

# FIGHT / FLIGHT / YIELD / ENGAGE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- If your country were likened to a car, then the role of Christians in your country would best be likened to ...?
- Party example:



## 2. FOUR APPROACHES

- 3 less helpful approaches that Christians can follow in terms of their interaction with people and culture: FIGHT, FLIGHT and YIELD. 4th better approach: ENGAGE.
- There is a place for FIGHT, FLIGHT and YIELD. But these shouldn't characterise us, they shouldn't be our dominant mindset. They should be the exception, not the rule.

### 2.1 YIELD

- Going along with the flow, path of least resistance, doing like everybody else does.
- Highly conformed, poorly transformed (Rom. 12.2).
- Not thinking about the implications of our faith to every part of life.
- Little practical outworking of the faith that is professed.
- Generally not a conscious decision, more of a passive thing, "just happens".



### 2.2 FLIGHT

- Withdrawal. Retreat into our Christian subculture. The world is bad, avoid it.
- Privatisation of faith:
  - Faith is just a personal thing, but it plays no role in the public square.
  - Faith becomes privately engaging, but publicly irrelevant.
- E.g. in SA, Christians are numerically a majority, but culturally marginal.
- Contrast:
  - Contamination by association (Pharisees);
  - Association without contamination (Jesus).



### 2.3 FIGHT

- Default position = anti; default answer = no; default attitude = aggression.
- There is a place for FIGHT. There is a lot of evil in the world. It's right to be angry about it sometimes. Some things are worth fighting for and even dying for.
- But FIGHT is harmful when we are:
  - habitually judgmental;
  - unnecessarily confrontational;
  - more concerned with our comfort zone than with the spread of the gospel;
  - harbouring an attitude that alienates others.



### 2.4 ENGAGE

- ENGAGE is not naïve:
  - It doesn't pretend all is fine,
  - but it also doesn't assume all is lost.
- Fully IN the world and fully NOT OF the world:
  - **In** the world: care, reach out, get involved;
  - **Not of** the world: be positively different, challenge, protect.
- Unique about the Christian faith: Both world-affirming and world-denying.
  - (only world-affirming → YIELD; only world-denying → FIGHT or FLIGHT)
- Speaking the TRUTH (→discernment) in LOVE (→compassion).
- To ENGAGE with others, we need to understand how people think; - their worldview. We won't catch people's attention unless we understand their context & speak a language they will understand.



## 2.5 Summary

<b>YIELD</b>	Salt losing its saltiness
<b>FLIGHT</b>	Lamp under a bowl
<b>FIGHT</b>	Salt to rub into wounds? Light to blind people?
<b>ENGAGE</b>	Salt & Light!

<b>YIELD</b>	darkness absorber
<b>FLIGHT</b>	darkness avoider
<b>FIGHT</b>	darkness basher
<b>ENGAGE</b>	light!

## 3. FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

*"Imagine you who are Christians would go out into the city and ask any 10 people this question: 'If you would become a Christian today, do you think your life would become larger, fuller, richer, more involved with the people and circumstances around you? Or do you think your life would be smaller, narrower, more withdrawn, less involved with the people around you?' What do you think their answer would be? Jesus said he came to give us abundant life, not tidy life. We are to be the salt of the earth, not of heaven. We are to be the light of the world, not of the sky. We are not supposed to gather together to shine on each other, but go out into the world to shine in the darkness and flavour and preserve the rotting culture around us. Most people think the Christian life is a smaller life. Where did they get that idea? Why did we teach it to them?" (Ellis Potter)*