

REFLECTING

HEAVEN

**BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL
CHURCH WHERE YOU ARE**

BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL
CHURCH WHERE YOU ARE

REFLECTING
HEAVEN



Intercultural Church Fundamentals HEART ATTITUDE

Tim McMahon
13th November 2025

The right HEART ATTITUDE is key for a church to become more intercultural

- 3 dangerous attitudes:
 - 1. Cultural SUPREMACY
 - – teach *identity in Christ*
 - – *raise awareness* of the unavoidable impact of culture
 - 2. Commitment to COMFORT
 - – teach *remembering God's mercy* → *willing sacrifice*
 - 3. FEAR of overwhelming DISCOMFORT
 - – acknowledge these feelings!
 - – teach *overruling of the mind*

An intercultural church's culture:

- “**Exalting Christ above all ...**”
- “Exalting Christ above all ... **competing cultural identities**”
- Our new identity “IN CHRIST” is given through the GOSPEL. **The gospel** must be allowed to **critique and transform culture** when culture **COMPETES** with Christ for our identity
- A church which grasps this truth will accept that **NO CULTURE is supreme** – even the culture of the majority community.
- An INTERCULTURAL CHURCH will have a **constantly transforming culture**. Transforming by the gospel. Always fighting cultural supremacy. Seeking to reflect the best from the cultures of all the members the Lord brings to it.
- The church's culture will therefore change as the members change – in number, in cultural composition, in knowledge of God's purposes, in commitment to willingly accommodate others from different cultures.

A few implications...

CHURCH, CULTURE, and IDENTITY

- **The CHURCH's purpose:** "Exalting Christ above all ..." – includes cultural identity
- A NUANCE: the biblical principles & practices that exalt Christ in our particular context are necessarily expressed within cultural forms. It cannot be otherwise! But because we are all image-bearers of the triune God, our experience (especially in communities) can be transcultural (especially *love*)
- Churches should expect both clashes and harmony between Christian values and wider culture
 - Example of a **clash**: a church's unapologetic value of 'evangelism' vs. the (current) British value of 'tolerance'
 - Example of cultural **harmony**: commitment to impartiality in the justice system – the powerful not favoured
- No national culture (even those with a "Christian" heritage) can validly claim to be "the" Christian or biblical culture. We can, however, influence the cultures we participate in – some more than others – to better reflect Christ's ways.
- Our – or others' – culture-of-origin should not be the basis of a Christian's or a church's identity. We are in danger of idolatry when we *demand* that our church preserve our cultural identity.
- All cultures need *constant transforming* by the gospel – including *all church cultures* in Britain and elsewhere. Growth in our understanding of the bible and changes in the people and cultures around us will mean that our church culture *cannot* remain the same. → CHANGE INEVITABLE



Create a CHANGE PLAN

Gradually build a change plan in 5 steps:

1. Facilitate a **conversion experience**
2. Provide a compelling **vision** for change
3. **Shrink** the change
4. Change the **setting**
5. Form a new **tribe**

Develop this plan with a team – don't impose it!

Using these resources – e.g. for Step 1

Facilitating a **CONVERSION EXPERIENCE**

1. Do a **LISTENING EXERCISE** – listening ONLY, no defence of the current situation – **to people of minority cultural groups** in your church / team. Use the CHURCH ASSESSMENT form

How do you feel about your culture's inclusion in each of the six areas in our church's life?

2. Ask each member of your **LEADERSHIP TEAM** to do the PERSONAL ASSESSMENT and CHURCH ASSESSMENT

3. DISCUSS 1 & 2 as a Leadership Team.

Note any differences in perception between the Leadership and people from minority groups.



Create a CHANGE PLAN

Gradually build a change plan in 5 steps:

1. Facilitate a **conversion experience**
2. Provide a compelling **vision** for change
3. **Shrink** the change
4. Change the **setting**
5. Form a new **tribe**

Develop this plan with a team – don't impose it!

