

INERTIA?

The Bible commands Christians to honor God “with all of our mind” (Mark 12:30). I suggest, however, that a profound inertia hinders many in Argentina from obeying this demand. Inertia is “a tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged” or “a lack of activity especially when movement is needed.” Mental activity is desperately needed, but many Christians are unable or unwilling to embrace intellectual discipleship or to integrate faith and ideas according to the biblical worldview.

The inevitable result is the status quo, marginalization of the church, aversion to risk and entrepreneurialism, and worst of all, the restriction of evangelical Christianity to private emotionalism and cultural irrelevance. The evangelical church in Buenos Aires, by and large, has little impact upon the educated or elite, the university community, and the cultural gatekeepers. Many believers have ceded worldview dominion, popular culture, and public policy to secular power brokers.

Sadly, our intellectual sluggishness affects every aspect of Christian life and practice. It is “deliberate ignorance,” according to the influential theologian, John Frame. Why? Because the hegemony of the secular worldview fosters an anti-intellectual outlook that severely restricts faith and practice to the private, subjective, and **behaviorial** realms. As a result, the biblical worldview is neither intellectually plausible nor existentially credible. And, of course, God is not honored with our minds and His glory is not displayed in our **ideas**. Evangelical Christians are complicit and culpable in this dilemma.

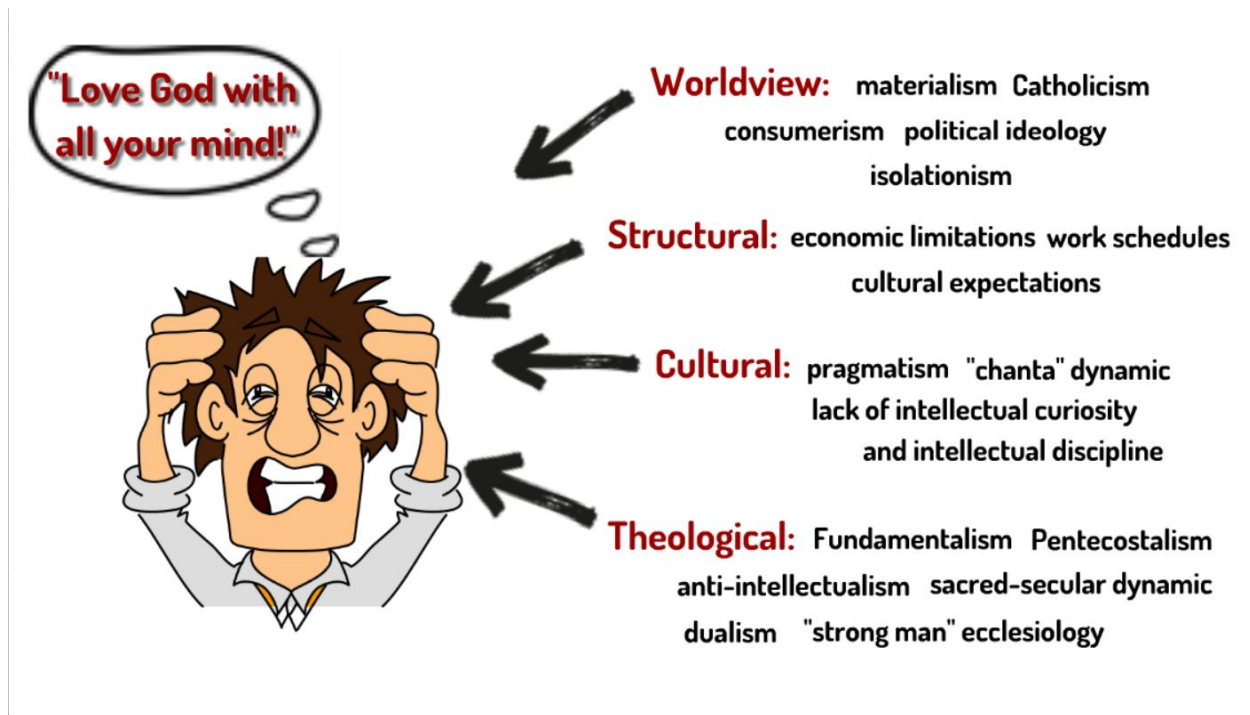
When we retreat from the world of ideas and theoretical analysis, how can we discern, for example, the relationship between faith and philosophy, conflicting truth claims and alternative worldviews, faith and science, political ideology and social advocacy, psychology and counseling, business and economics, education, the arts, and so forth?

Frame declares that Christians have a God-given “stewardship of the mind and intellect.” He wrote:

It is remarkable that Christians so readily identify the lordship of Christ in matters of worship, salvation, and ethics, but not in thinking. But...God in Scripture over and over demands obedience of his people in matters of wisdom, thinking, knowledge, understanding, and so forth. (John Frame, "A History of Western Philosophy and Theology," p. 5)

Based upon my experience and observation in Buenos Aires, as well as my research about Argentina (though limited), I suspect this inertia is produced by an interlocking web of ideas and structures that theologians call a “prison of disobedience” or “domination system.” These refer to the corrosive and unhealthy **cultural**-ethical-intellectual-spiritual environment in which we live, i.e. worldviews. These are the prevailing anti-biblical belief systems, what Jesus calls a “strong man” (Matt 12:29) and Paul calls “strongholds” (“arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God” [2Cor 10:4-5]) and “the cosmic powers over this present darkness,” which are opposed to Christ and the church (Eph 6:12).

To illustrate this “domination system” I depict below the general ideas and structures that hinder intellectual discipleship in Argentina. Clearly, my list is not exhaustive, nor is each dimension equally pervasive or influential. But together, I submit, they constitute a faith-destroying and irrelevance-producing “prison of disobedience,” what might be called “fortress Argentina”:



So, what should we do now? How can we respond?

We should ask a few questions:

Is there a "Fortress Argentina," "prison of disobedience," "domination system" or "strong man" that hinders the Gospel and limits the evangelical church?

Is the depiction in this blog accurate -- inertia? Why or why not?

Are evangelical Christians complicit and culpable in the "domination system"? If so, how and why?

What does it mean to "love God with all the mind" in Argentina today, especially among the educated and elite classes, as well as in the university setting?

What should be the principles and procedures to correct the situation?