

Why Are We Three Fellowships?

Harvard-Radcliffe Christian Fellowship (HRCF),
Harvard-Radcliffe Asian-American Christian Fellowship (HRAACF),
Harvard College Black Christian Fellowship (HCBCF)

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Meet: YB ('05)



Was looking for a Christian fellowship to join for the first couple of weeks during freshman year.

An Asian-American woman who lived across the hall invited her to a AACF Bible study. They would soon become best friends and roommates.

Meet: YB ('05)



Really enjoyed the Bible study, so continued to go.

Eventually, she ventured to Large Group “where I did at first feel awkward being the only non-Asian in the room.”

Meet: YB ('05)



But over time she got to know the people better and was really drawn by the fellowship's vision – to serve one another and engage the Asian community.

Over her four years, served in a couple of different roles, as treasurer, a small group leader, and coordinator of HRAACF's small groups.

The Lesson

- Each fellowship's name reflects its mission, not its constituency
- HRAACF: Asian-American cultures
- HCBCF: Black cultures
- HRCF: All Harvard undergrads

Asking the Broader Question

- Why have ministry by groupings at all?
 - Age group: Youth, College, etc.
 - Marital status: Single, Married
 - Gender
 - Occupation or interest, etc.

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- There seem to be clear, intuitively obvious needs for have separate groupings here. Is it clear in our case? How do we express partnership and unity?

The Immediate Question

- Why do we have HRCF, HRAACF, and HRBCF?
- History
 - HRCF launched and blessed the formation of HRAACF (1993) and HCBCF (2008).
- Questions
 - The central question is probably “Is it the result of sin on someone’s part that we have 3 fellowships?”

What is faith? What is culture?

What ETHNIC GROUP is God engaging?	The PERSON God uses	God's VALUE or INTENTION?	The CULTURAL EXPRESSION
Jewish disciples in Israel	Jesus (John 13)	Love one another	Footwashing



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Unbelieving Jews in Lystra & Iconium	Paul & Timothy (Acts 15)	Have respect for Jewish customs	Paul circumcises Timothy

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Greeks in Athens	Paul (Acts 17)	Share Jesus in an effective, relevant way	Paul quotes Greek philosophers and the 'altar to an unknown god'



Jesus empowers our love

Culture is the wrapping

- For though I am free from all, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I become as a Jew, that I might win the Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; **I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.** (1 Corinthians 9:19 – 22)

Jesus empowers our love

Culture is the wrapping

- To some degree, Jewish and Gentile Christians preserve cultural distinctives on food and traditions (Rom.14 – 15; 1 Cor.8; Gal.2; Col.3)
- **Affirmation of Jewish culture:** ‘One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him...One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike...’ (Romans 14:2 – 5)
- **Affirmation that Gentiles don’t have to be culturally Jewish** (Galatians)

Culture and Faith

- Lesson #1: **God speaks in our heart language.** Hence if we are to better understand God, God's mission, ourselves, and others, we must understand ethnicity and culture.
- Lesson #2: **God redeems cultures, not just individuals.** Since every tribe and tongue will one day worship Jesus around his throne (Rev.5:9), it seems that God is preserving language and other cultural distinctives that can be redeemed.

Some Aspects of Culture

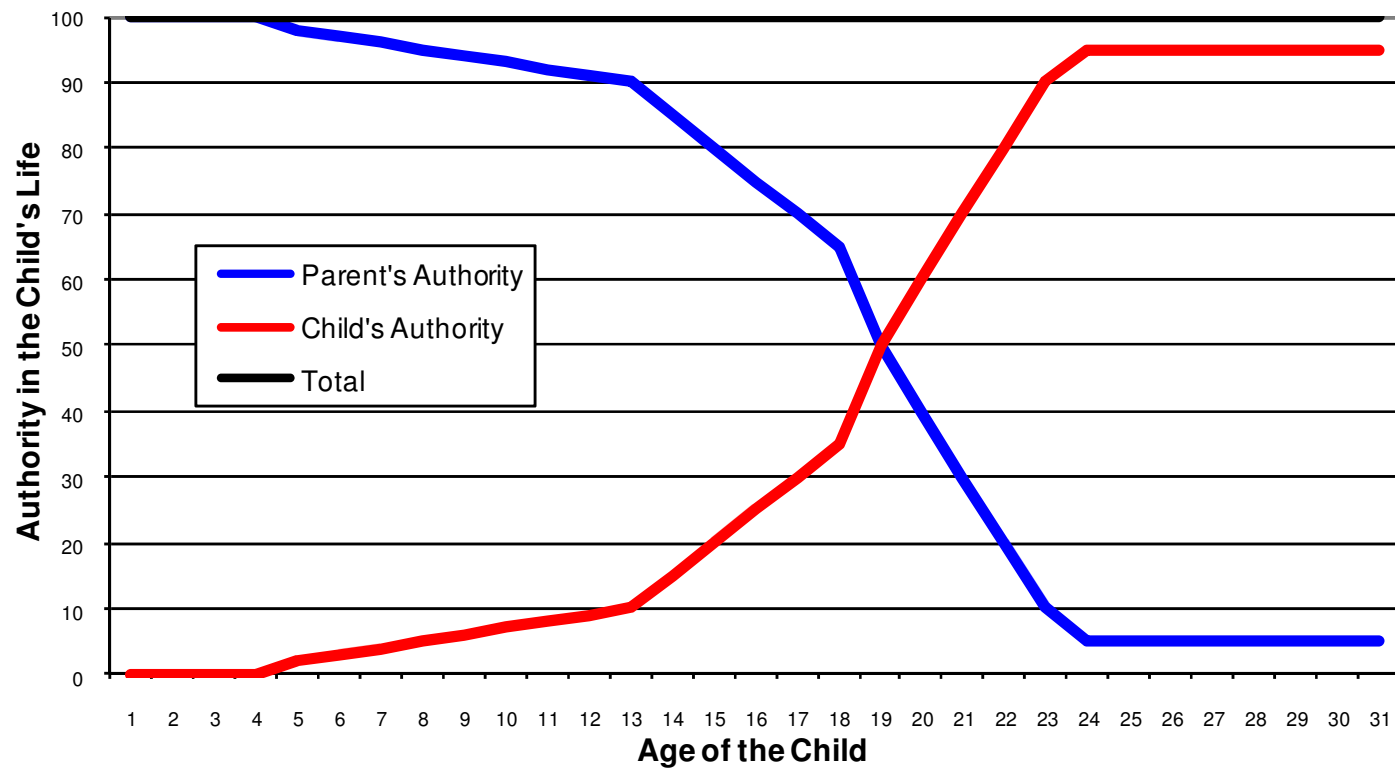
- See Lera Boroditsky, “Lost in Translation: New cognitive research suggests that language profoundly influences the way people see the world”, *Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 2010
 - English likes to describe events in terms of agents doing things. English speakers tend to say things like “John broke the vase” even for accidents. Speakers of Spanish or Japanese would be more likely to say “the vase broke” or “the vase was broken”. Such differences between languages have profound consequences for how their speakers understand events, construct notions of causality and agency, what they remember as eyewitnesses and how much they blame and punish others.
 - Is this one reason why English speaking people, in the U.S. especially, are more litigious?