Using these resources – e.g. for Step 1

Facilitating a **CONVERSION EXPERIENCE**

Raise awareness of the reality of cultural differences and the negative impact these have if not intentionally addressed

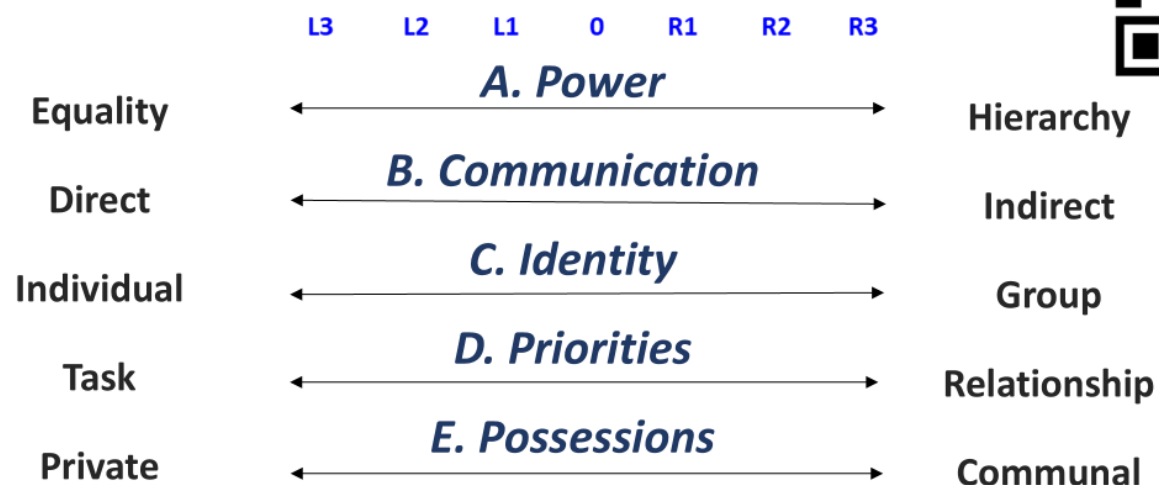
(e.g. punctuality v. fluidity expectations about event times – English v. West Indians)

- a. **Conduct interviews asking about the culture** of people in the communities you are seeking to engage more fully in your church.
- b. **ANALYSE the interviewees culture(s)** using the 15 culture scales.
Analyse the majority culture similarly!
- c. **Identify areas of CULTURE CLASH** caused by fundamental differences in approach between the minority culture(s) and the majority culture
- d. Identify the **values** underlying the minority culture's patterns – especially how their approach, though different to the majority culture, may **reflect biblical values**
- e. Discuss ways to **ACCOMMODATE the different cultural approach(es)** in a way that will get the best of both worlds. Identify where accommodation / change / discomfort will be required (by *both* groups).

Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/VGhHtxShTdDYFTxT8>



Culture Preference Scales A-E



PREFERENCE SCALES A-E

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
A. POWER (Equality to Hierarchy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. COMMUNICATION: (Direct to Indirect)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. IDENTITY (Individual to Group)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. PRIORITIES (Task to Relationship)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. POSSESSIONS (Private to Communal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences A-E

