

## Who Put the C in the C-E-NI?

There has been much misrepresentation in some circles, perhaps unintentional, concerning what CENI (or CEI) actually is. CENI is the axiomatic method of reasoning, communication through commands, examples, and deductions (necessary inferences).

1. Commands are not just "Thou shalt do this" commands but direct statements. (cf. Zeph. 2:3) Examples are indirect statements. We know that God wanted something to do because he gave us an example of its being done. Asking or begging carries the same logical weight as commanding. Do you really need a "Thou shalt do this" if God says "Please do this"?

2. Examples that are negative, such as Israel refusing to take Canaan land in Numbers, are those which are obviously unapproved since they describe behavior not to be imitated. (cf. 1 Cor. 10:5-6) The reason why an example is "approved" is because God approved it, not man. Ac. 20:7 is an example of the church gathering to fulfill the previous command to remember Christ in the Lord's Supper. We have an example of the church doing this on Sunday. We do not have an example of the church doing this on Monday-Saturday. The one example, Sunday, is approved, the others may be, but God did not reveal that part to us. We can only go on what is clear, what he has revealed, not what he has not revealed.

3. Necessary Inferences, also known as deductions, are based on premises. These are direct statements of truth or statements which fairly represent approved examples. Deduction is nothing more than accepting the intersection of all revealed truths. If these things be true, then there is a conclusion that must also be true. Each deduction (or deductive conclusion) must be tested against the premises to verify that it is true. Each premise must be tested as well. Deduction is used in your personal life: should you not apply it consistently in your spiritual understanding of God's will? Deduction is not based on silence, what has not been revealed. Deduction is based on what has been revealed. The thing that makes the deductive inference necessary is the tested relationship between the premises and the conclusion. Inductive inferences may be true, to a weak or strong probability, but tested and verified deductive inferences (necessary ones) are certainly true. (cf. Isa. 28:13)

In all of this, historical, literary and grammatical context is important. CENI is not about creating law or tradition, but understanding God's will as communicated through the medium of scripture to us. The abuse of the CENI label is meant to argue against the authority of God's communication method and medium. Yes, certain things remain a mystery to us, (Deut. 29:29), but CENI is about understanding what God has revealed to us. CENI is a valid tool to interpret scripture and understand truth.