Some Aspects of Culture

- Experience of injustice or privilege
- Experience of immigration/displacement or not
- Money, income, educational background
- Perceptions of power, leadership, responsibility
- Individualism vs. familial culture
- The role of parents, family, age
- The role of gender, masculinity, femininity
- Views on dating and marriage
- Speech: quick or slow, loud or soft, direct vs. indirect, interrupt or not, how to have conflict
- What is humorous, fun
- Perceptions of time, lateness
- History of ethnic interaction with Christian faith & church

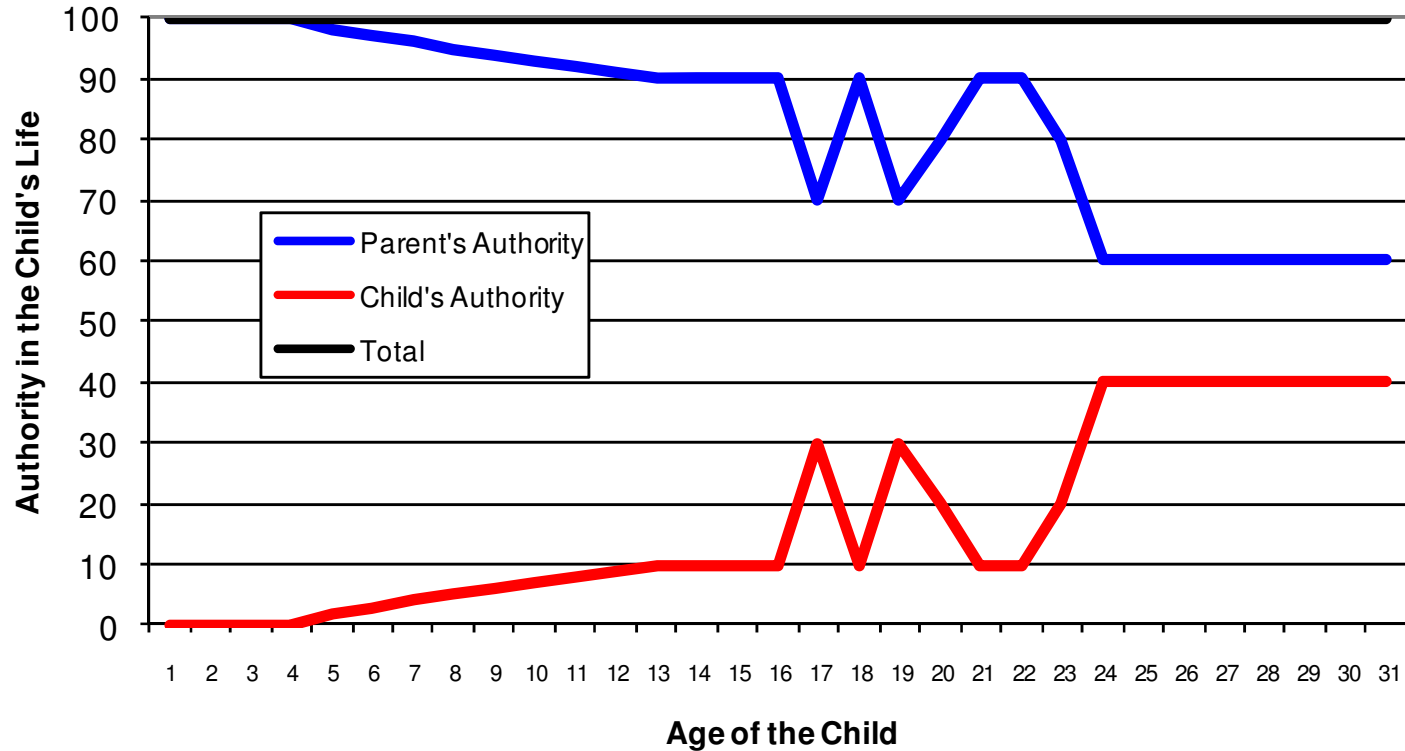
Example: Impact of Family

Stereotyped European American Parent-Child Relationship



Example: Impact of Family

Stereotyped 2nd Generation Asian American Parent-Child Relationship



Example: Impact of Family

- Most European American students: higher intimacy with God, growing in authority of God
 - For example, they are more likely to challenge Scripture on topics like Jesus' uniqueness, evangelism, sexuality, etc. and need longer explanations.
- Most Asian-American students: high sense of the authority of God, growing in intimacy with God.
 - More likely to need counsel about identity, emotions, anger, the character of God and the nature of His love and affection, etc.
 - Asian-American students wrestle more with family pressure, boundaries, shame, ability to be vulnerable about brokenness, etc.

Example: Impact of Family

- Asian-American students simultaneously wrestle both personally and on behalf of their parents, so evangelism and discipleship has to account for parents, even while on campus
 - Buddhism, ancestor worship, and Confucian patterns of family (East and Southeast Asian)
 - Hinduism and Islam (South Asians)
 - For Filipinos and some other Pacific Islanders, exposure to Western culture happened prior to immigration
- European American students tend to wrestle individually and have atheism and secularism in the background; family conflict over belief may be hard but tends to not be a factor in campus ministry