Power

Communication

Identity

Priorities

Possessions

Equality $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Hierarchy*

Direct $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Indirect*

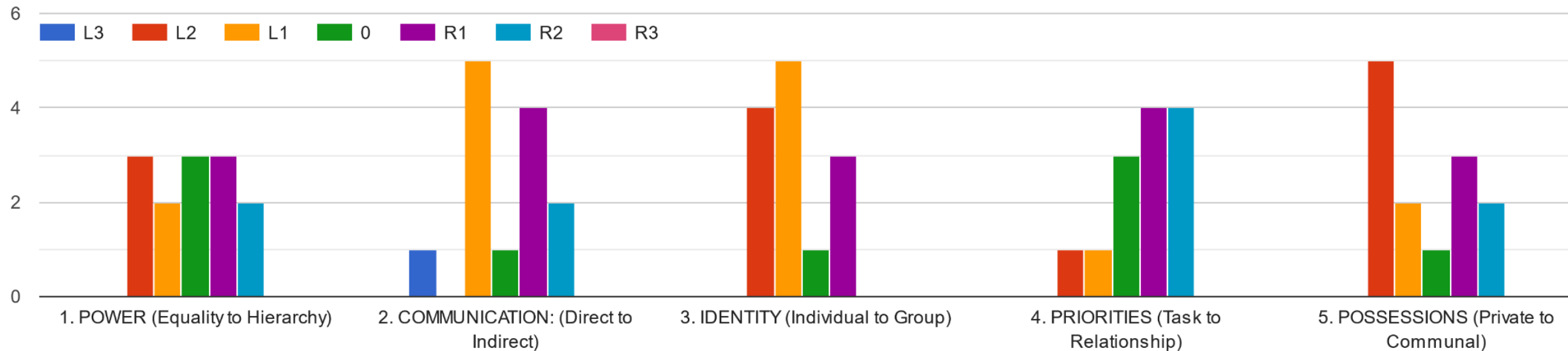
Individual $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Group*

Task $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Relationship*

Private $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Collective*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral



Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/hnffLTB6PhBvegg27>



Culture Preference Scales F-J

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3	
Low	F. Context (formality)						High	
Rich	G. Wealth (material)						Poor	
Progressive	H. Values						Traditional	
Physical	I. Foundation						Spiritual	
Strongly AGAINST	J. Tribal affinity						Strongly FOR	

PREFERENCE SCALES F-J

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
F. CONTEXT (High to Low)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. WEALTH (Rich to Poor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. VALUES (Progress to Tradition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. FOUNDATION (Physical to Spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. TRIBAL (Against to For)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences F-J

Context

Low $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *High*

Wealth

Rich $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Poor*

Values

Progressive $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Traditional*

Foundation

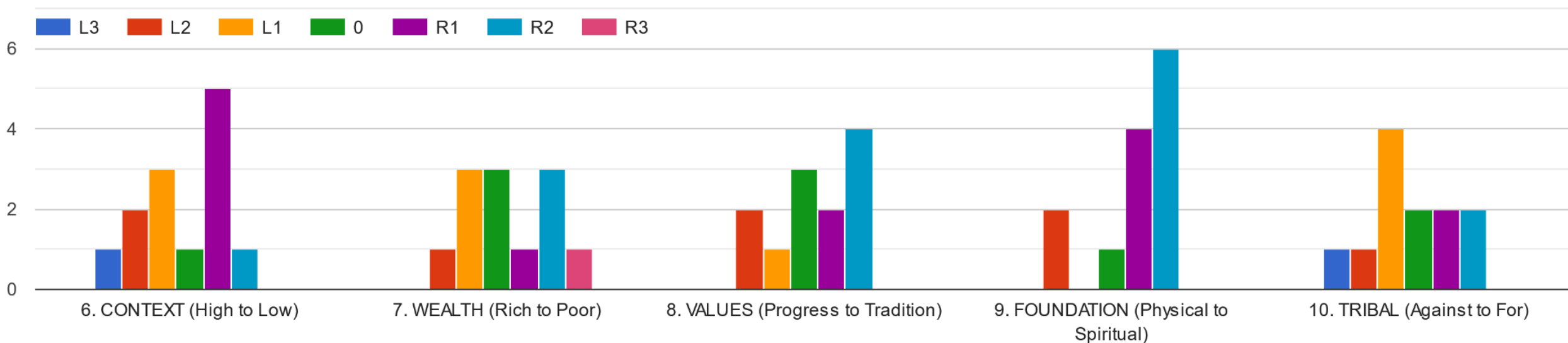
Physical $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Spiritual*

Tribalness

Against $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *For*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

