – we are communal / relational beings – culture is the outworking of this

- **Dangerous** – we can define ourselves by created things (our culture) rather than our Creator → idolatry

- **We don't have to be slaves to culture** –
  To avoid this we have to be:
  - *intentional – "... be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:2) and*
  - *motivated – "... in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices..." (Romans 12:1)*

**REFLECTING HEAVEN**

# What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?
# Mono- vs. Multi- vs. Inter-cultural

- **CULTURE** – shared *patterns* tied to *identity*

- **MONO-cultural** – groups with some differences (e.g. families) who interact / engage with each other *assuming commonality*

- **MULTI-cultural** – groups with large differences coexisting alongside each other, but with minimal engagement – the overarching aim is *peaceful coexistance*, achieved mainly through *mutual tolerance*

- **INTER-cultural** – groups with large differences valuing each other and interacting / engaging deeply. Cultural identities are maintained, but accommodation of other groups is expected by all groups (discomfort, struggle with fear!). People in intercultural groups expect to *bless* and *be blessed by* those of other cultures, and are willing to *bear the cost* to bring and experience such blessing → *mutuality.*
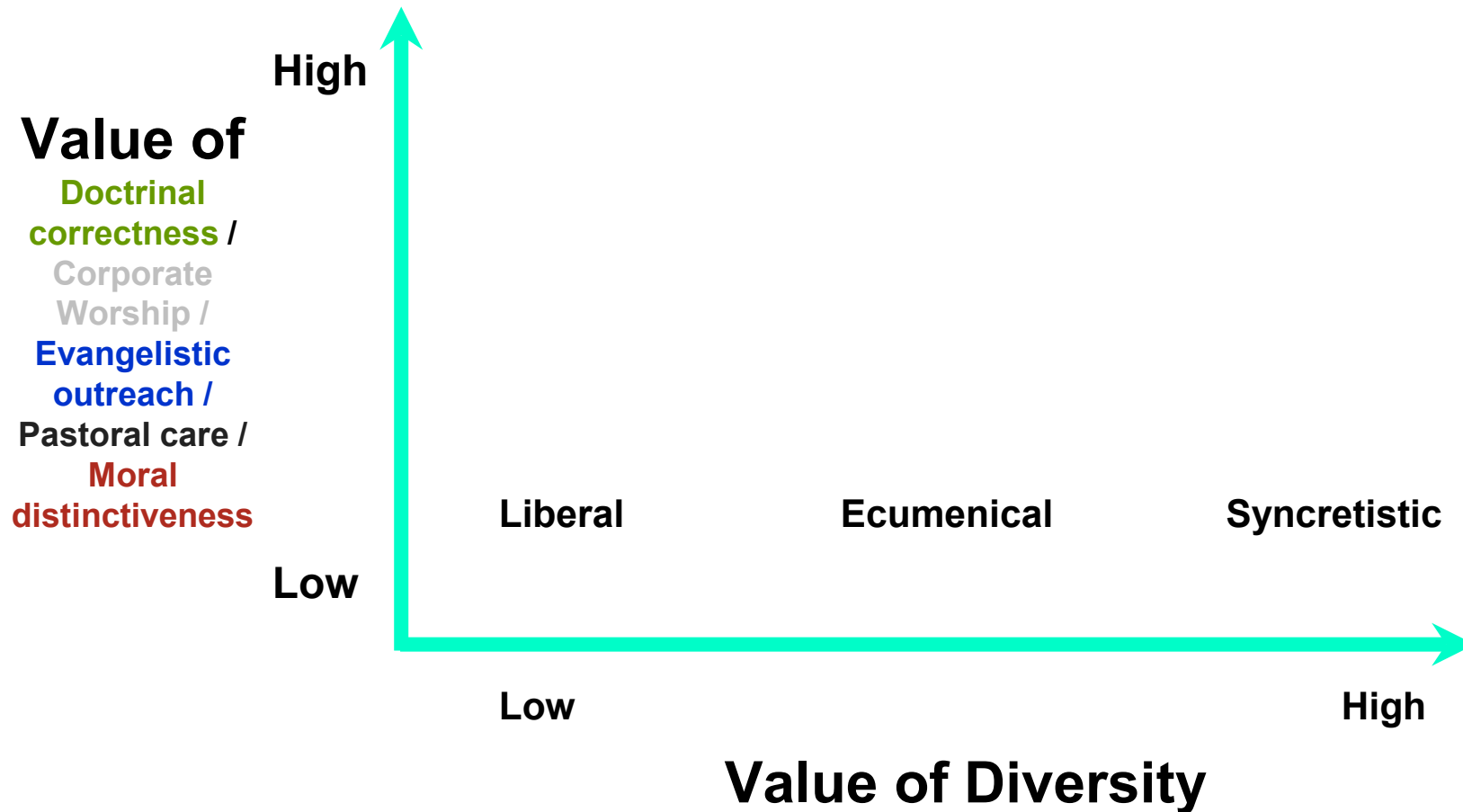
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HEAVEN

**What is an INTERCULTURAL CHURCH?**
# International vs. Intercultural

- **CULTURE** – shared *patterns* tied to *identity*

- **InterNATIONAL church** – a church made up of people from a diversity of nations. It is understood that a dominant (not necessarily majority) national group sets the ethos of meetings to reflect the dominant culture.

- **InterCULTURAL church** – a church made up of people from a diversity of nations. Even though there may be a dominant national group, the ethos and mix of meetings is intentionally set to pursue ***mutuality of blessing***, for all groups, with expected ***mutual accommodation of difference***.

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HEAVEN

# DOING (as against "being") church – a place for all three: MONO-cultural, MULTI-cultural, and INTER-cultural ministry
## 2 key questions: What is the purpose of *this MEETING?* How does this meeting *contribute to the WHOLE purpose?*

High

**Value of**

**Doctrinal correctness** /
Corporate Worship /
**Evangelistic outreach** /
Pastoral care /
**Moral distinctiveness**

Low

Liberal            Ecumenical            Syncretistic

Low                                    High

**Value of Diversity**

# *Valuing* diversity ≠ *devaluing* doctrine / worship / mission / care / holiness

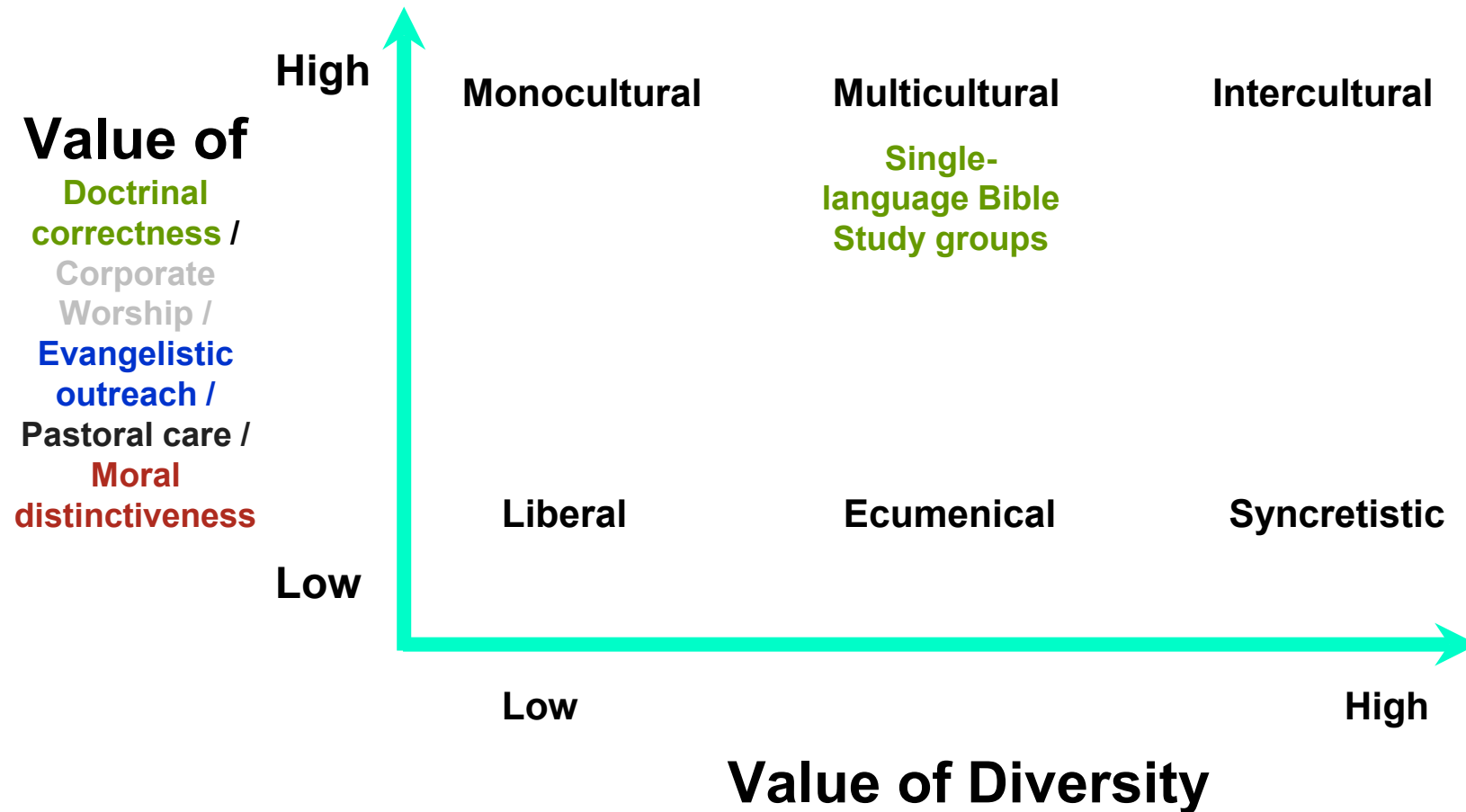*Being* **Evangelical, Worshipful, Missional, Pastoral & Moral** ≠ *being* monocultural



**Value of**
**Doctrinal correctness** /
**Corporate Worship** /
**Evangelistic outreach** /
Pastoral care /
**Moral distinctiveness**

High

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Monocultural | Multicultural | Intercultural |
| Liberal | Ecumenical | Syncretistic |

Low

Low                                         High

**Value of Diversity**
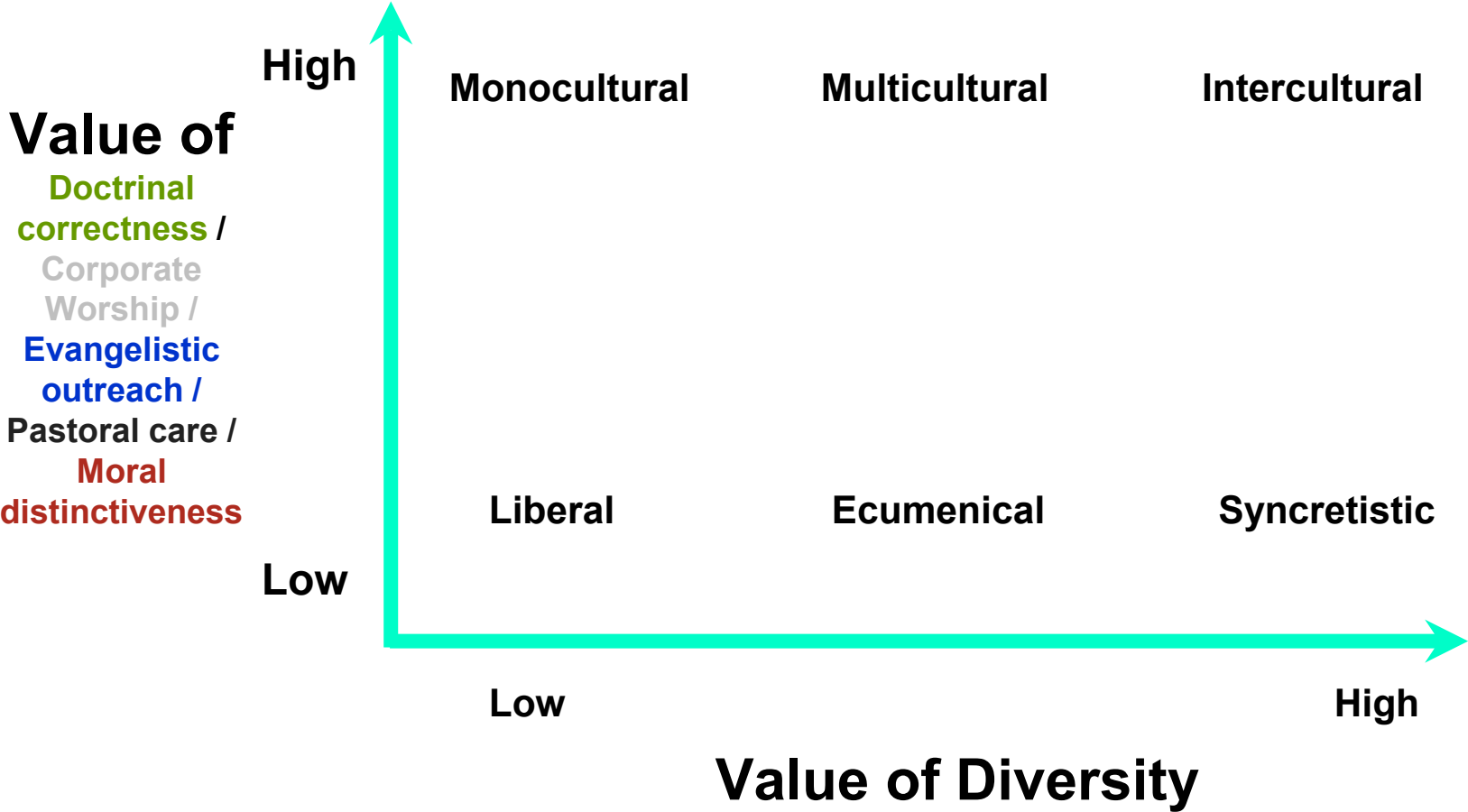
# *Valuing* **diversity** ≠ *devaluing* **doctrine** / **worship** / **mission** / care / **holiness**