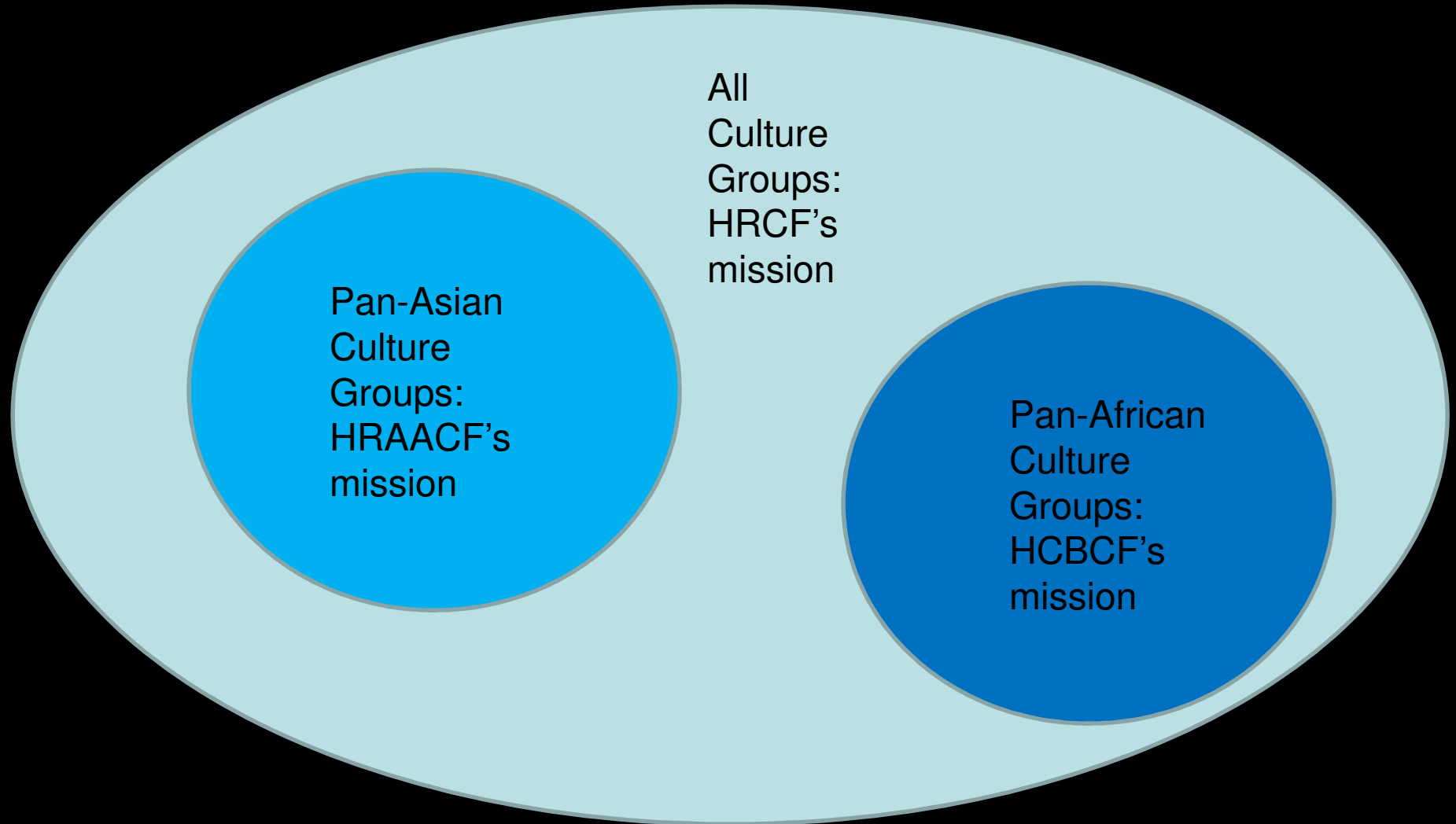
Faith and Ethnic History

- History of Christian impact on ethnic groups is vitally important to understand:
 - Scottish, Swiss, Dutch: Presbyterian
 - English: Anglican, Presbyterian
 - German, Scandinavian: Lutheran
 - Irish, Italian, Polish, French: Catholic
 - Latin American: Catholic, Pentecostalism
 - Black American: Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, SDA
 - Caribbean: Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, SDA, Pentecostal
 - Filipino: Catholic
 - Korean: Catholic, then Presbyterian, Methodist

Faith and Ethnic History

- Euro-American Protestants have unique cultures with particular challenges of their own, some inherited from Europe, some unique to U.S.
 - Individualism
 - Patriotism
 - Suspicion of Roman Catholics
 - Splits among churches over politics (Winthrop vs. Williams), then slavery, then science, then Scripture, resulting in 'liberal' mainline and 'conservative' evangelical denominations
 - Culture wars
 - Tendency to use 'race' as a socio-political construct for identity, as opposed to the biblical category of 'ethnicity'
 - Tendency to not see one's own culture(s)
 - Etc.