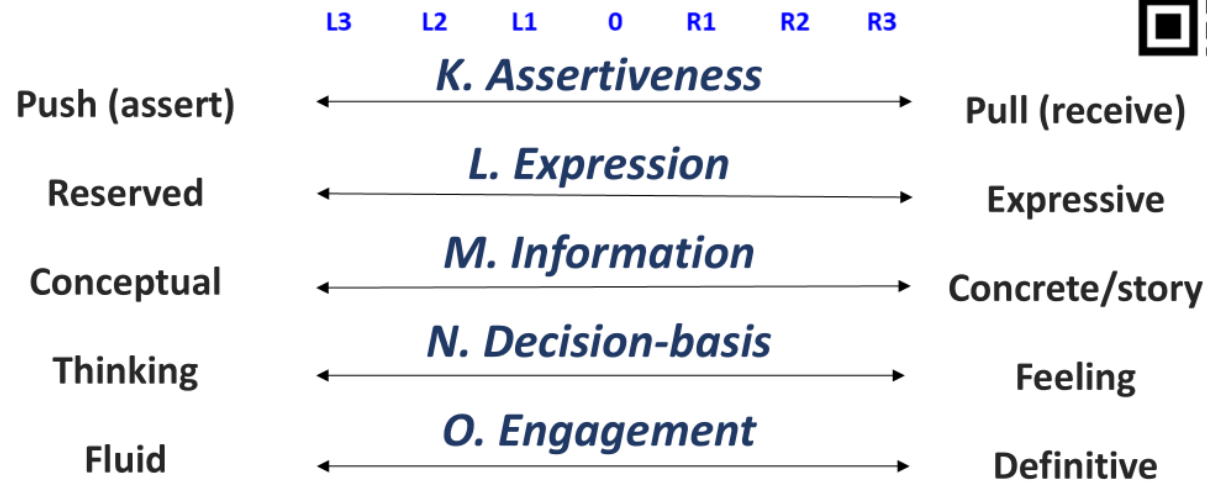
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral



Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/2JbULs5vEoSsyQ6t7>



Culture Preference Scales K-O



PREFERENCE SCALES K-O

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
K. ASSERTIVENESS (Push to Pull)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. EXPRESSION (Reserved to Expressive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. INFORMATION (Concept to Concrete)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. DECISION (Thinking to Feeling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. ENGAGEMENT (Fluid to Definite)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences K-O