*Being* **Evangelical, Worshipful, Missional, Pastoral & Moral** ≠ *being* **monocultural**
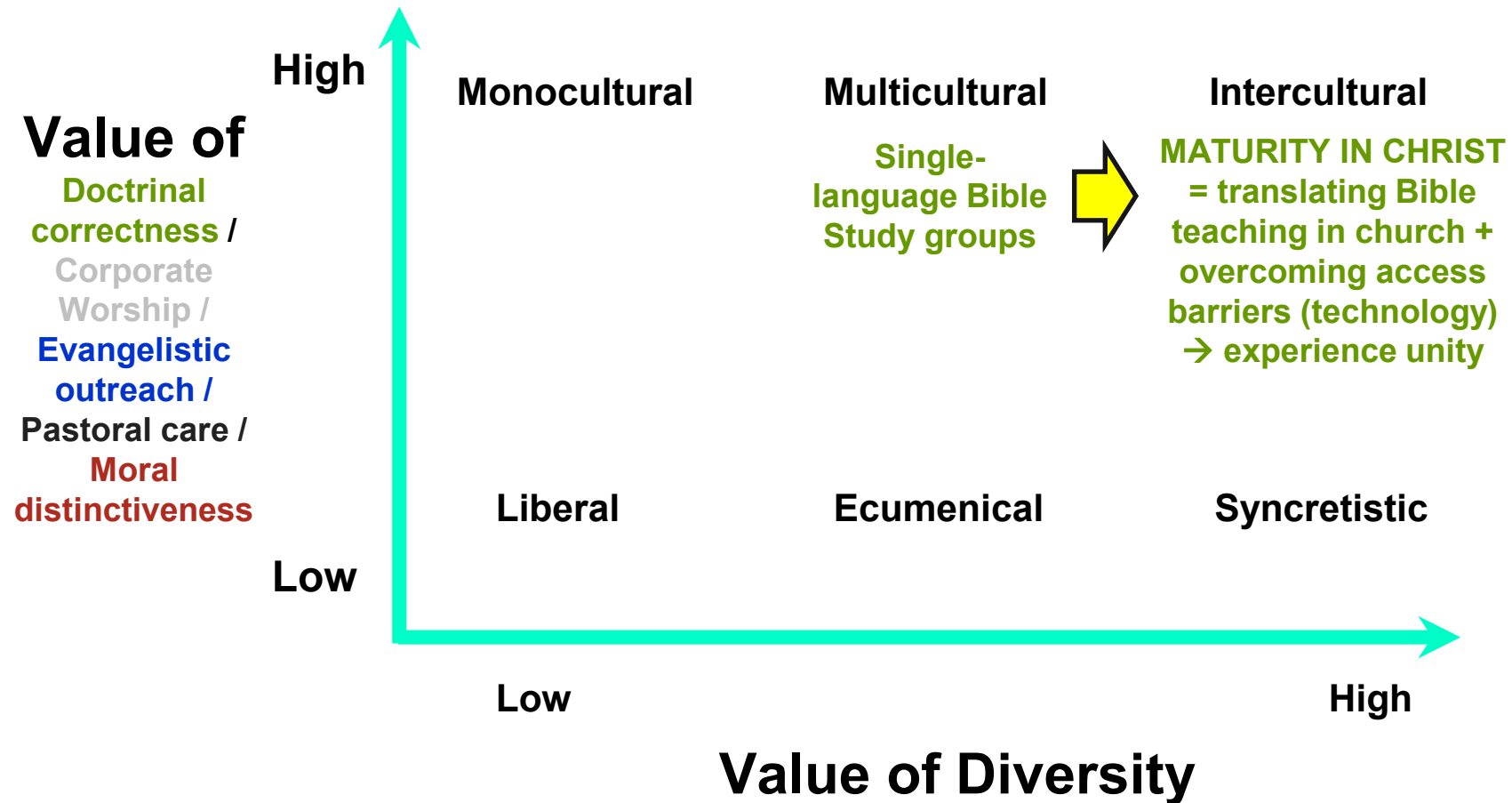
**Monocultural** ministry can contribute to building an **intercultural** church

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*Being* **Evangelical, Worshipful, Missional, Pastoral & Moral** ≠ *being* monocultural

**Monocultural** ministry can contribute to building an **intercultural** church

**Value of**
**Doctrinal correctness** /
Corporate Worship /
**Evangelistic outreach** /
Pastoral care /
**Moral distinctiveness**

**High**

**Monocultural**

"Homogenous Unit" principle of evangelism

**Multicultural**

**Intercultural**

**MATURITY IN CHRIST = rejecting cultural supremacism + overcoming divisions → experiencing unity**

**Liberal**

**Ecumenical**

**Syncretistic**

**Low**

**Low**

**High**

**Value of Diversity**

# *Valuing* diversity ≠ *devaluing* doctrine / worship / mission / care / holiness

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**High**

**Value of**
**Doctrinal correctness /**
**Corporate Worship /**
**Evangelistic outreach /**
Pastoral care /
**Moral distinctiveness**

| | Monocultural | Multicultural | Intercultural |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Single-language Bible Study groups** | |
| | Liberal | Ecumenical | Syncretistic |

**Low**

**Low** ................................................................ **High**

**Value of Diversity**

# *Valuing* diversity ≠ *devaluing* doctrine / worship / mission / care / holiness

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**Multicultural** ministry can contribute to building an **intercultural** church

**High**

**Monocultural**          **Multicultural**          **Intercultural**

**Value of**

**Doctrinal correctness /**
**Corporate Worship /**
**Evangelistic outreach /**
**Pastoral care /**
**Moral distinctiveness**

**Single-language Bible Study groups**

**MATURITY IN CHRIST = translating Bible teaching in church + overcoming access barriers (technology) → experience unity**

**Liberal**          **Ecumenical**          **Syncretistic**

**Low**

**Low**          **High**

**Value of Diversity**

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

| | *Monocultural* | | *Multicultural* | | *Intercultural* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage**<br>AREA | **Hostility**<br>0 | **Indifference**<br>1 | **Open+Unaware**<br>2 | **Engagement**<br>3 | **Inclusion**<br>4 | **Mutuality**<br>5 |
| **A. INTEREST & AWARENESS** | I feel threatened and diminished by foreign cultures and people. | I'm not interested in the life or culture of people from other cultural groups. | I think that we are all the same inside, and that that's what really matters | I'm glad I've met you; I'd really like to get to know you, and others from your culture. | It's a blessing to have people from other cultures here; I'll make room for them | I want to learn from and even be led by those from another culture, we're incomplete without them |
| **B. Depth of UNDERSTAND-ING** | Believes and promotes negative stereotypes about other cultures. | "I don't see you. You are invisible and unconsidered." | Assumes that we understand and can speak for those of other cultures. | Considers one's own cultural perspective is just one among many. | Recognizes the need to hear the perspectives of other cultures. | Defers to those from other cultures in leadership, wisdom and organization. |
| **C. Openness to CHANGE** | Actively resists any sort of integration. | Couldn't be bothered with cultural accommodation. | Assumes that everyone wants to assimilate into the dominant culture. | Appreciates and values diversity and cultural difference. | Intentionally accommodates cultural differences. | Submits joyfully to alternative cultural patterns and styles. |
| **D. VALUE of Culture** | Scoffs at the meaning and importance of cultural difference. | Assumes that one's culture and customs are the 'right and proper' way. | Does not feel that special cross-cultural training is necessary. | Is curious about cultural differences and anticipates new insights. | Seeks to balance competing cultural styles and approaches. | Enriched through friendship with those from many cultures. |
| **E. Attitude toward LANGUAGE** | Insists upon making people speak the dominant language. | Ignores those who speak other languages. | Holds those who speak one's language in higher esteem. | Interested in, and intrigued by, other languages and customs. | Celebrates language diversity and makes room for their use. | Longs to communicate in other languages for their intrinsic value. |
| **F. VOICE & LEADERSHIP** | Opposes representation of minority groups in leadership. | Assumes that competency is the sole criteria for leadership, not representation. | Ambivalent about proportional representation of minority groups in leadership. | Advocates for representation of minorities in leadership, even at risk of tokenism. | Insists on importance of minorities being seen in leadership positions, even if over-represented. | Intentionally builds an environment where everyone is heard & influences leadership decisions. |

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

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# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT
## *Online form*

**PERSONAL Intercultural Assessment**

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com  Switch accounts

✉ Not shared

PERSONAL attitudes to ICM in 6 areas

| | 0 Hostility | 1 Indifference | 2 Open/Unaware | 3 Engagement | 4 Inclusion | 5 Mutual |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A INTEREST & AWARENESS | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| B UNDERSTANDING depth | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| C CHANGE Openness | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| D VALUE of Culture | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| E LANGUAGE - Attitude to | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| F VOICE & LEADERSHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

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Google Forms

*Enter your assessment answers (0-5 for A-F) into the form at this link:*
*https://forms.gle/e87p9jcxLcYDBL2WA*

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – PERSONAL ASSESSMENT
## Results for this group

PERSONAL attitudes (in 6 areas)



Legend: ■ 0 Hostility ■ 1 Indifference ■ 2 Open/Unaware ■ 3 Engagement ■ 4 Inclusion ■ 5 Mutuality

Categories: A INTEREST & AWARENESS, B UNDERSTANDING depth, C CHANGE Openness, D VALUE of Culture, E LANGUAGE - Attitude to, F VOICE & LEADERSHIP

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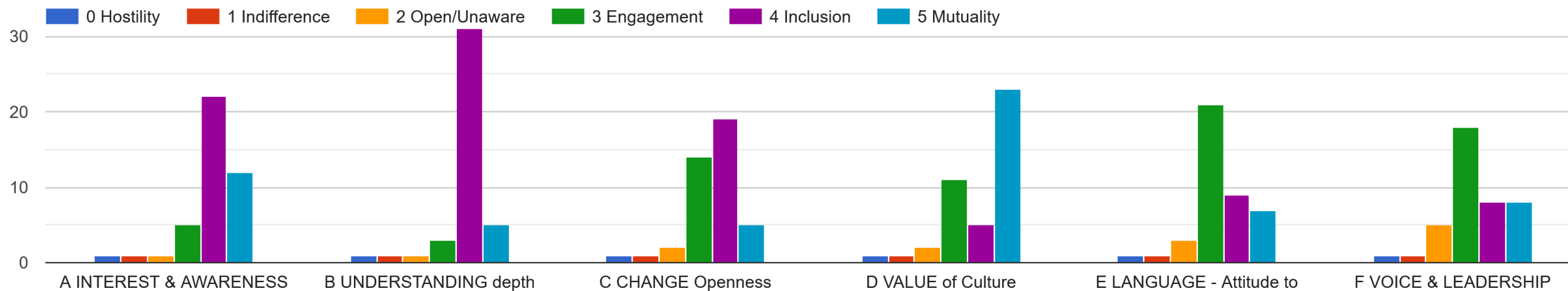
# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – CHURCH ASSESSMENT

| | *Monocultural* | | *Multicultural* | | *Intercultural* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage** / **AREA** | **Exclusive** **0** | **Club** **1** | **Open** **2** | **Awakened** **3** | **Reforming** **4** | **Transforming** **5** |
| **A. ETHOS** | One cultural grouping intentionally cultivates a monocultural environment | One cultural grouping maintains cultural dominance and decision-making power | Desires inclusivity, but unaware of behaviors that maintain privileges of the dominant cultural group | Sensitive to discriminatory behaviors; sees need for intentional intercultural dialogue. | Moves beyond tolerance and awareness to acceptance and *anticipation*. | Mutuality is central to congregational identity; reflecting an *intercultural disposition* at every level. |
| **B. WORSHIP** | Enthusiastically promotes a cultural worship identity | Expects acceptance of a particular cultural expression | Occasionally uses "ethnic" music and people | Seeks to accommodate "alternative" cultural expressions | Learning to appreciate multicultural expressions | Mutual enrichment through varied cultural expressions |
| **C. FELLOWSHIP** | Active, intentional separation | Cultural assimilation is expected | Minorities treated as guests | Cultural "mixing" encouraged | Recognizing same culture incompleteness | Fluid, interactive ethnic and cultural exchange |
| **D. DISCIPLESHIP** | Enculturated distrust of "otherness"; exalting same culture identity | Assuming the "right" to embrace one's cultural identity | Sees 'colourblindness' as desirable, without realizing its paternalism | Recognizing & embracing the cultural breadth of authentic Christianity | Relinquishing the "right" to embrace one's cultural identity | Exalting Christ above all competing cultural identities |
| **E. FRIENDSHIP** | Intentionally exclusive associations | Exclusive networks seen as sufficient | Occasional cultural "experiences" | Seeking diverse opportunities and connection | Finding joy and trust in diverse relationships | Diverse connectedness adds value to our lives |
| **F. LEADERSHIP** | Ethnically and culturally homogenous | Tolerates diversity without encouraging it | Welcomes diverse presence | Seeks diverse involvement | Recognizes need for diverse structures and policies | Reciprocal edification and deference |

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – CHURCH ASSESSMENT
## *Online form*