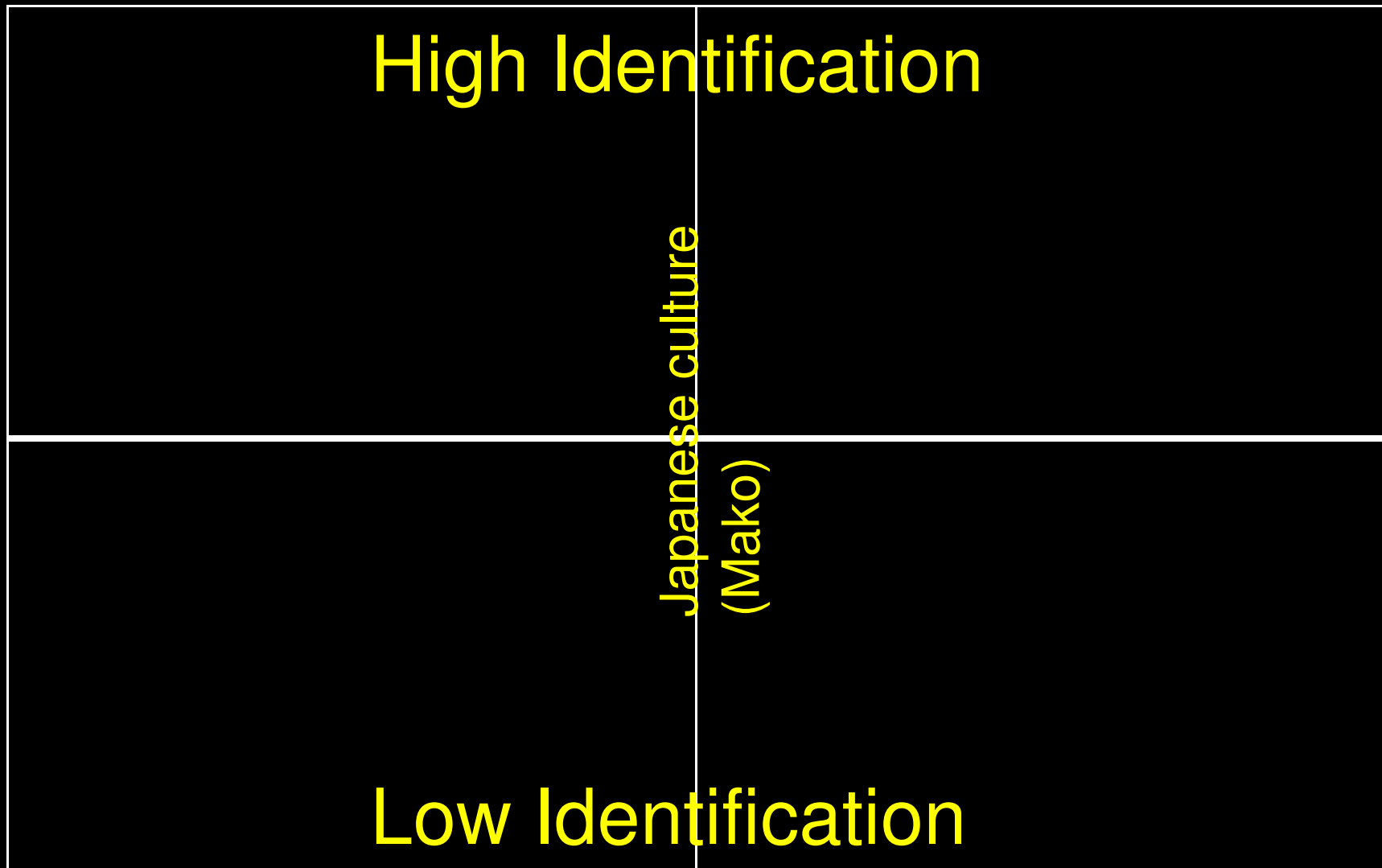
Loving and Reaching Harvard



The Intersection of Two Cultures

Japanese culture
(Mako)