Assertiveness

Assertive ← → *Receiving*

Expression

Reserved ← → *Expressive*

Information

Conceptual ← → *Concrete*

Decision-basis

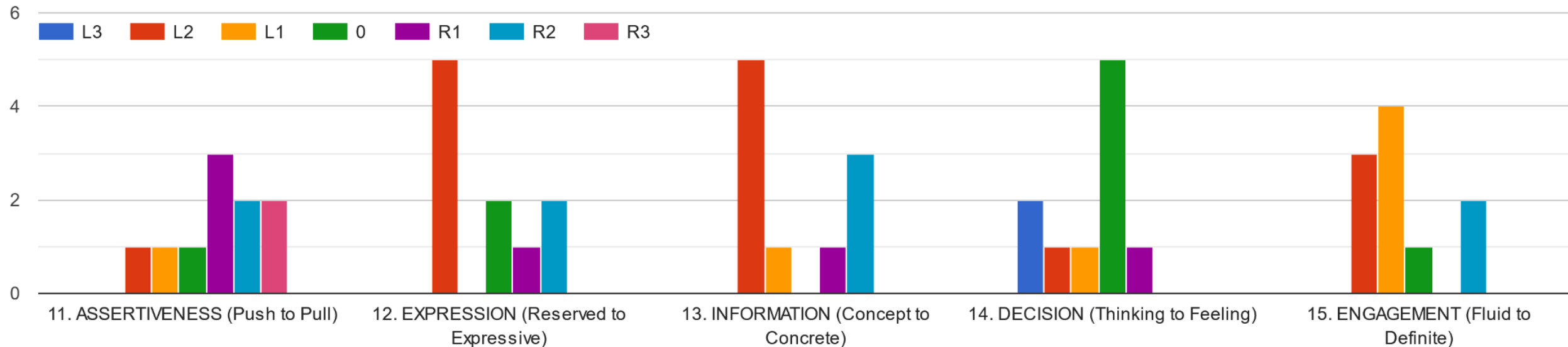
Thinking ← → *Feeling*

Engagement

Fluid ← → *Definitive*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

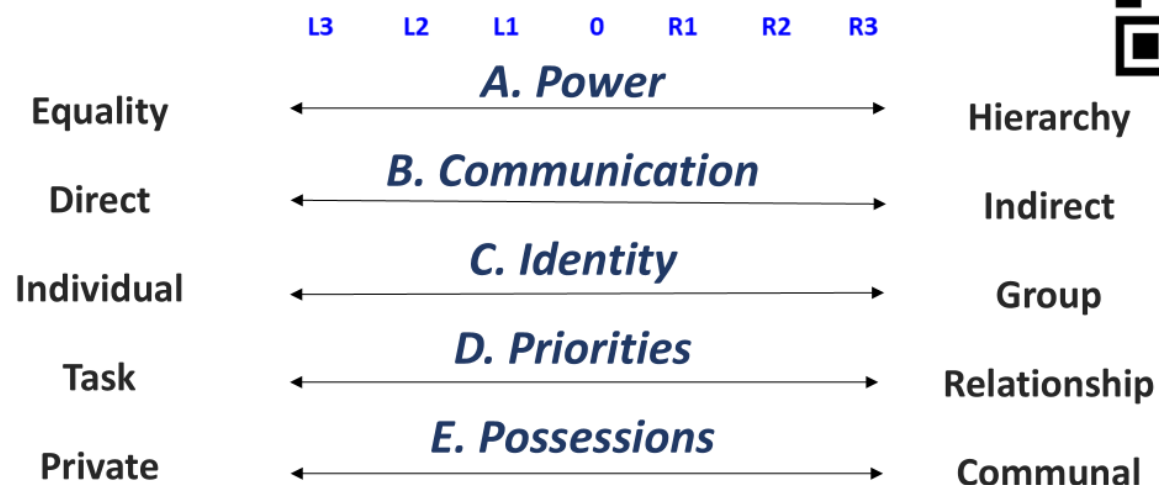
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral



Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/VGhHtxShTdDYFTxT8>



Culture Preference Scales A-E



PREFERENCE SCALES A-E

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
A. POWER (Equality to Hierarchy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. COMMUNICATION: (Direct to Indirect)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. IDENTITY (Individual to Group)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. PRIORITIES (Task to Relationship)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. POSSESSIONS (Private to Communal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences A-E