CHURCH Intercultural Assessment

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com  Switch accounts

Not shared

CHURCH's attitudes (in 6 areas)

| | 0 Exclusive | 1 Club | 2 Open | 3 Awakened | 4 Reforming | 5 Transforming |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A ETHOS | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| B WORSHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| C FELLOWSHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| D DISCIPLESHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| E FRIENDSHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| F LEADERSHIP | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Submit                                    Clear form
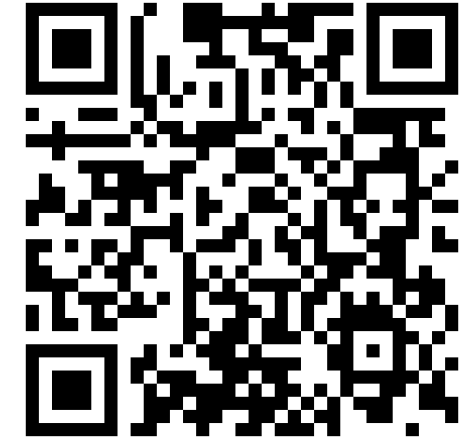
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# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – CHURCH ASSESSMENT
## *Results for this group*

CHURCH's attitudes (in 6 areas)
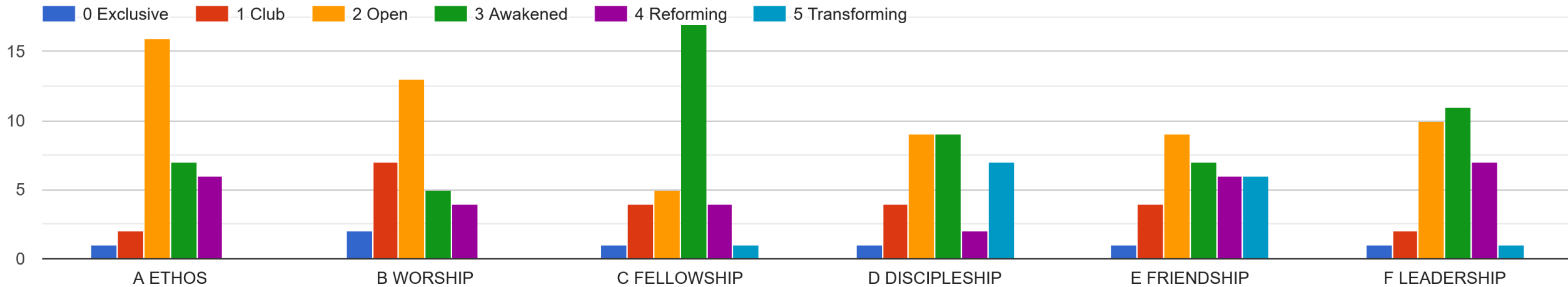
# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY – CHURCH ASSESSMENT

## *Questions churches should ask…*

CHURCH's attitudes (in 6 areas)
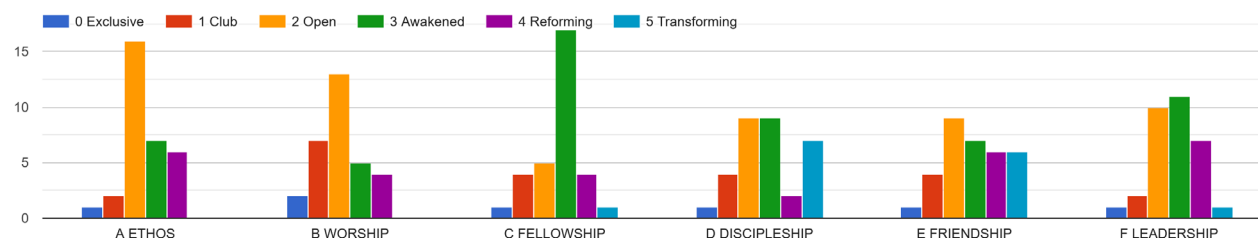


**Questions churches should ask before pursuing local, cross-cultural ministry…**

1. *What is our congregation's track record with Otherness in our community?*
2. *Do we see those with different languages, cultures and beliefs as a threat to cohesiveness in our community?*
3. *How does God want us to relate to Others in our neighbourhood?*
4. *What is the 'tribal affinity' and 'cultural gravity' of our church?*
   a. *How do our personal friendship networks impact our church's perspective on gospel ministry?*
   b. *Is our church a monocultural echo chamber?*
   c. *To what degree are multicultural realities and change a common/current conversation within our church? What is the tone of such conversations?*
5. *If mission among all our Neighbours is biblical (and not just recently biblical with the sudden interest in 'missional' ministry), why are we not already in relationship with Others in our community?*
6. *What in our church life and practice has prevented us from living in relationship with Others in our community?*
7. *What would such scrutiny entail for a congregation contemplating a move toward local multicultural ministry?*
8. *Can we presume to be ready for a multicultural engagement ministry when we have only had homogeneous church experiences?*
9. *What is the outcome we envision for ministry among diverse peoples in our community?*
10. *Are we prepared for lifelong relationship with Others in our community?*
11. *How well do we know those who are already engaged in local multicultural ministry in our community?*
12. *How well do you understand and teach about majority culture privilege?*
13. *Do we want a diverse congregation so that we can project a diverse image?*
14. *Do you believe that mere inclusion is the goal? (rather than mutuality)*
15. *Are you aiming at a particular model, or asking God how he wants his kingdom to flourish in this place and time?*
16. *Do you even know who lives in your context? Do you know from personal experience the narratives of their lives?*
17. *How much time have you spent learning from those with whom you anticipate ministry?*
    o *Do you have a mentor in the context?*
    o *Are you willing to follow others?*
    o *Partner with other ministries?*
    o *Who is indigenously ministering in the context?*
    o *Who has experience there?*
    o *It's about learning from the context, not about the context*
18. *Who are your advisors in this process? Do they represent a range of provenance, or are they from the same ethnic, cultural, generational orientation or tradition?*

REFLECTING HEAVEN

# The importance of cultural awareness

John Calvin's masterpiece, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, has a classic opening statement. He wrote it for the first draft of the book in 1536 when he was 26, and it remained the opening statement right through all editions of the book, including the last in 1559. Here it is:

- Nearly all the wisdom which we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the *knowledge of **God*** and *of **ourselves***. But, while joined by many bonds, *which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern*.

# Unless we *intentionally* seek CULTURAL AWARENESS, we will...

- **Largely be BLIND to the effect of culture – especially on the assumptions we use to understand others**

- **NOT LOVE WELL – what we consider a loving (or unloving) action may be perceived differently by someone from a different culture**

- **2 aspects of awareness required:**
  **– Different VALUES (though a common humanity)**
  **– Different PRIORITY given to the *same* values**

Serving in Mission

Privacy

Punctuality

Compassion

Generosity

Tradition

Honesty

Respect for Elders

Efficiency

# The effect of differing cultural VALUES in multicultural teams

**Serving in Mission**

| East Africa | Asia | Europe | North America * | Oceania |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | Relationships | Truth | Privacy | Equality |
| Respect | Loyalty | Loyalty | Equality | Respect |
| Generosity | Harmony | Punctuality | Punctuality | Loyalty |
| Loyalty | Respect | Privacy | Generosity | Honour |
| Honour | Honour | Equality | Truth | Truth |
| Harmony | Truth | Relationships | Respect | Punctuality |
| Truth | Generosity | Respect | Harmony | Privacy |
| Equality | Equality | Generosity | Relationships | Generosity |
| Punctuality | Punctuality | Harmony | Loyalty | Harmony |
| Privacy | Privacy | Honour | Honour | Relationships |

# The effect of differing cultural VALUES in multicultural teams

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| East Africa | Asia | Europe | North America * | Oceania |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | Relationships | Truth | **Privacy** | Equality |
| Respect | Loyalty | Loyalty | Equality | Respect |
| Generosity | Harmony | Punctuality | Punctuality | Loyalty |
| Loyalty | Respect | **Privacy** | Generosity | Honour |
| Honour | Honour | Equality | Truth | Truth |
| Harmony | Truth | Relationships | Respect | Punctuality |
| Truth | Generosity | Respect | Harmony | **Privacy** |
| Equality | Equality | Generosity | Relationships | Generosity |
| Punctuality | Punctuality | Harmony | Loyalty | Harmony |
| **Privacy** | **Privacy** | Honour | Honour | Relationships |

# The effect of differing cultural VALUES in multicultural teams

**Serving in Mission**

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | Relationships | Truth | Privacy | **Equality** |
| Respect | Loyalty | Loyalty | **Equality** | Respect |
| Generosity | Harmony | Punctuality | Punctuality | Loyalty |
| Loyalty | Respect | Privacy | Generosity | Honour |
| Honour | Honour | **Equality** | Truth | Truth |
| Harmony | Truth | Relationships | Respect | Punctuality |
| Truth | Generosity | Respect | Harmony | Privacy |
| **Equality** | **Equality** | Generosity | Relationships | Generosity |
| Punctuality | Punctuality | Harmony | Loyalty | Harmony |
| Privacy | Privacy | Honour | Honour | Relationships |

# The effect of differing cultural VALUES in multicultural teams

**Serving in Mission**

| East Africa | Asia | Europe | North America * | Oceania |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | Relationships | **Truth** | Privacy | Equality |
| Respect | Loyalty | Loyalty | Equality | Respect |
| Generosity | Harmony | Punctuality | Punctuality | Loyalty |
| Loyalty | Respect | Privacy | Generosity | Honour |
| Honour | Honour | Equality | **Truth** | **Truth** |
| Harmony | **Truth** | Relationships | Respect | Punctuality |
| **Truth** | Generosity | Respect | Harmony | Privacy |
| Equality | Equality | Generosity | Relationships | Generosity |
| Punctuality | Punctuality | Harmony | Loyalty | Harmony |
| Privacy | Privacy | Honour | Honour | Relationships |

# The effect of differing cultural VALUES in multicultural teams

**Serving in Mission**

| East Africa | Asia | Europe | North America * | Oceania |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relationships** | **Relationships** | Truth | Privacy | Equality |
| Respect | Loyalty | Loyalty | Equality | Respect |
| Generosity | Harmony | Punctuality | Punctuality | Loyalty |
| Loyalty | Respect | Privacy | Generosity | Honour |
| Honour | Honour | Equality | Truth | Truth |
| Harmony | Truth | **Relationships** | Respect | Punctuality |
| Truth | Generosity | Respect | Harmony | Privacy |
| Equality | Equality | Generosity | **Relationships** | Generosity |
| Punctuality | Punctuality | Harmony | Loyalty | Harmony |
| Privacy | Privacy | Honour | Honour | **Relationships** |