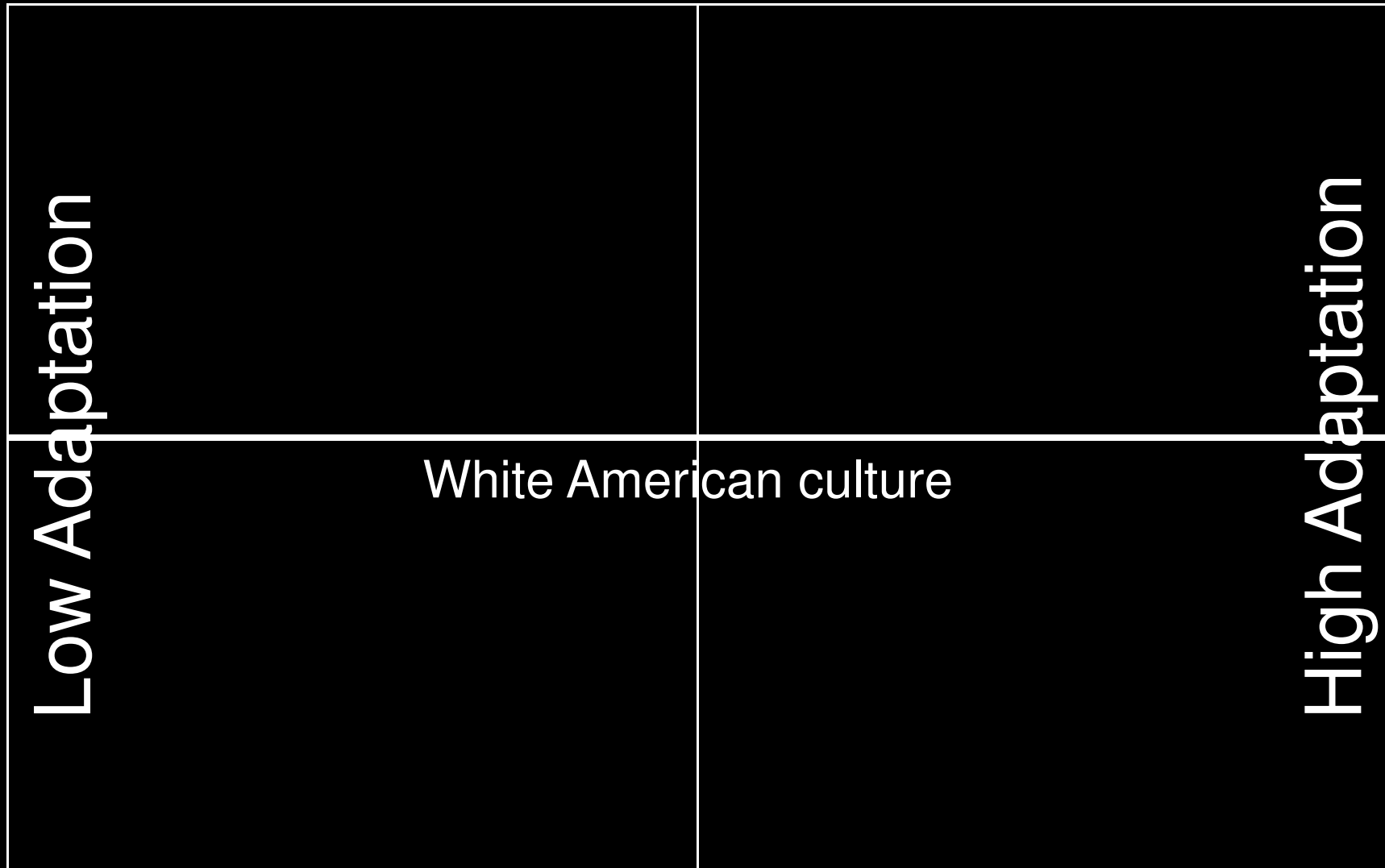
The Intersection of Two Cultures



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	White American culture

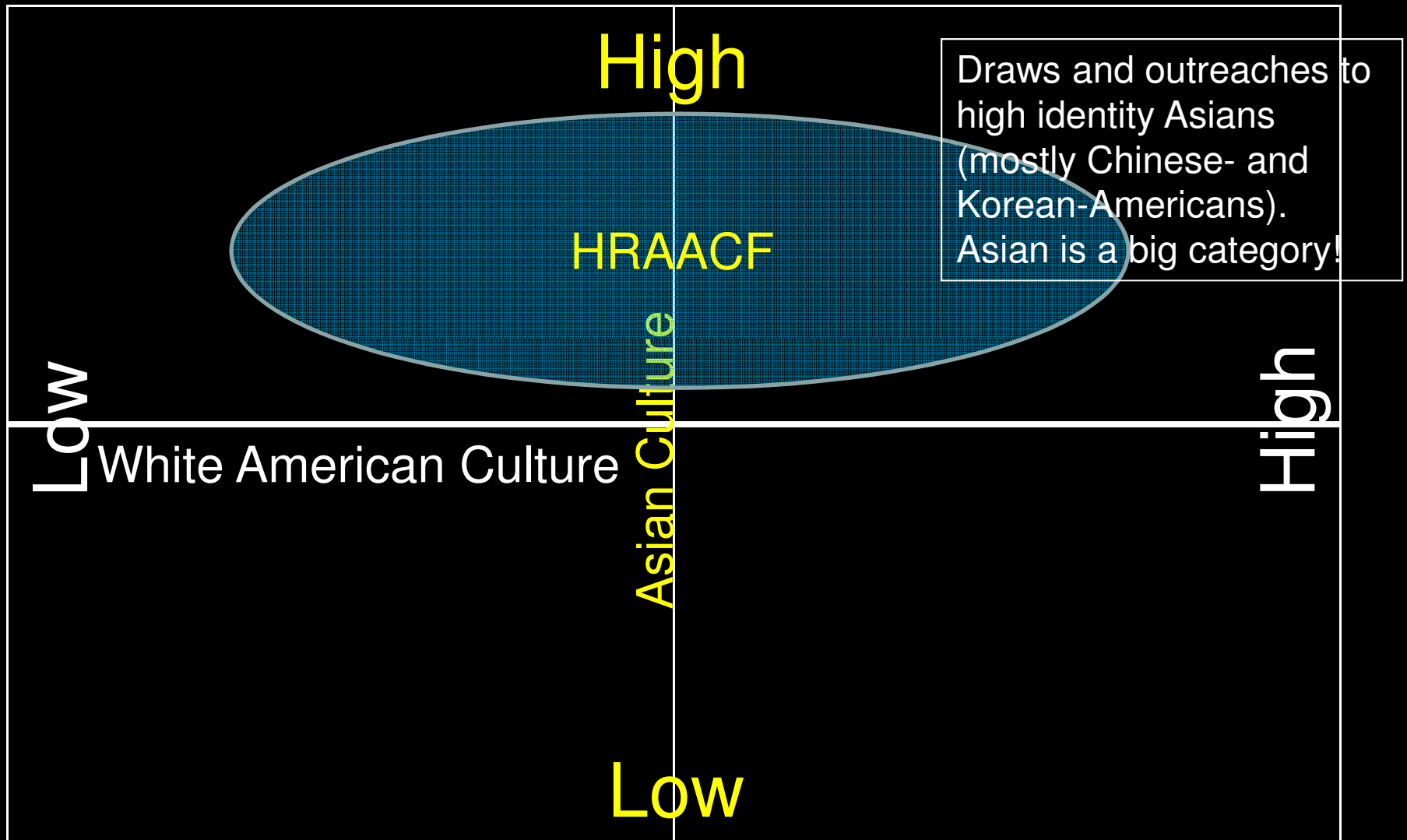
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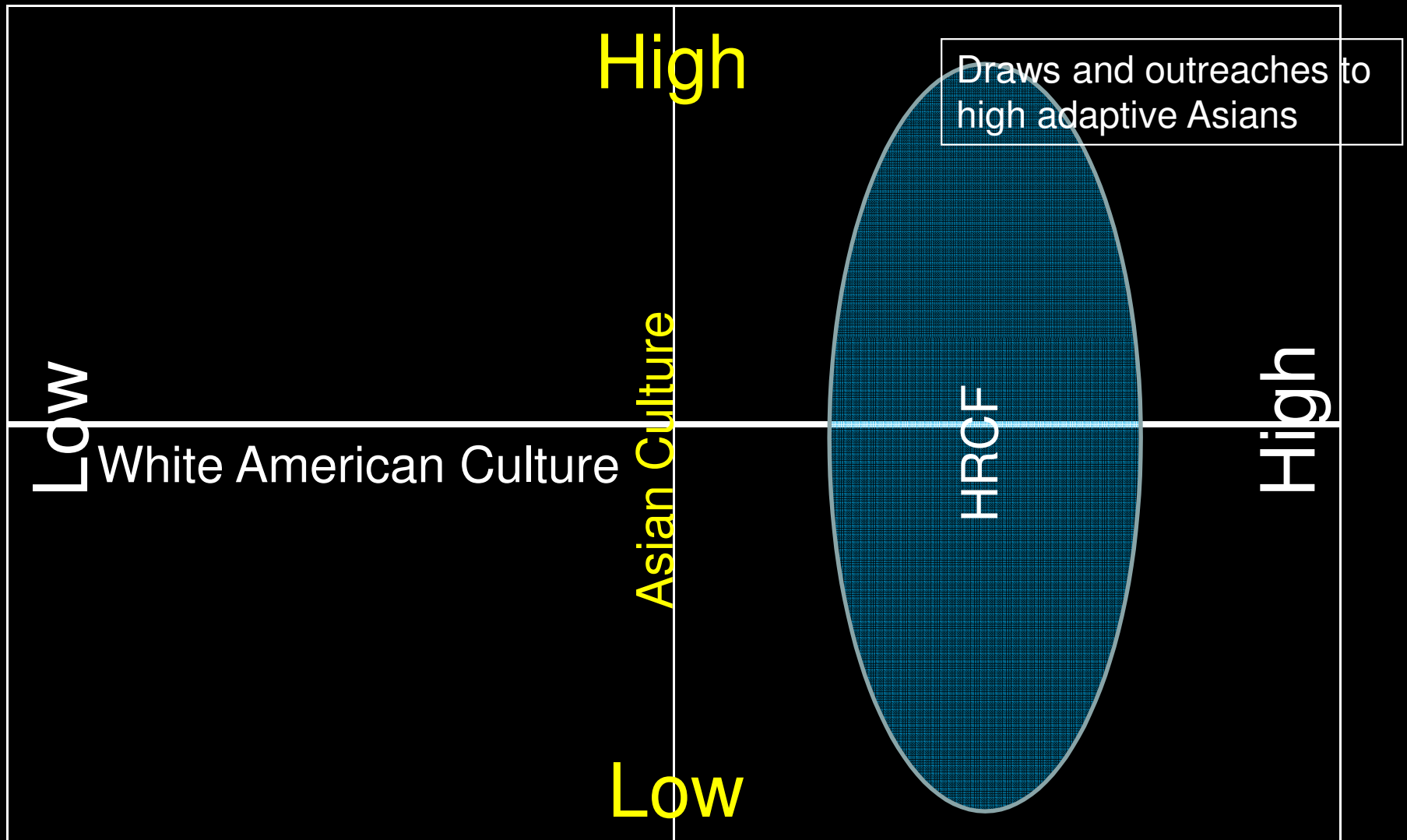
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Low Adaptation	High Identification
High Adaptation	Low Identification