Power

Communication

Identity

Priorities

Possessions

Equality ← → *Hierarchy*

Direct ← → *Indirect*

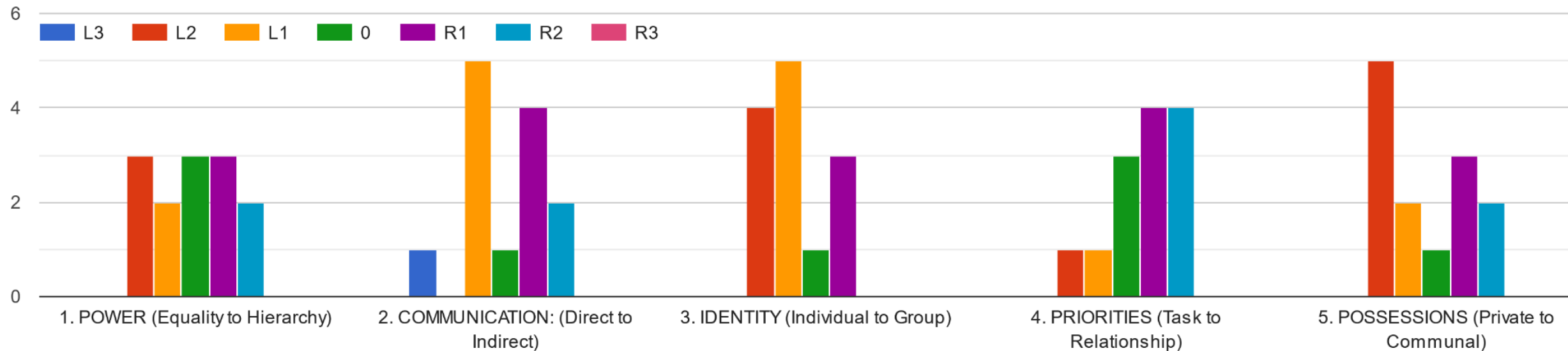
Individual ← → *Group*

Task ← → *Relationship*

Private ← → *Collective*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

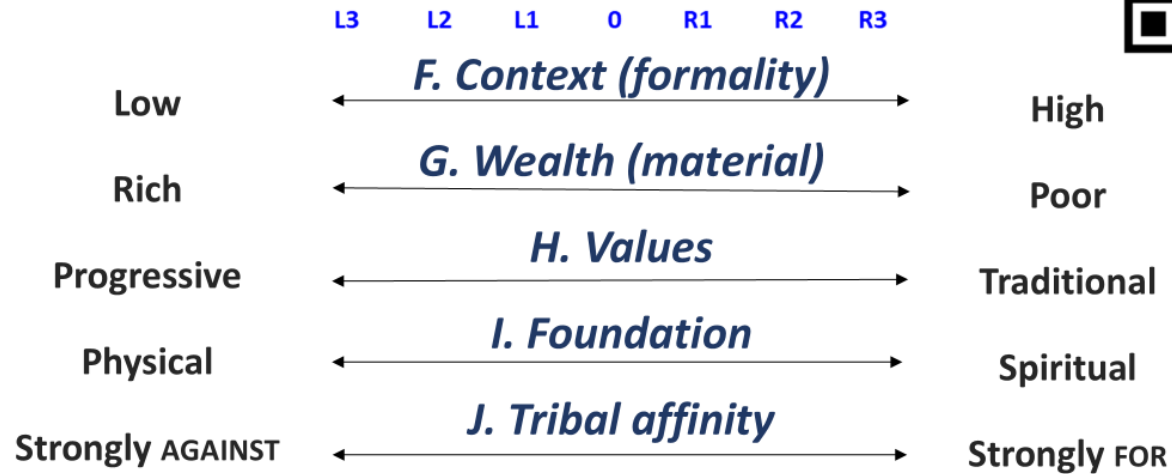
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral



Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/hnffLTB6PhBvegg27>



Culture Preference Scales F-J



PREFERENCE SCALES F-J

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
F. CONTEXT (High to Low)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. WEALTH (Rich to Poor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. VALUES (Progress to Tradition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. FOUNDATION (Physical to Spiritual)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. TRIBAL (Against to For)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences F-J

Context

Low $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *High*

Wealth

Rich $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Poor*

Values

Progressive $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Traditional*

Foundation

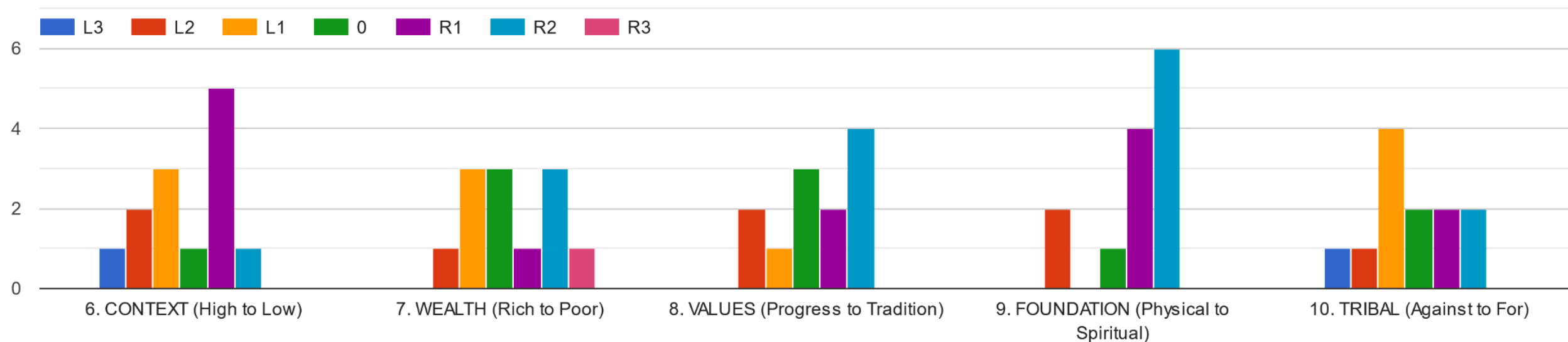
Physical $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *Spiritual*