# Training Resources – Cultural Understanding

The boss/leader
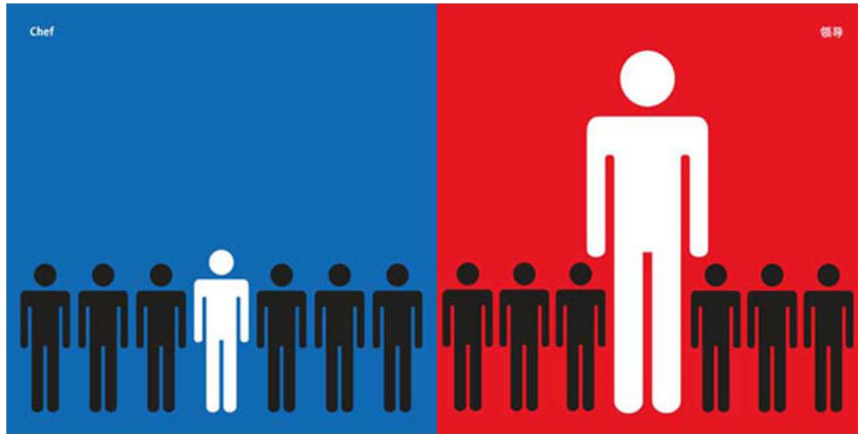
Attitude towards time (punctuality v. event)
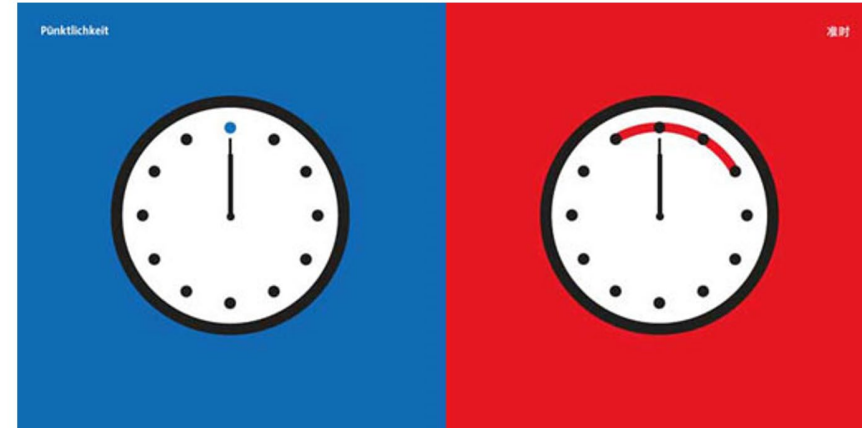
Communication style (direct/indirect)
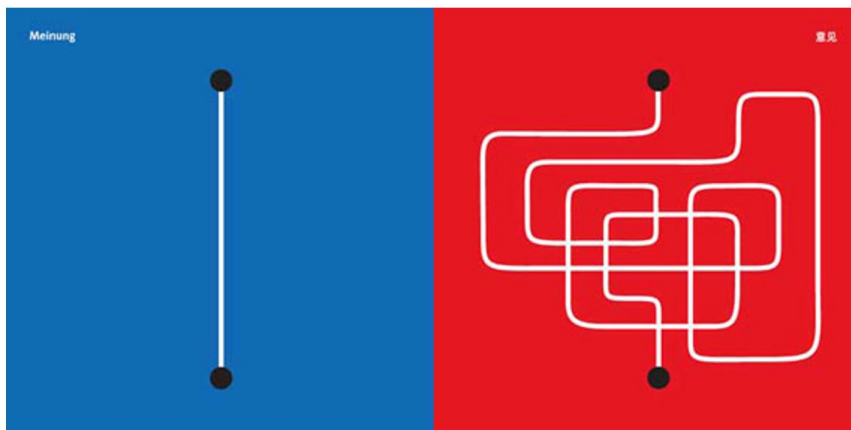
Telling the truth (honour/shame)