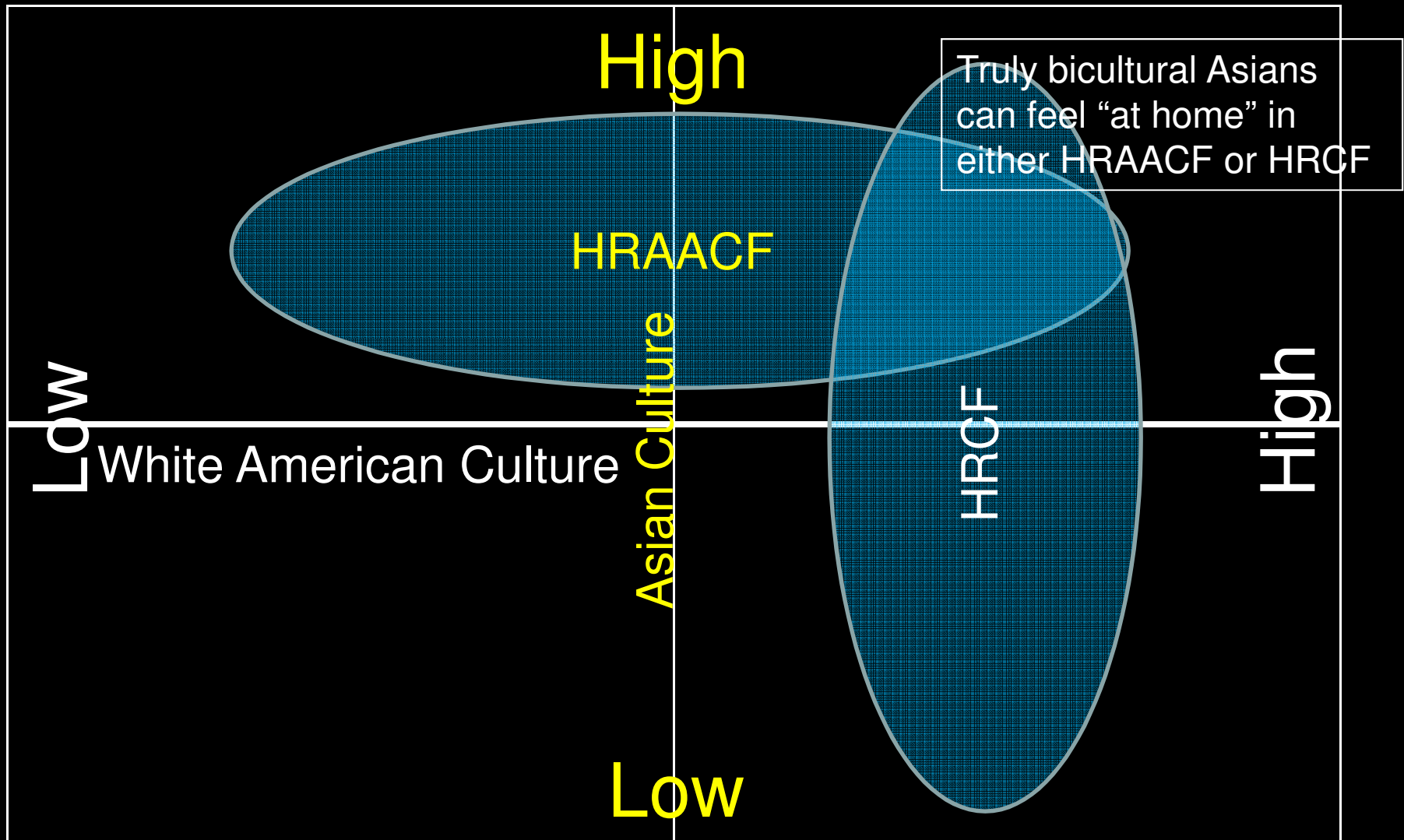
Example: Asians and 2 fellowships



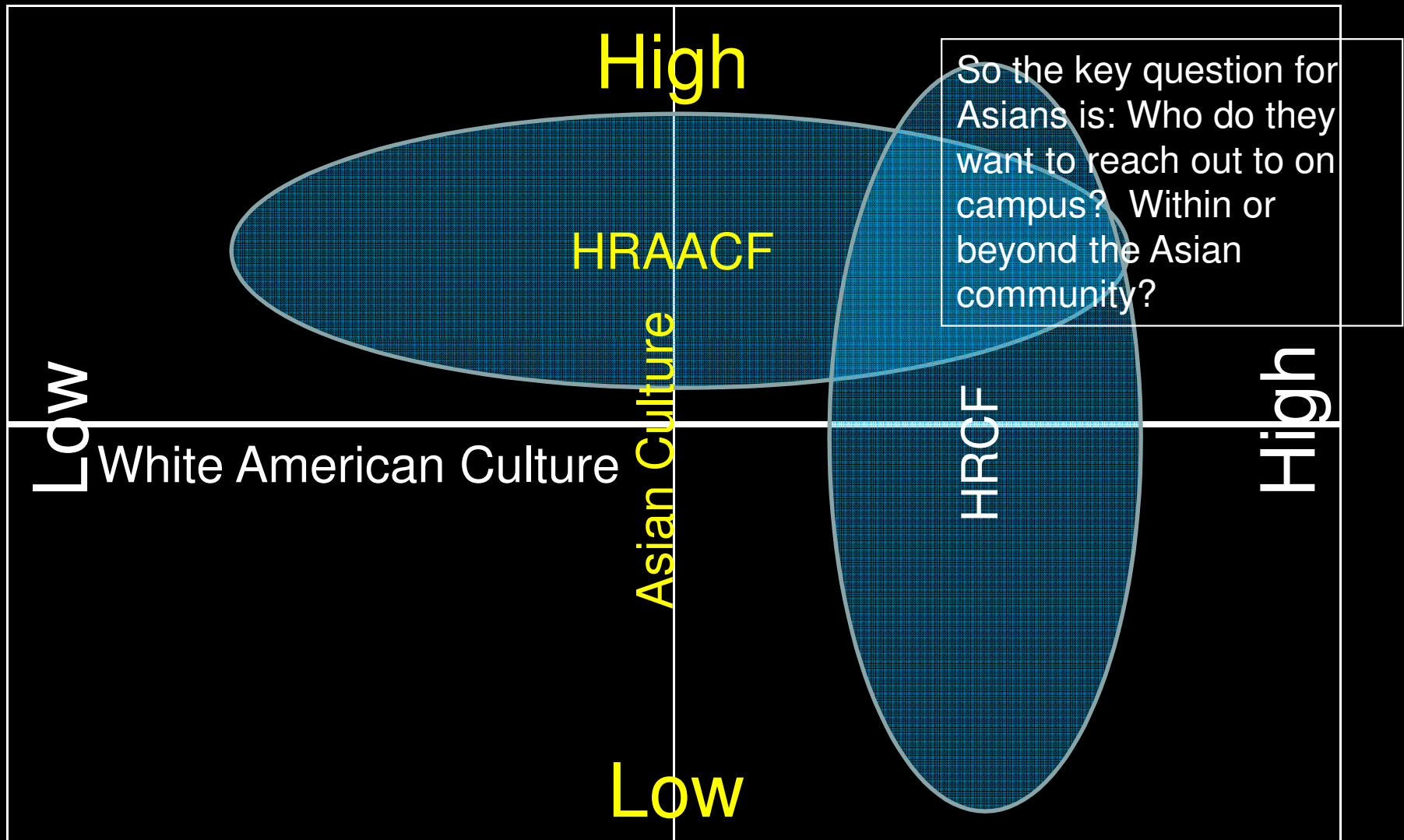
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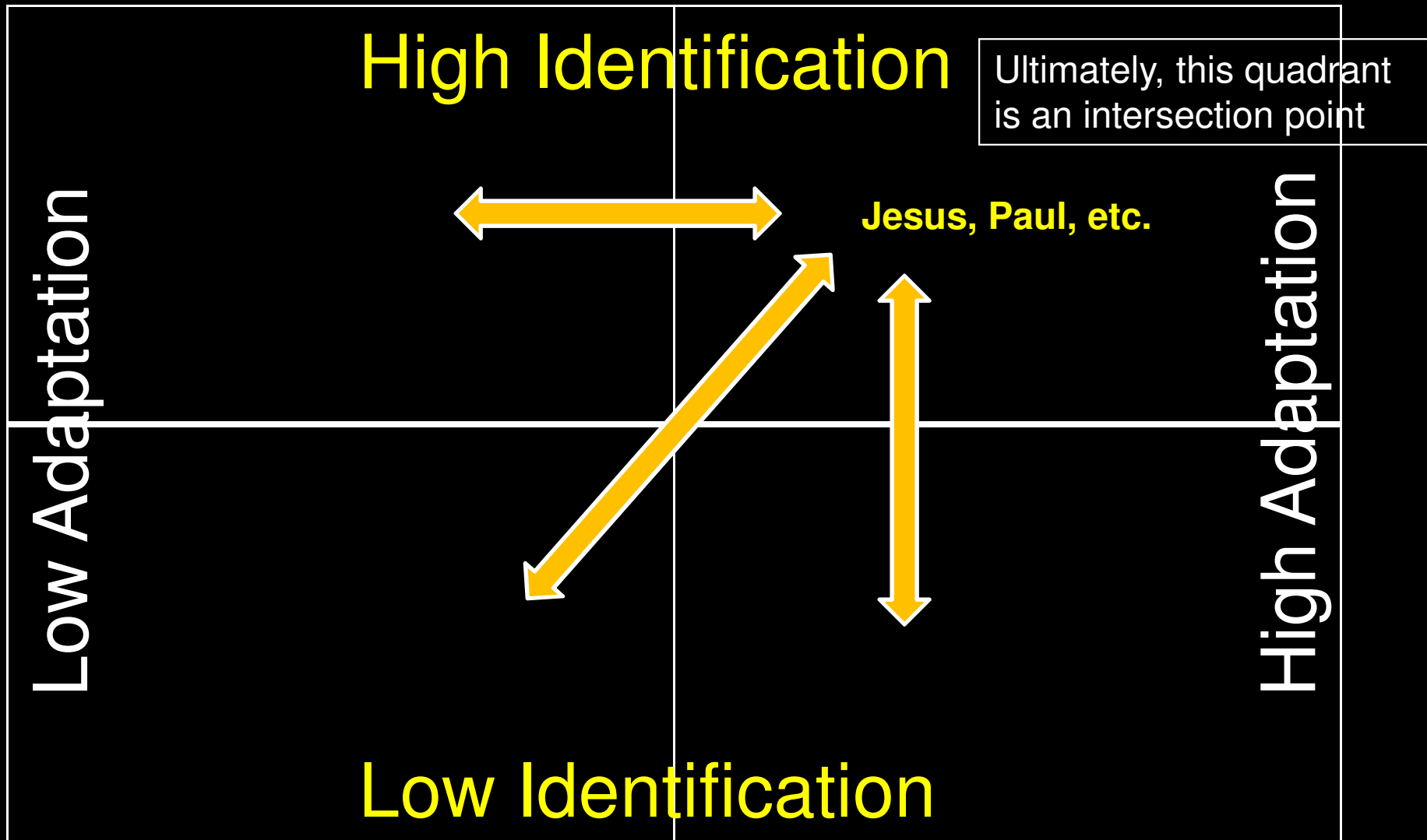