Tribalness

Against $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ *For*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

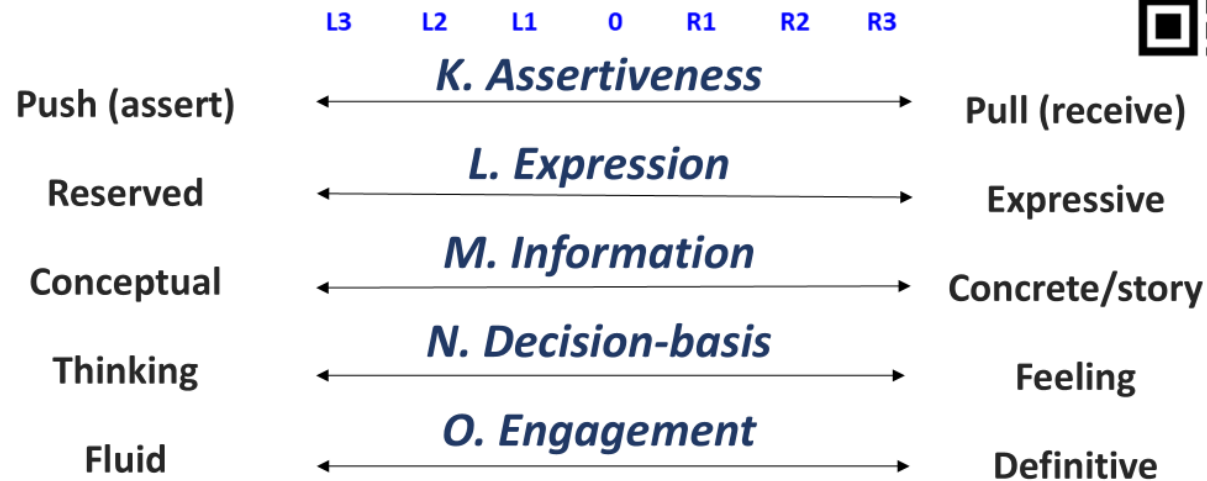
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral



Decide where you fall on the scale (Left3, Left2, Left1, Centre0, Right1, Right2, Right3) for each of the 5 preference scales. Enter your answer (L3, L2, L1, 0, R1, R2, R3) for each scale into the form at this link: <https://forms.gle/2JbULs5vEoSsyQ6t7>



Culture Preference Scales K-O



PREFERENCE SCALES K-O

Mark ONE CHECKBOX on EACH SCALE showing where you fall on the spectrum (from L3 to R3)

tim.mcmahon64@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)
STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral

	L3	L2	L1	0	R1	R2	R3
K. ASSERTIVENESS (Push to Pull)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. EXPRESSION (Reserved to Expressive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. INFORMATION (Concept to Concrete)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. DECISION (Thinking to Feeling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. ENGAGEMENT (Fluid to Definite)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SURVEY RESULTS: Culture Preferences K-O