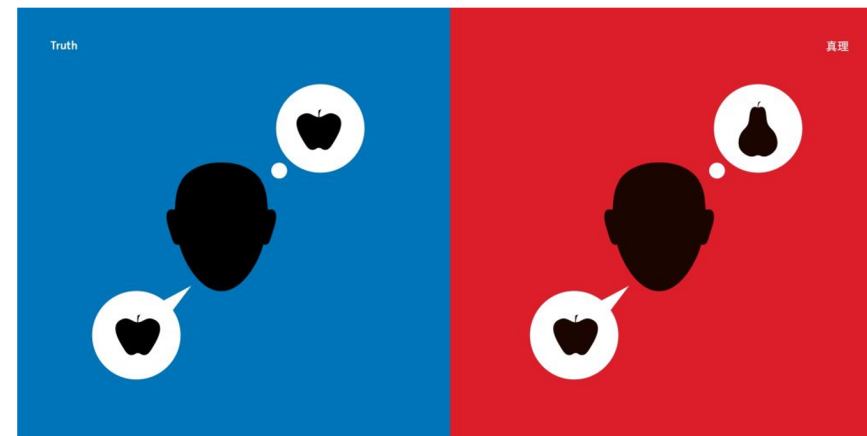
# Importance of the individual
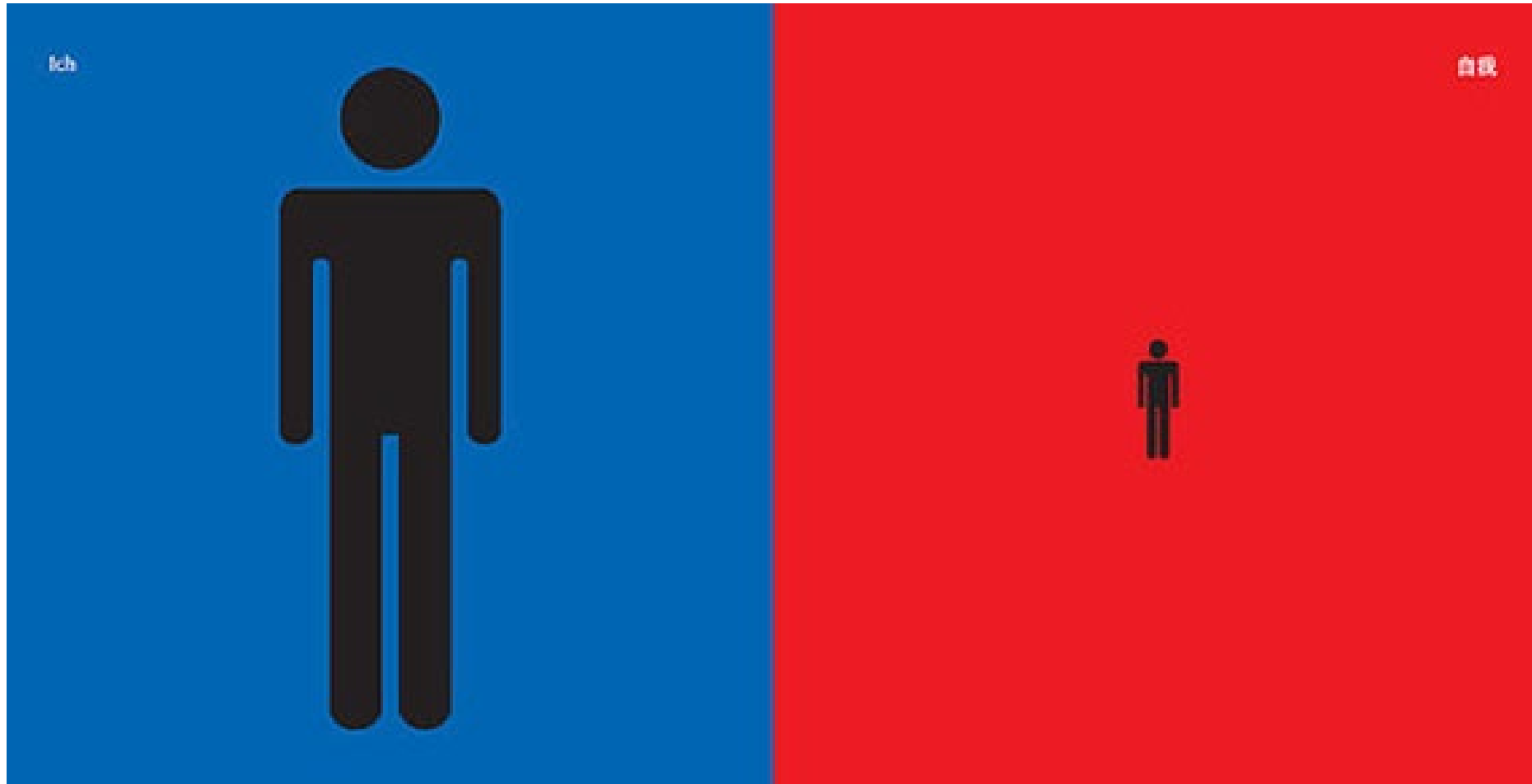
# Lifestyle: Independent vs. dependent (individual v. community)
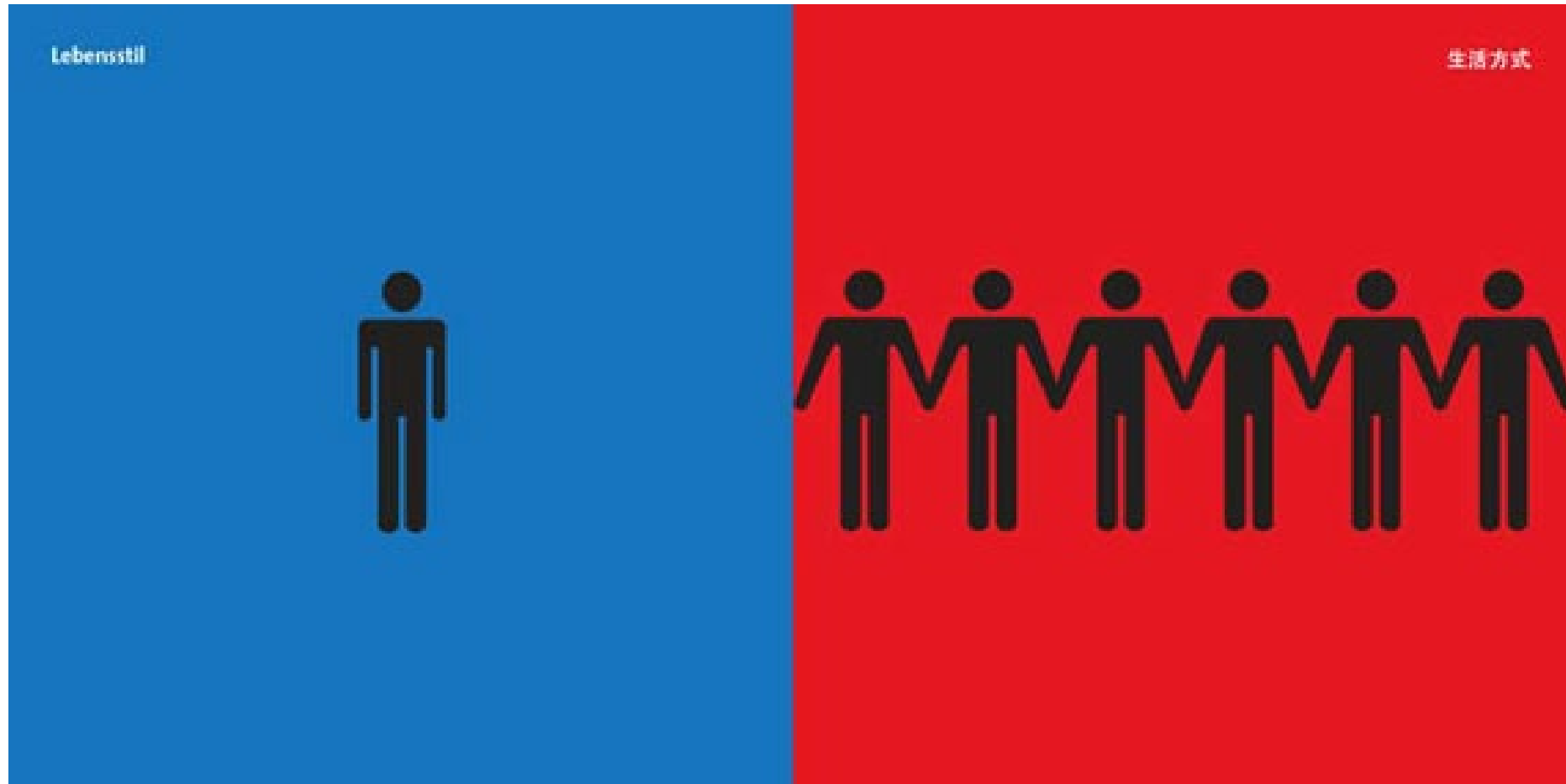
# Connections and contacts
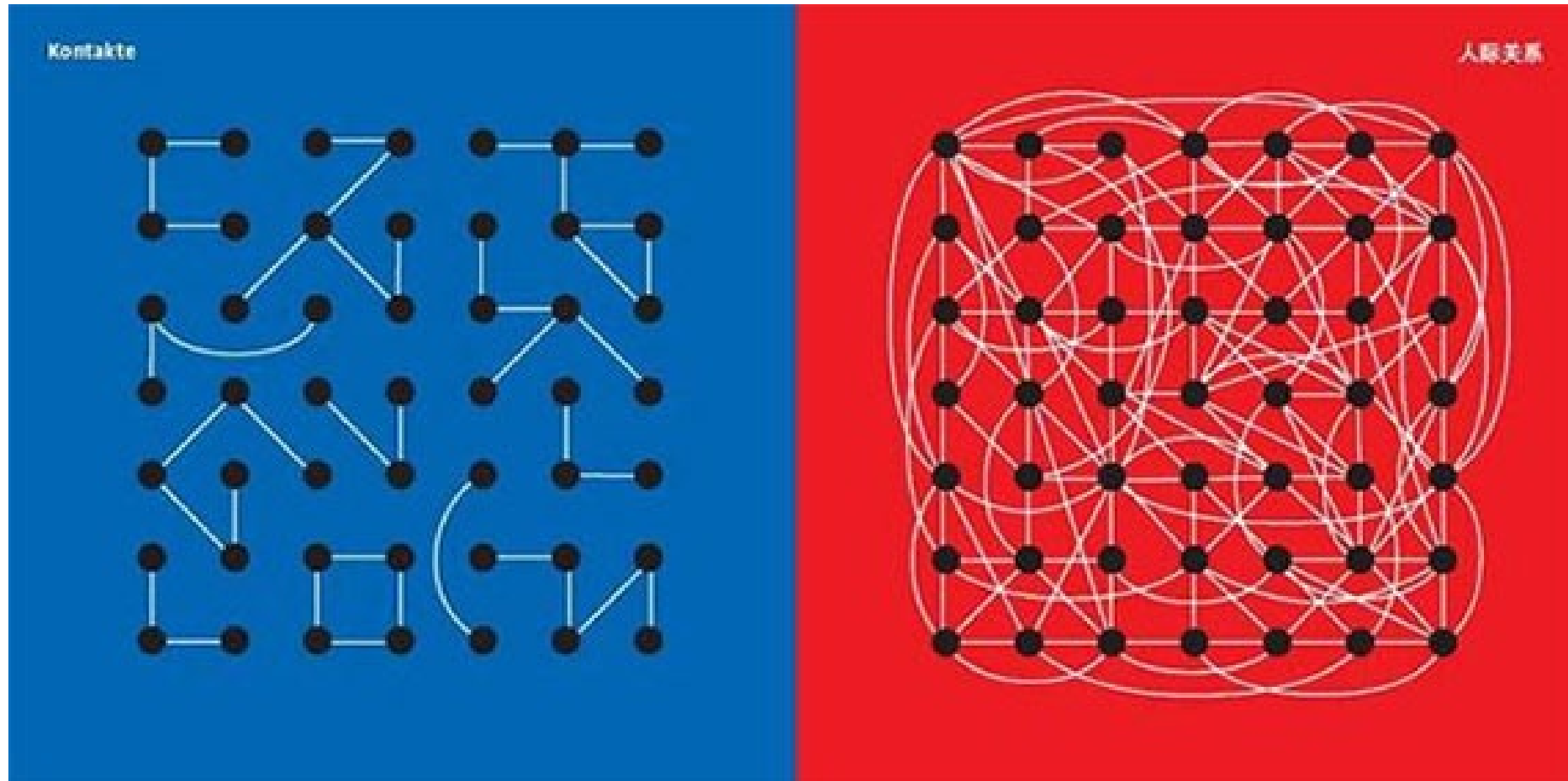
# At a celebratory event
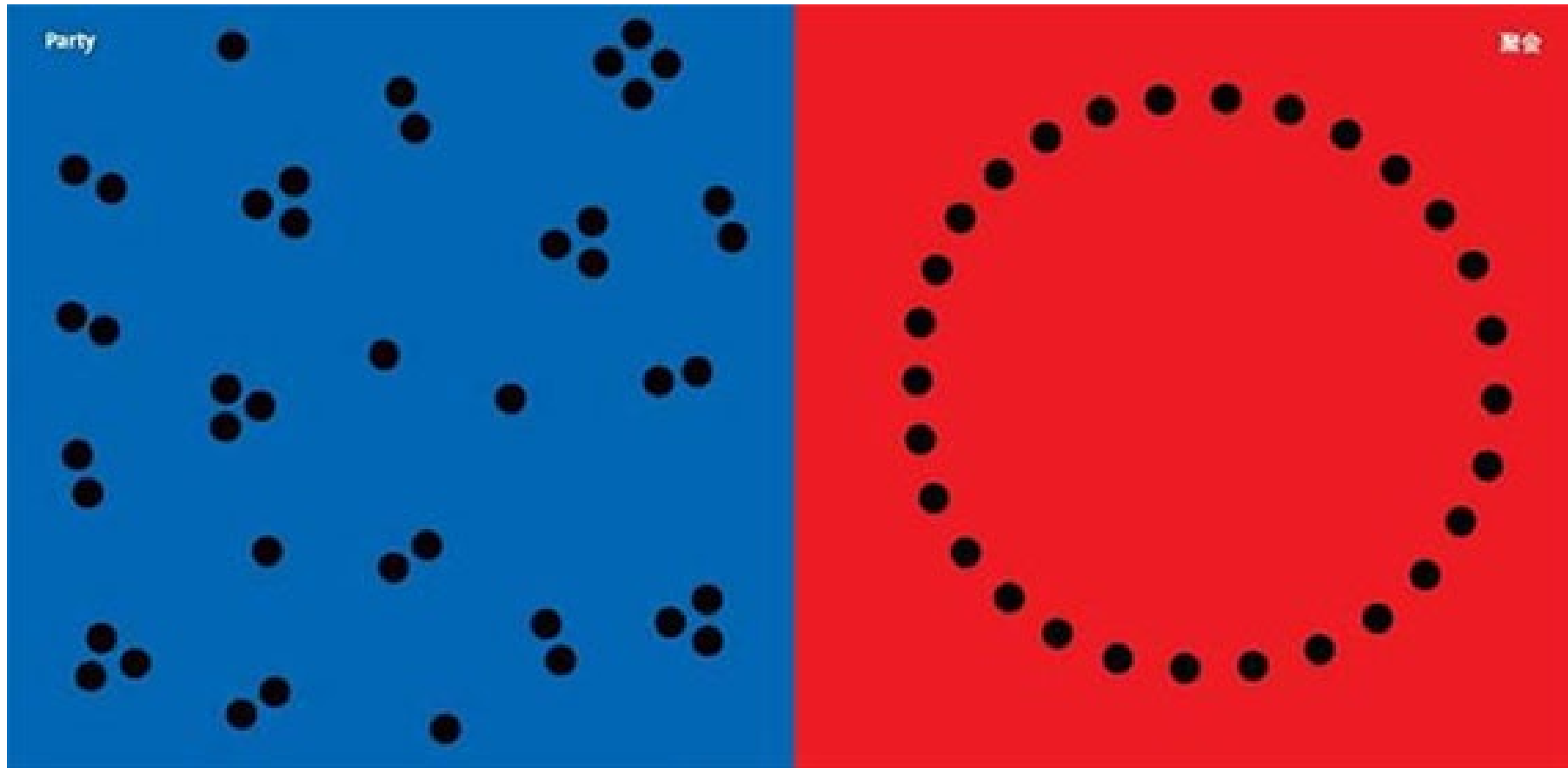