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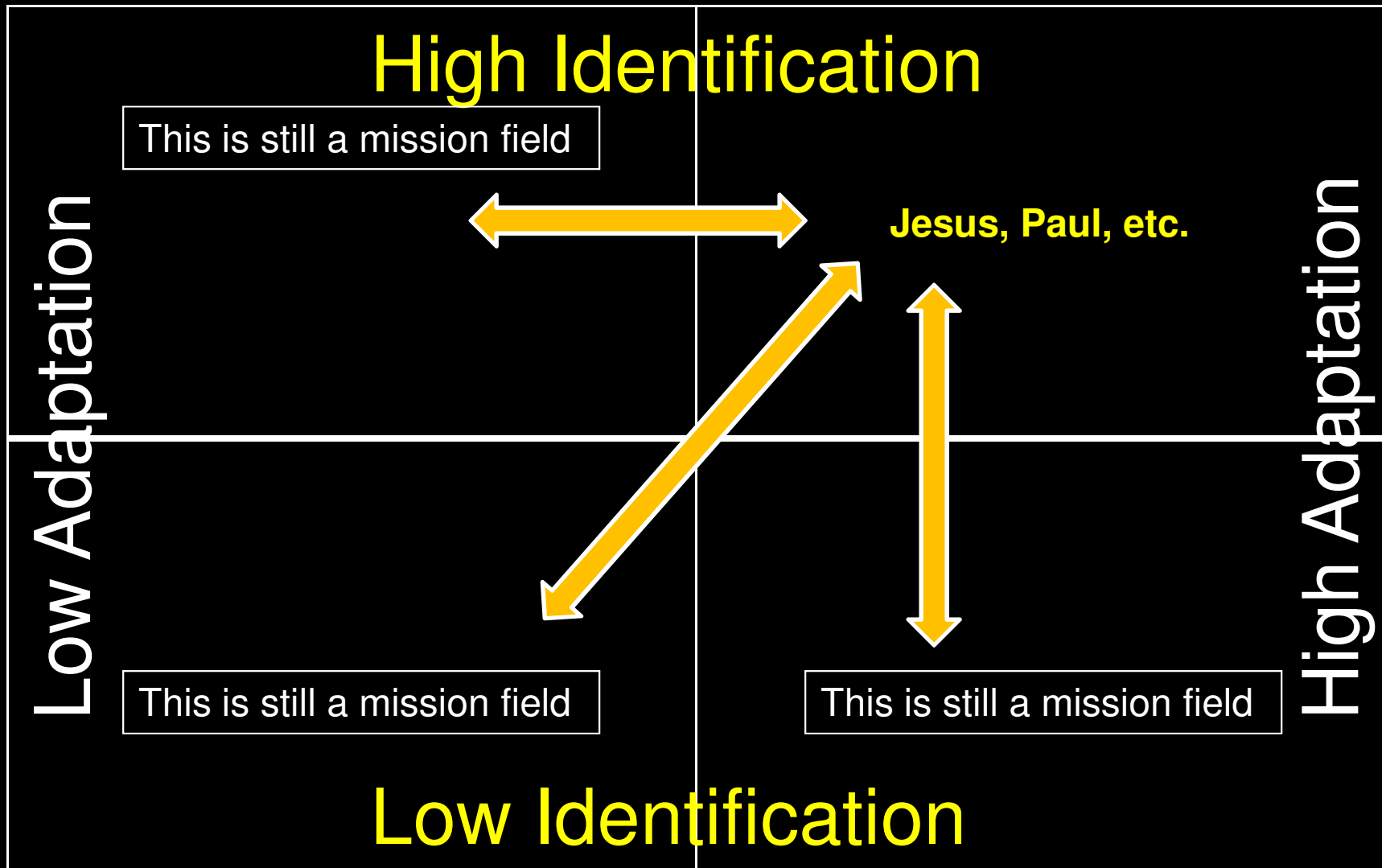
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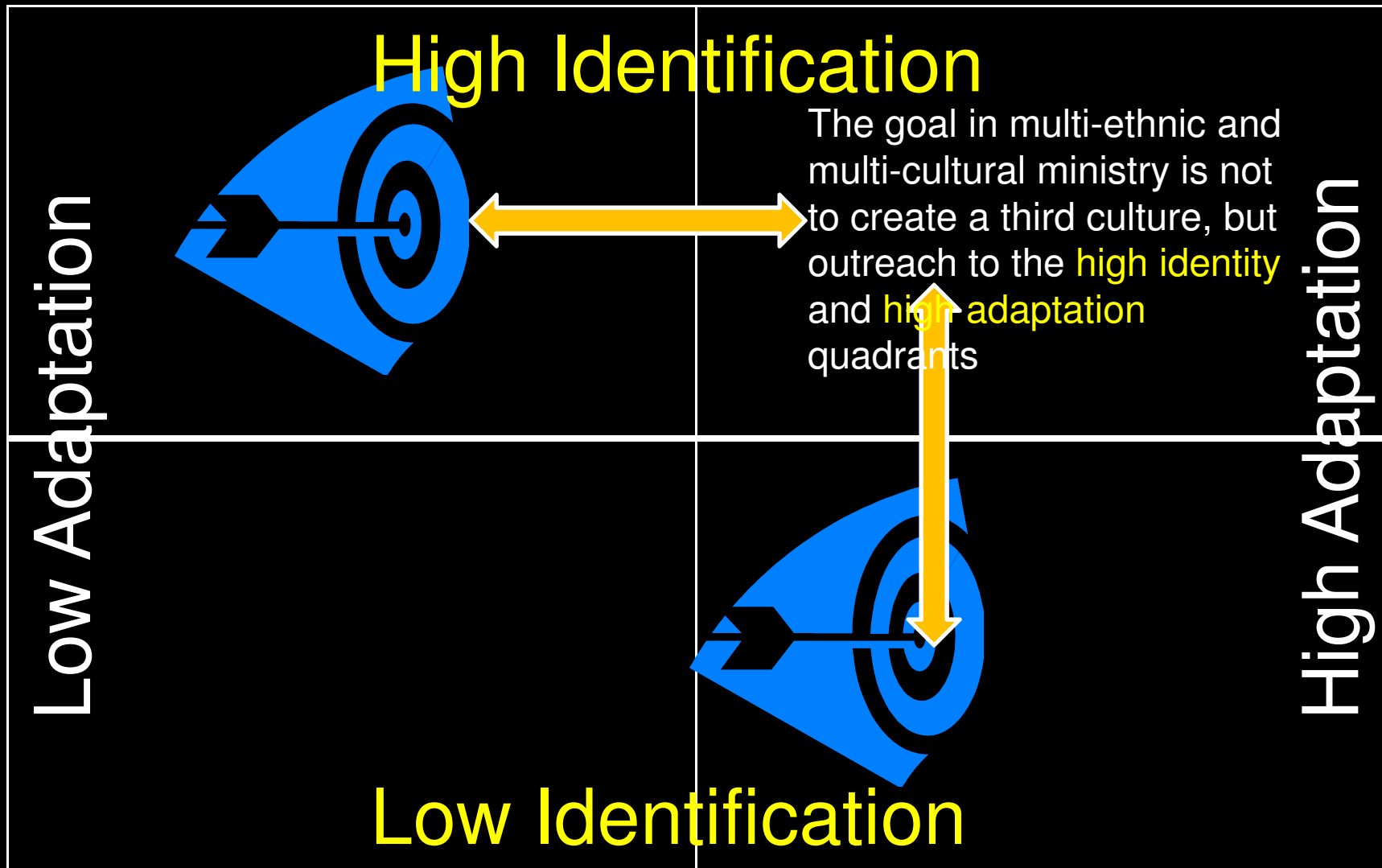
Our Development in Light of Jesus' Mission