Assertiveness

Assertive ← → *Receiving*

Expression

Reserved ← → *Expressive*

Information

Conceptual ← → *Concrete*

Decision-basis

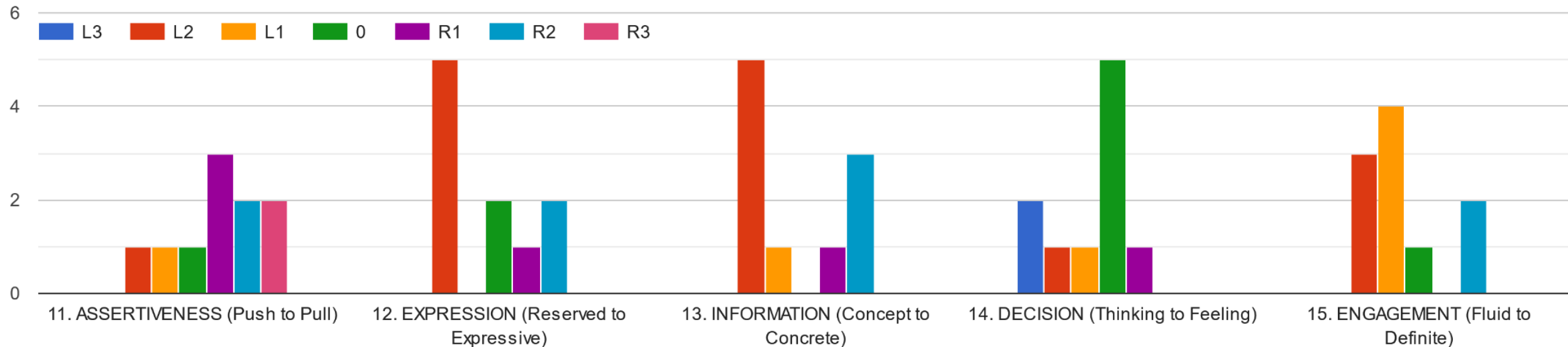
Thinking ← → *Feeling*

Engagement

Fluid ← → *Definitive*

SPECTRUM: from Left (L) to Centre (0) to Right (R)

STRENGTH: 3=Strong 2=Moderate 1=A little 0=Neutral





Create a CHANGE PLAN

Gradually build a change plan in 5 steps:

1. Facilitate a **conversion experience**
2. Provide a compelling **vision** for change
3. **Shrink** the change
4. Change the **setting**
5. Form a new **tribe**

Develop this plan with a team – don't impose it!

CHANGE PLAN – Steps 2-3

A. FORM A STEERING GROUP – ensure diverse input!

- a. **Identify WHO** – in or outside! – your church should help define what intercultural community might look like in your ministry context.
- b. **Make a plan** to engage and empower those people to input to, and significantly influence, the formation of an intercultural vision for your context.
- c. **Form the group** (this will take more than a single meeting!)

B. Create a “Destination postcard” for what your church might look like if it were more intercultural (Step 2: provide a compelling [vision](#)).

C. Identify the first critical steps of the change process and start implementing them (Step 3: [Shrink](#) the change)

CHANGE PLAN – Step 4

Step 4: **change the setting**

BRAINSTORM

How can you change the **environment** so it becomes easier for people in your church to make the changes you think God wants to see?

CHANGE PLAN – Step 5

Step 5: form a new tribe

What can **you do** to create a community where the desired behaviour is the new norm?

How can we encourage **others** in **attitudes and actions** that will contribute to establishing a new norm?



Create a CHANGE PLAN

Gradually build a change plan in 5 steps:

1. Facilitate a **conversion experience**
2. Provide a compelling **vision** for change
3. **Shrink** the change
4. Change the **setting**
5. Form a new **tribe**

Develop this plan with a team – don't impose it!



CHANGE PLAN – Review

conduct a *pre-mortem* to
VACCINATE YOUR PLAN!

Imagine it's November 2026, and your change plan has failed!

1. Take 3 minutes individually to write down every conceivable reason **why it might fail**.
2. Now work as a group. **Collect all reasons** on a flipchart.
3. Underline **the 3 most likely/critical ones**
4. Consider, what are a **few things** you could do *collectively* to avoid the pitfalls that might lead to failure?

BUILDING AN INTERCULTURAL
CHURCH WHERE YOU ARE

REFLECTING
HEAVEN



Intercultural Church Fundamentals HEART ATTITUDE

Tim McMahon
13th November 2025