# Queuing
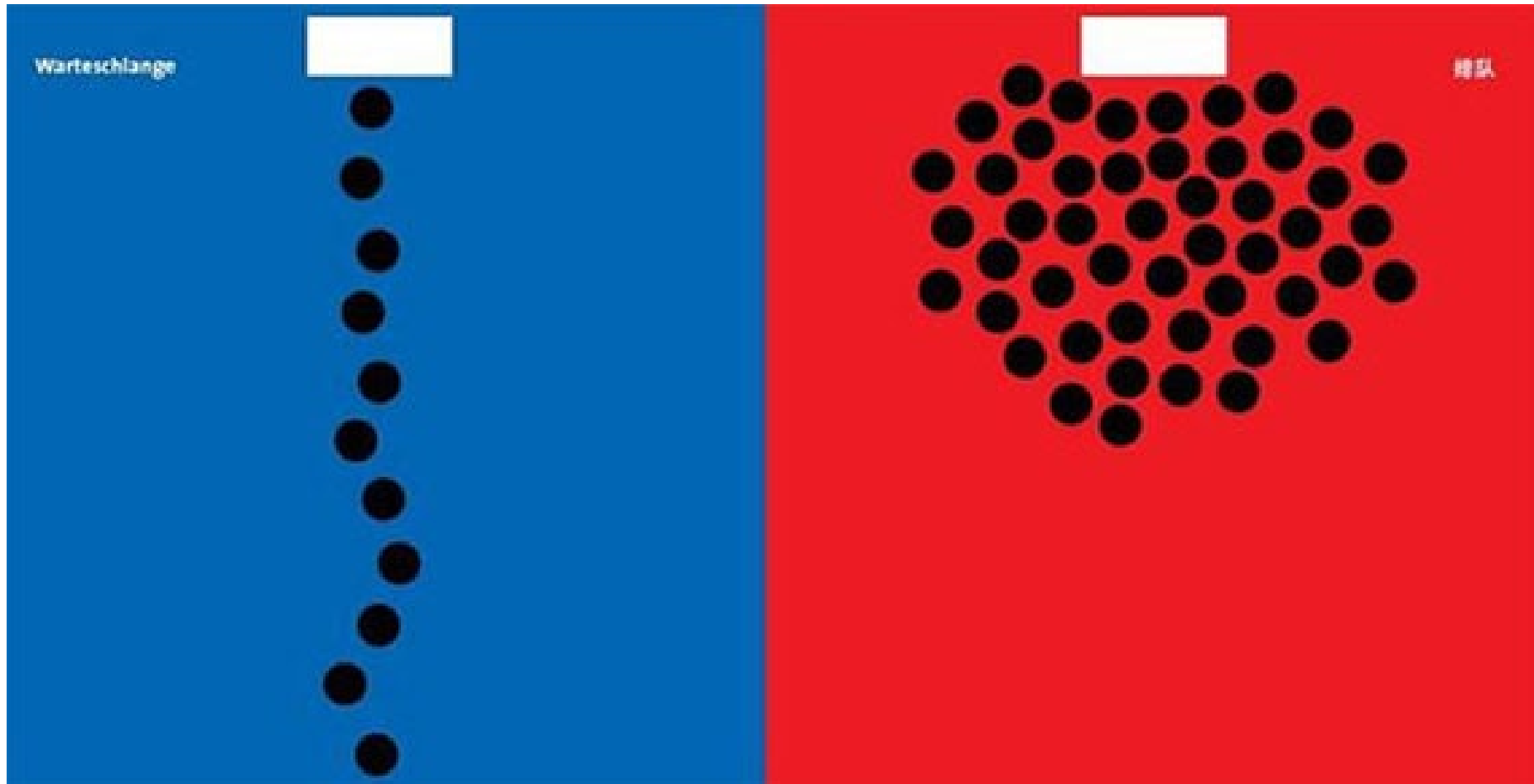
# Noise level inside a restaurant (church?)
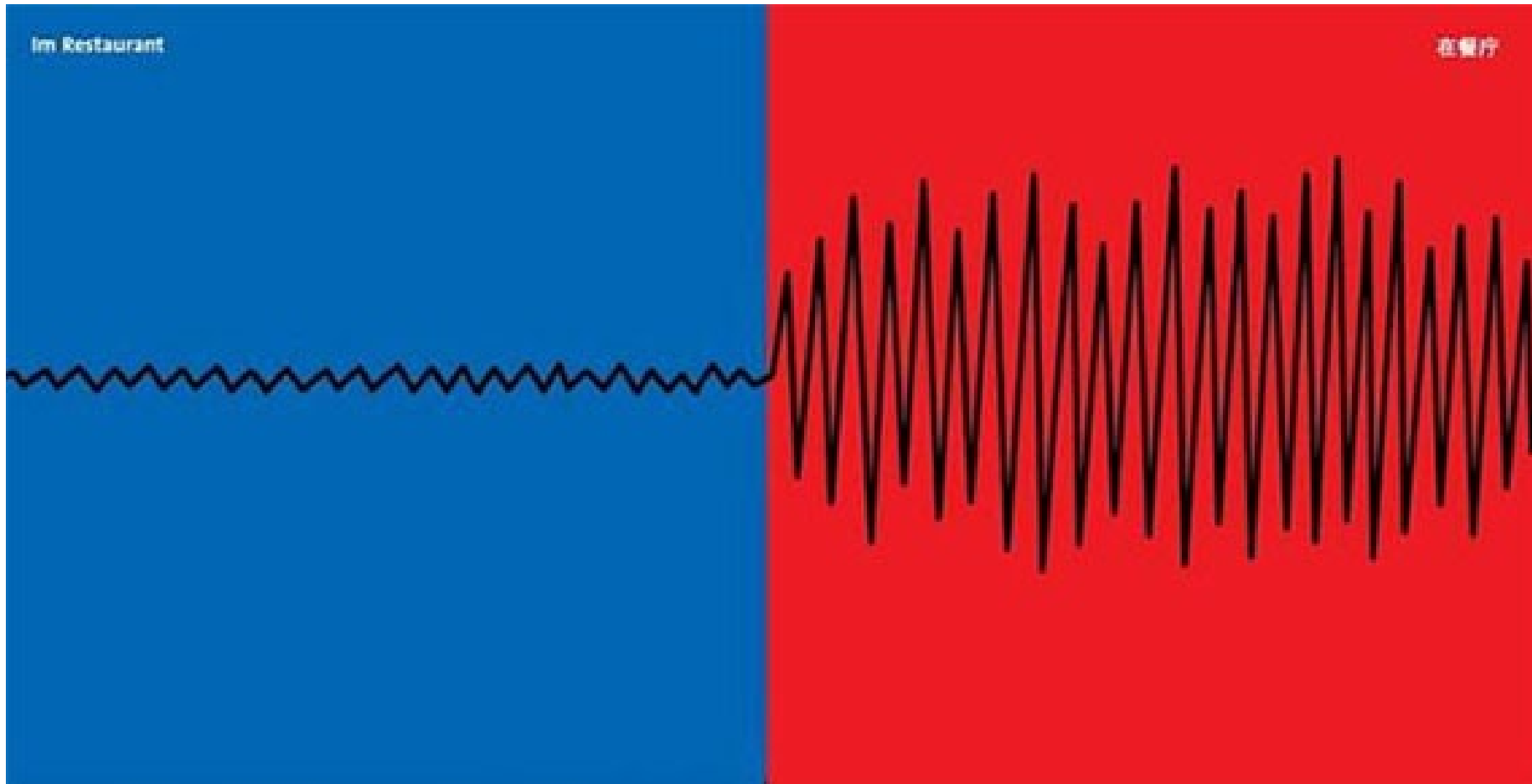
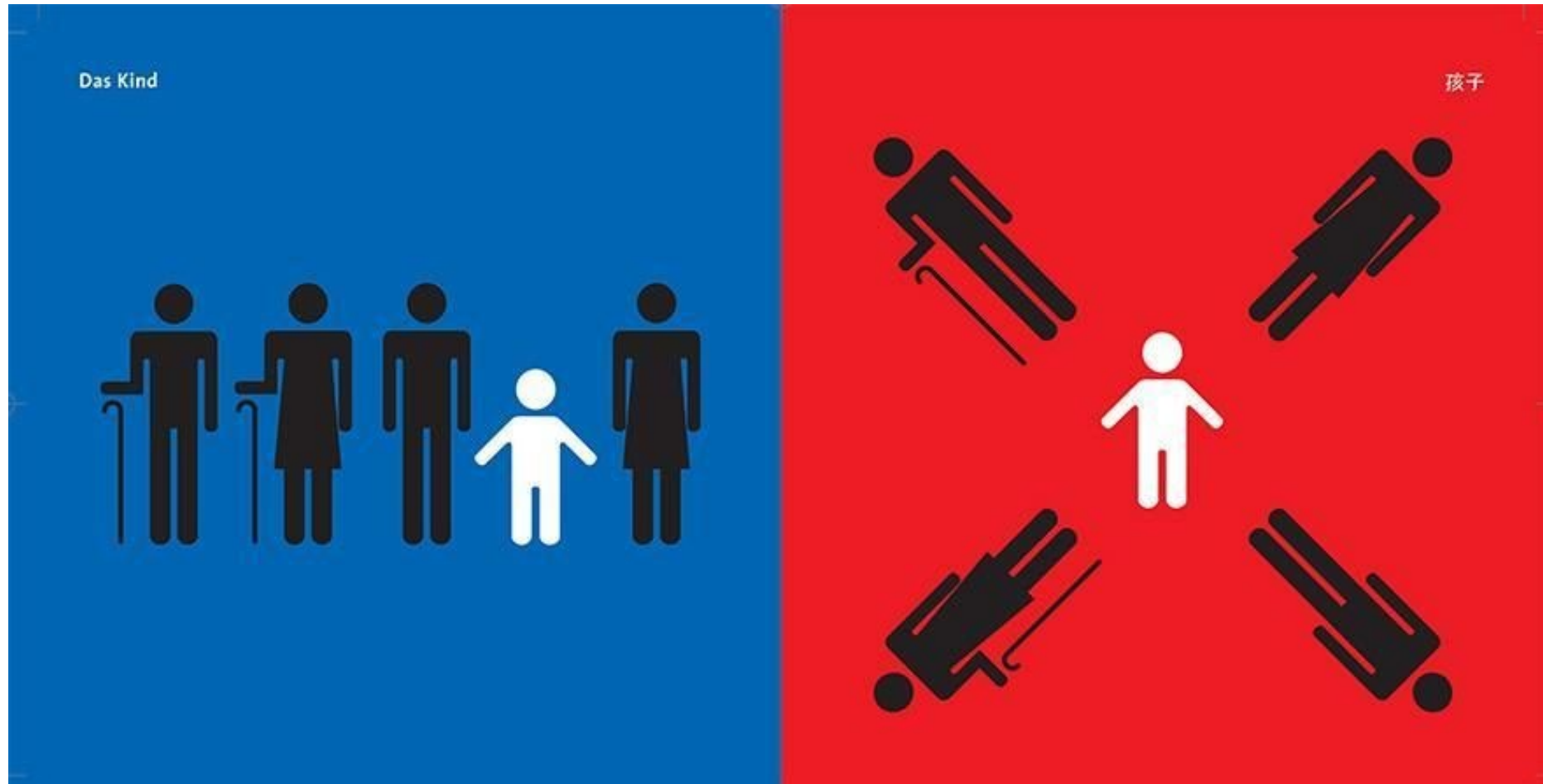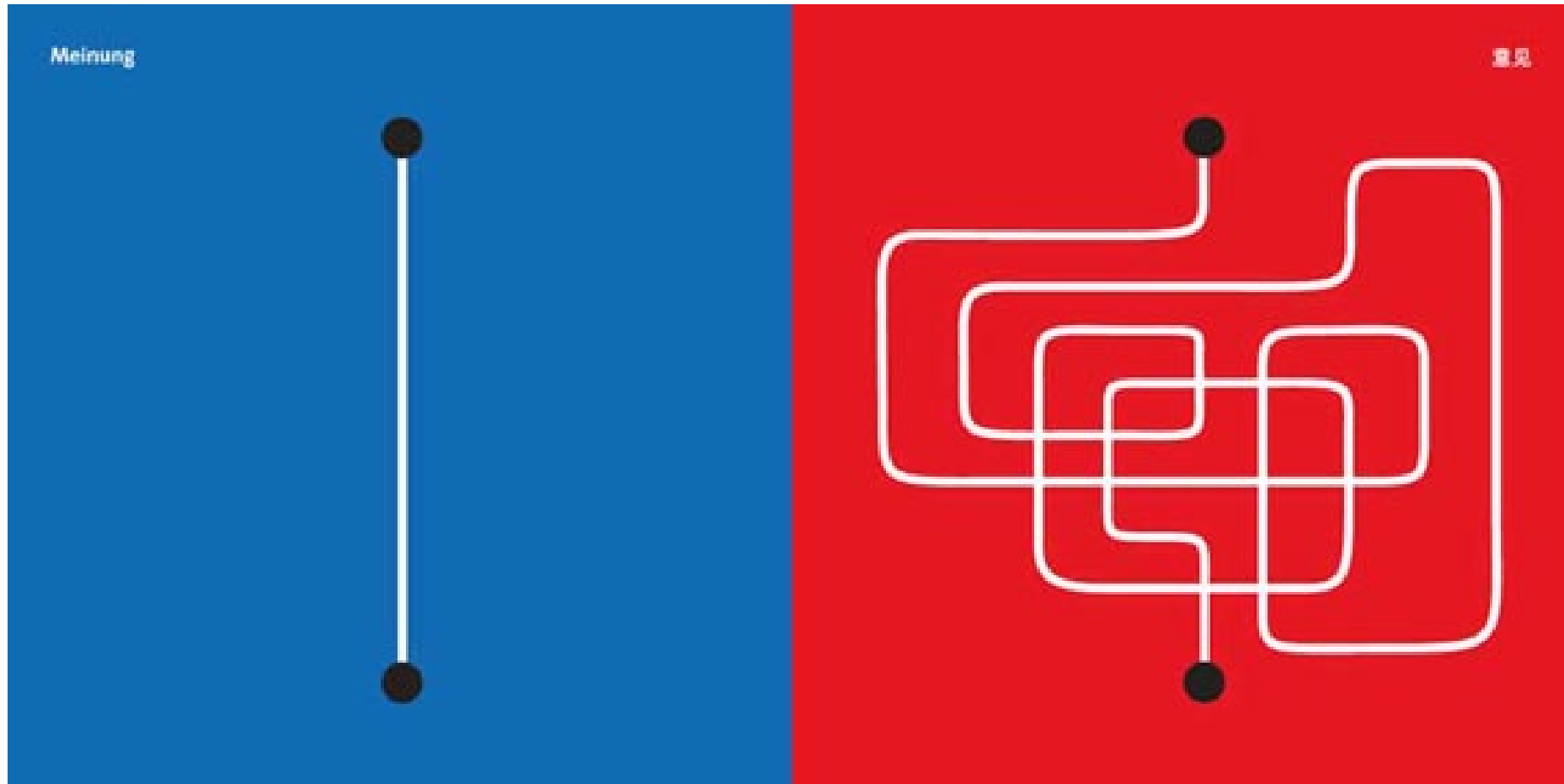# Sundays on the streets
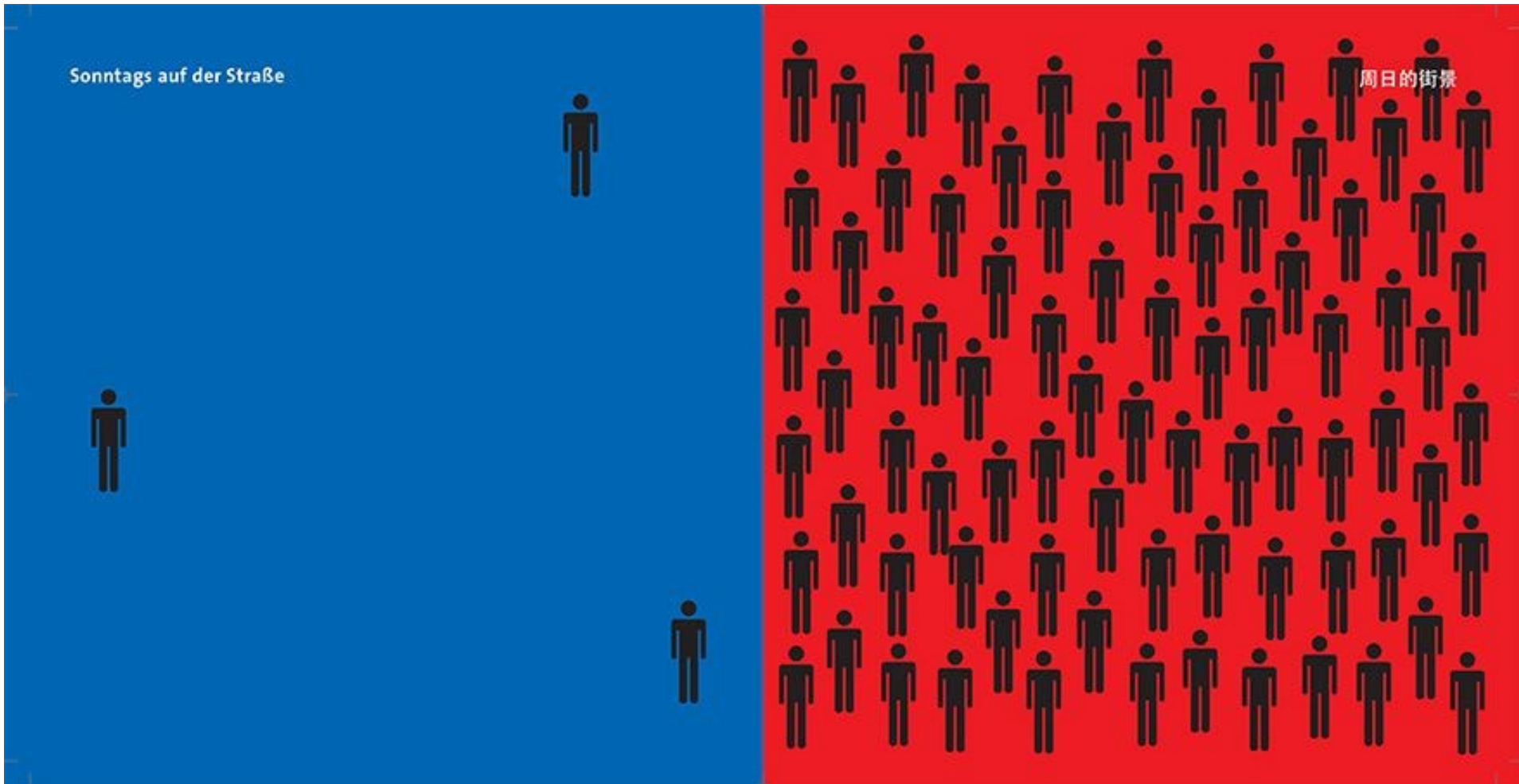
# The boss/leader