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Outreach in a Multi-Cultural Fellowship



Our Context: The Individual

- Not just two cultures, but *many!*
- Each person's development on ethnic and cultural issues is varied in scope and pace
- Some people may be growing in their own culture, and this is valuable (ethnicity does not necessarily equal culture)
- Personally, immersion in one culture at a time has been incredibly helpful, perhaps irreplaceable
 - My story: East Asian-American college fellowship and mentors, mostly White church and mentors during that period and beyond, Mexican immigrant community from 1994 – 1999, diverse Black community from 2000 – present.

Our Context: The Fellowships

- God redeems cultures, not individuals
 - More space to express, grow, welcome, shine
 - More of the love of Jesus: God speaking in their heart language (Acts 2), honoring aspects of human language and culture (Rev.5:9).
 - AACF and BCF dedicate their time to more deeply exploring issues that arise from within the Asian and Black communities.
 - HRCF draws from what we learn in Asian and Black contexts, and strives to stretch out further to engage the whole campus with the Gospel of Jesus.

Our Context: The Fellowships

- Each fellowship is actually **multi-ethnic**
- Just as each person has a **cultural range**, each fellowship does too
- **Someone** in each fellowship is experiencing more cultural disconnection than others; we seek to know that and be sensitive to that

Responding to the Immediate Question

- Why do we have HRCF, HRAACF, and HRBCF?
- Theology of culture
 - God wants to preserve/redeem aspects of culture
 - Leadership: different strengths and qualities
 - Discipleship: different needs
 - Outreach: different opportunities
 - Articulation: we must articulate our own cultures
 - Gender: women do better in multi-cultural settings
- Understanding of unity
 - Centered around Jesus
 - Relational, not primarily organizational
 - Best expressed through outward partnership (evangelism, social justice, service)