# Society & the Elderly



Society and seniors

老人的社会地位
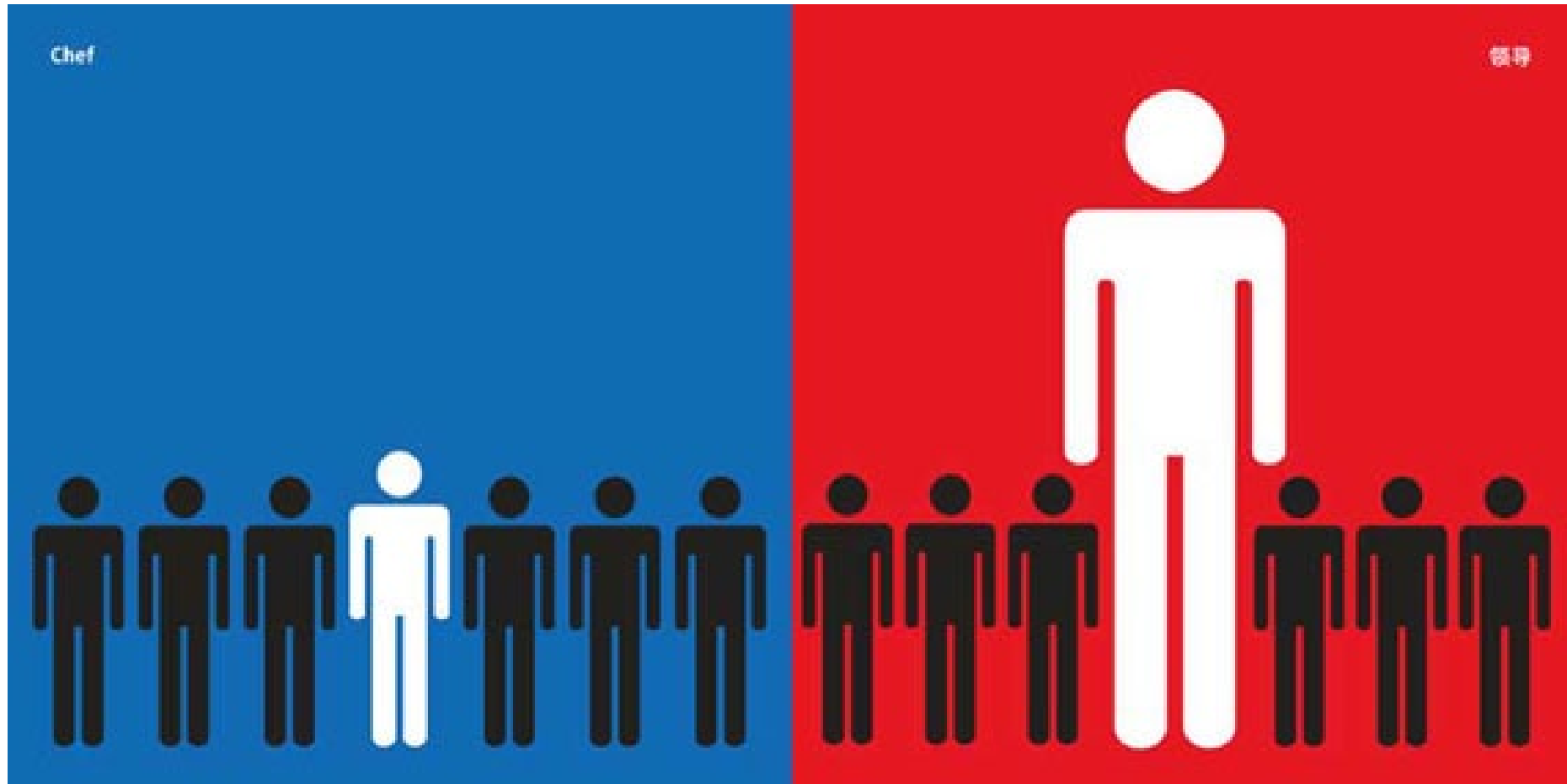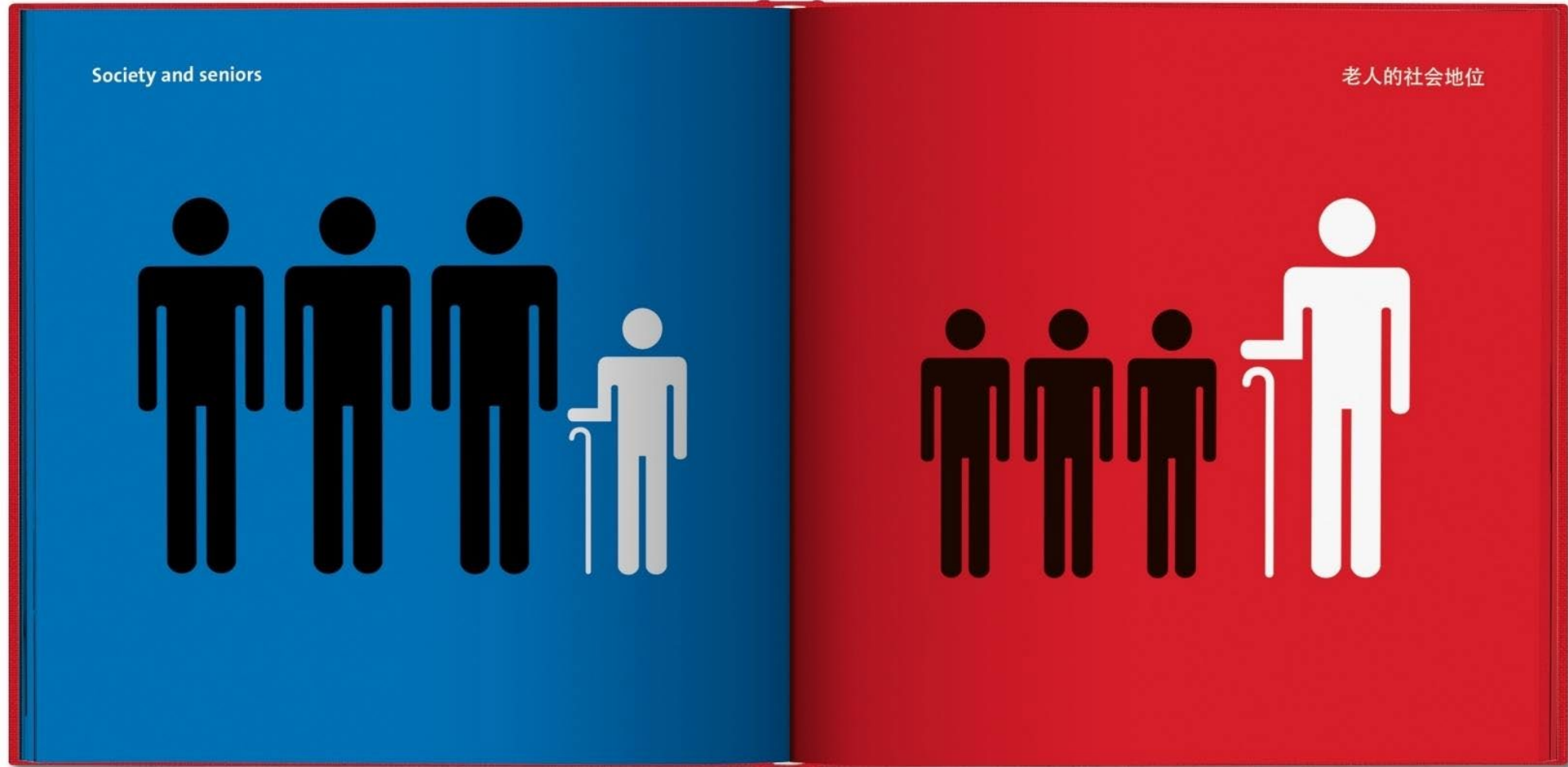
# Responsibility of the Elderly in day-to-day life
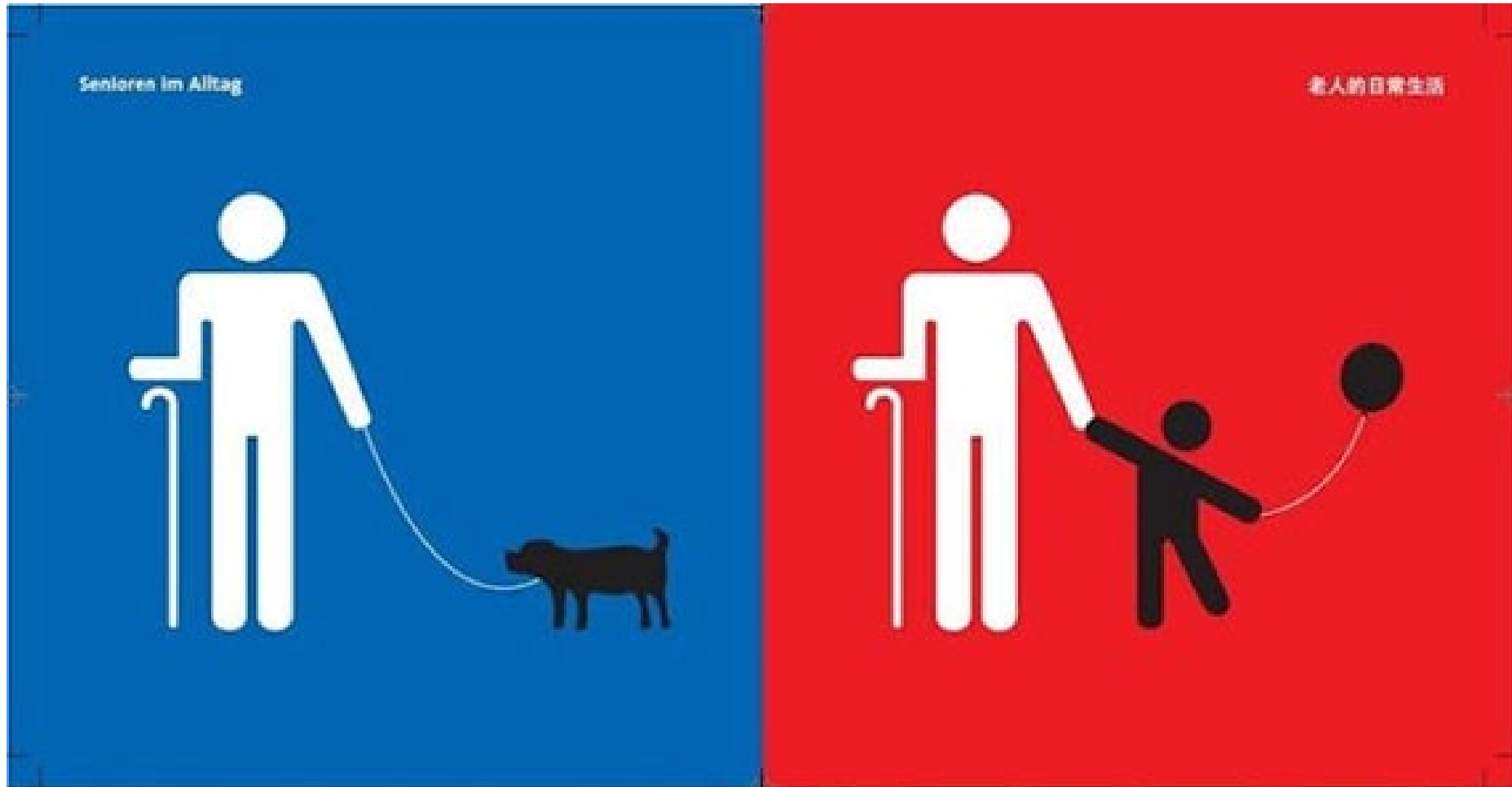
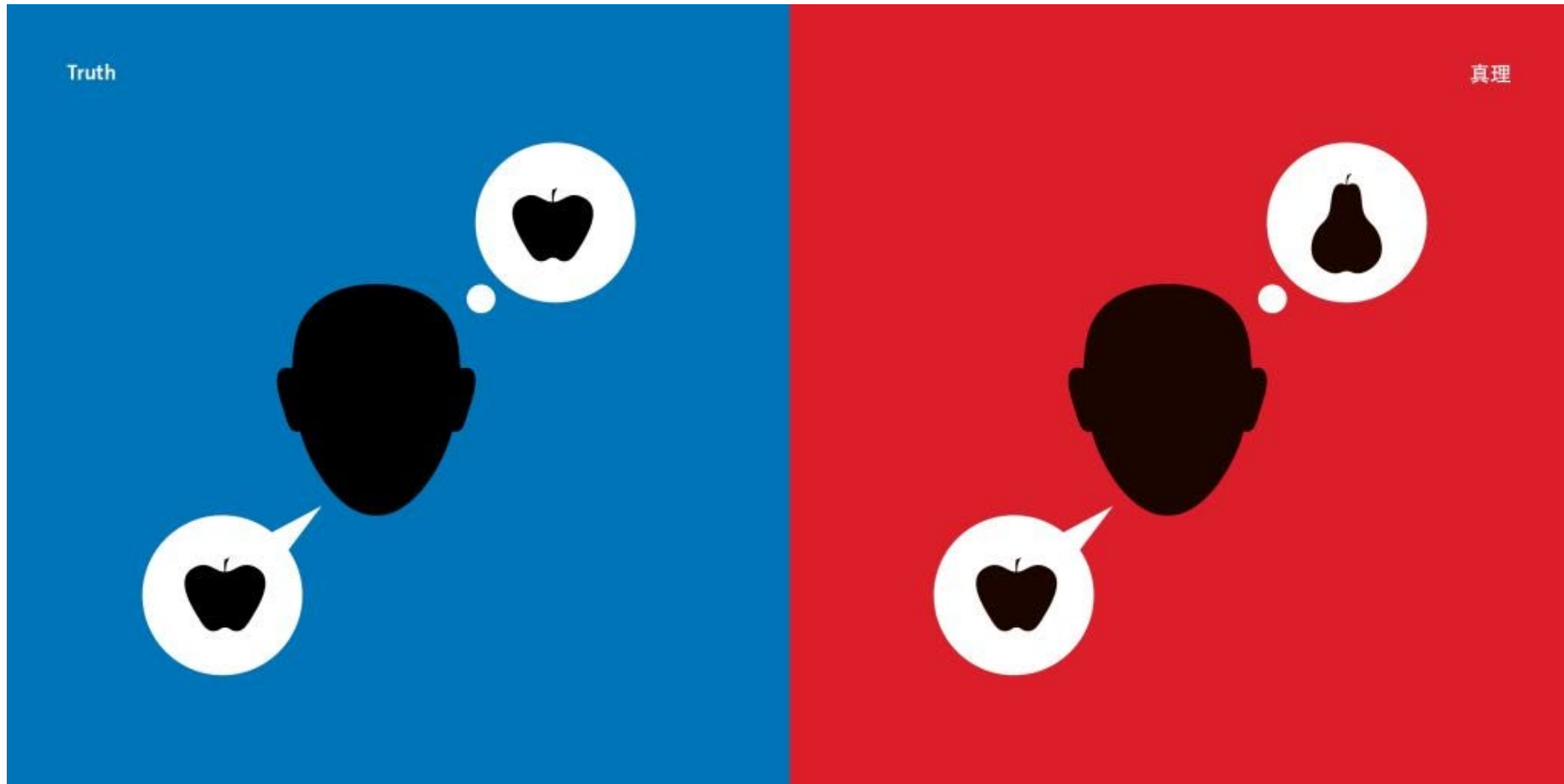# Place of children in family

# Communication style (direct/indirect)
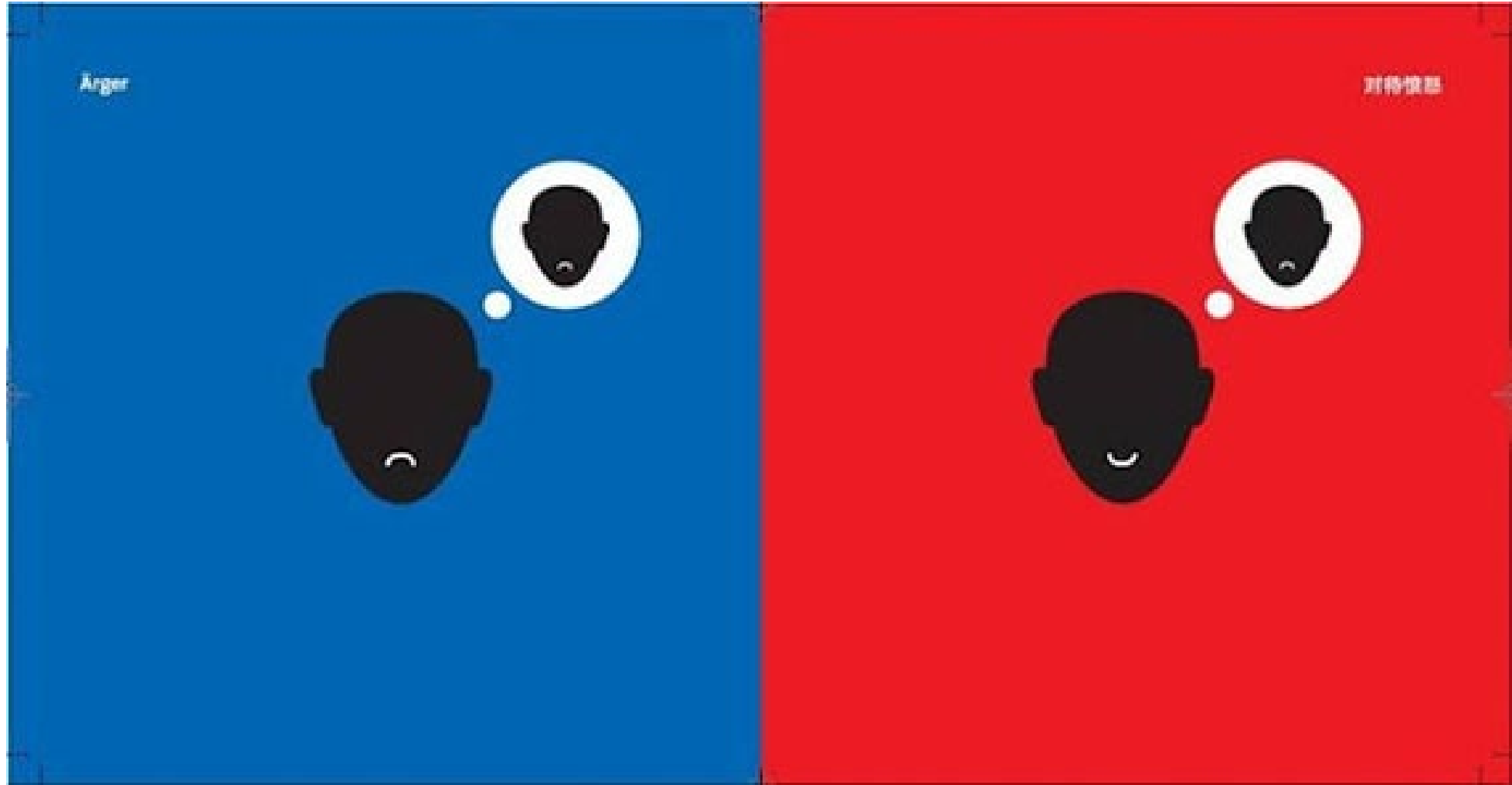
# Problem-solving approach
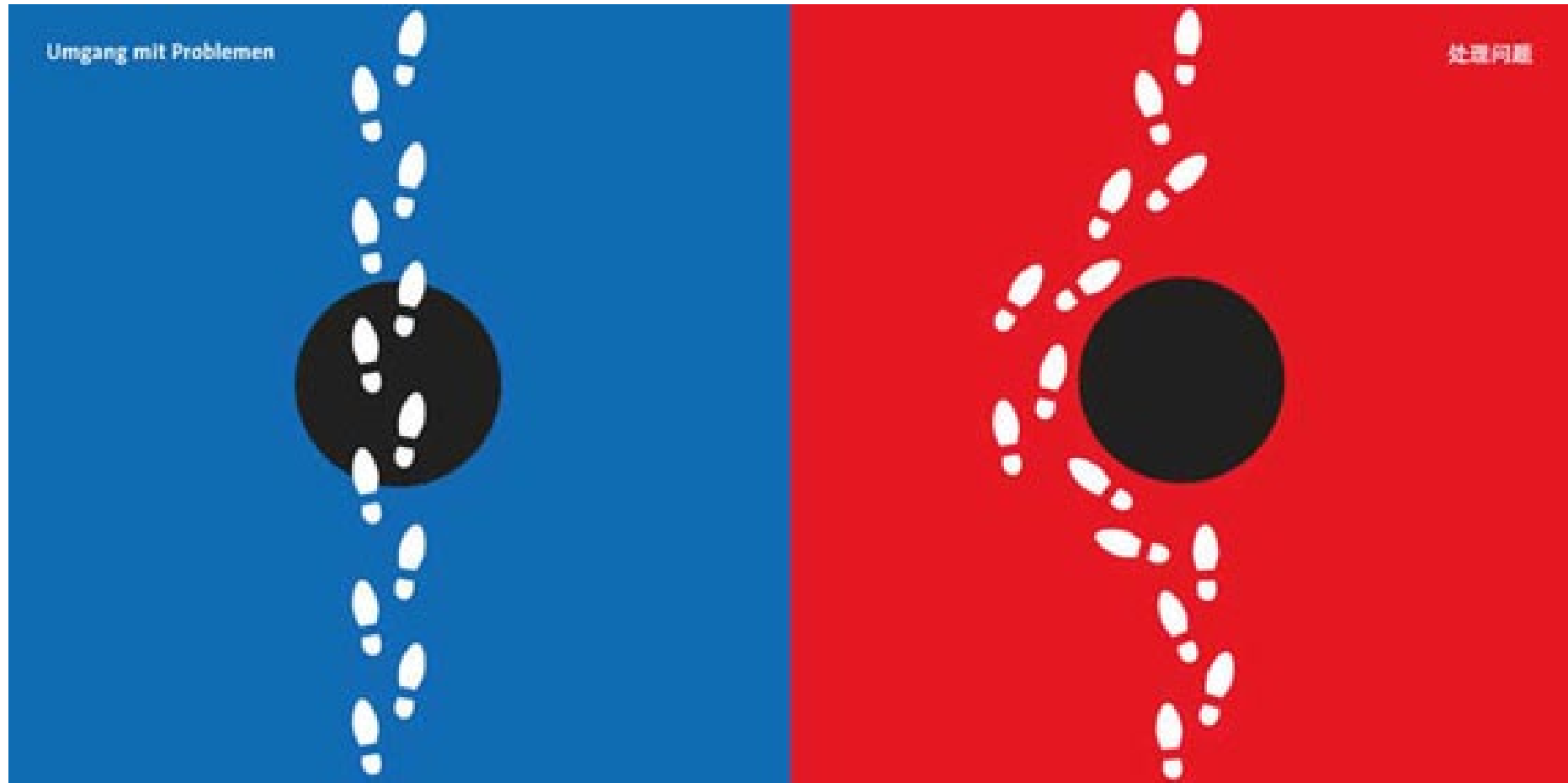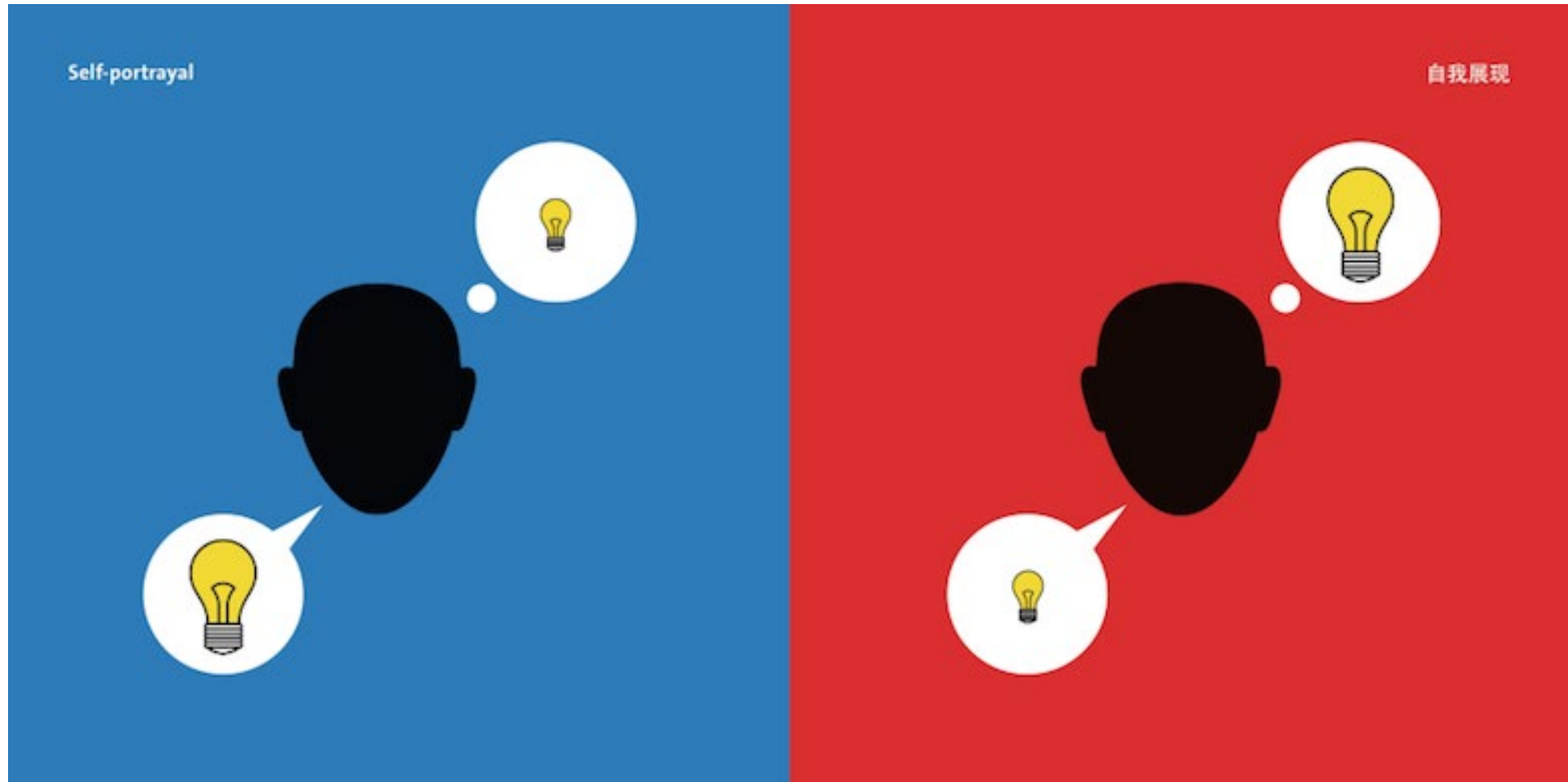
# Attitude towards time (punctuality v. event)
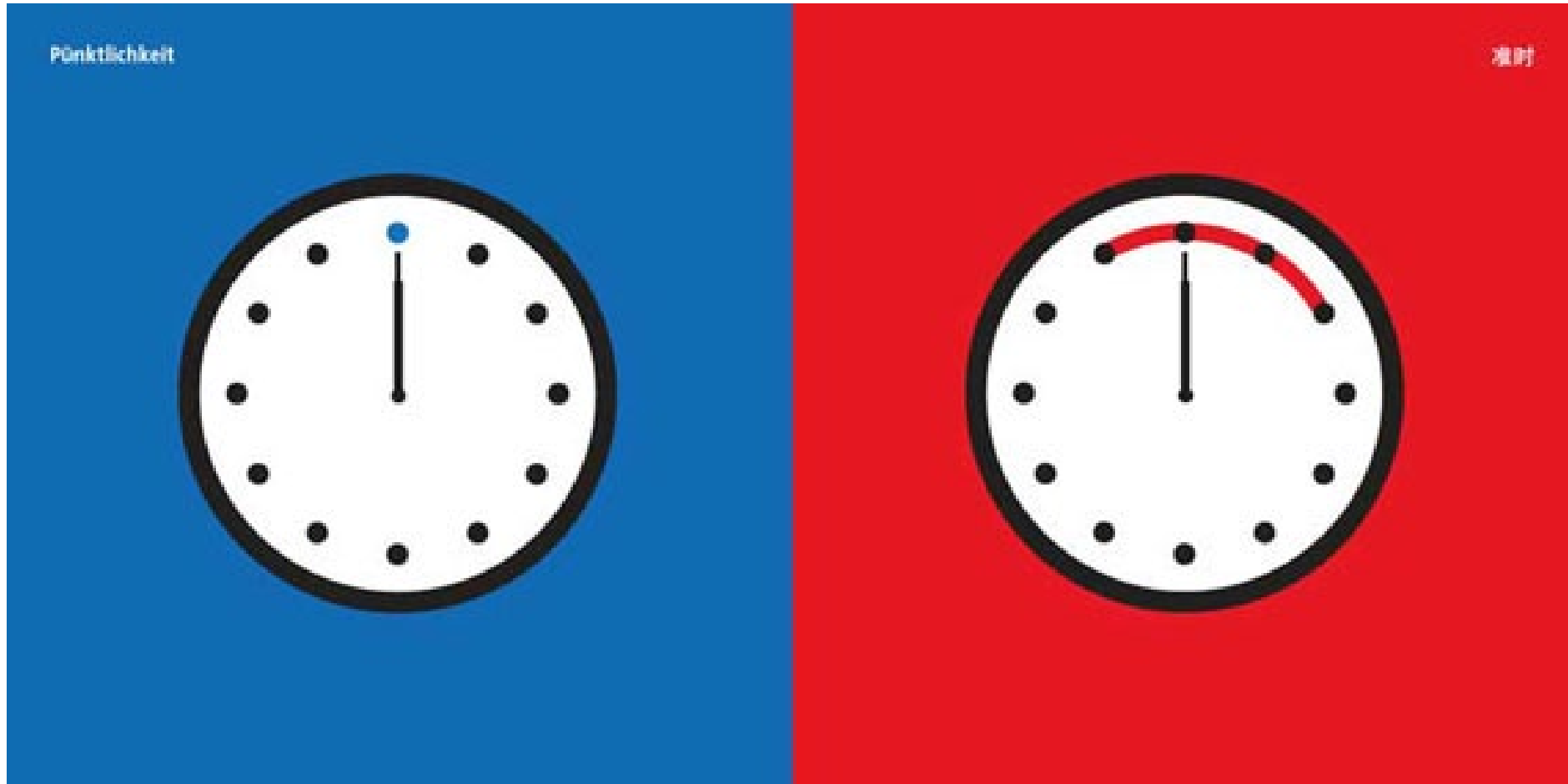
# Telling the truth (honour/shame)

# Expressing feelings (honour/shame)

# Self-expression/self-portrayal