

## Luther Used CENI Before Bacon Invented It?

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by Sam Stinson

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The term “**CENI**” is an abbreviation used in *derision* of the biblical way one may establish Bible authority: **C** - command, **E**- example, and **NI** -necessary inference. The argument set forth by some of our **most liberal** institutional brethren is that this method of establishing Bible authority is a modern-day invention of “churches of Christ” and has nothing to do with true authority. Brother Stinson answers their weak argument in the following article. We appreciate his efforts, and offer it to you for your education and awareness. As he points out, even Martin Luther, in protesting a Roman Catholic practice, referred to these three avenues!

*“For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” (Matthew 8:9, **ESV**)*

Let’s recall that certain soldier under authority who treated Jesus’s authority with respect. Should Christians respect those words of Jesus, His apostles, and the prophets who came before by seeking authorized doctrine, practice, and faith as the soldier identified authority? Some have argued such as this:

“Seeking authority through commands, examples, and deductions (**CENI**) is ‘Church of Christ authority,’ not scriptural authority!” and “**CENI** is the logic of Sir Bacon, not Lord Jesus or Apostle Paul!”

Consider the peculiar religious practice of praying to saints and angels that some in the religious world teach. This is praying to deceased saints, or even calling upon heavenly angels, to intercede with God on behalf of Christians living in the flesh. Now, is this practice of sound doctrine? (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).

In, his writing “**An Open Letter On Translating**,” Martin Luther wrote, “And again, you know that there is not a single passage from God demanding us to call upon either saints or angels to intercede for us, and that there is no example of such in the Scriptures. One finds that the beloved angels spoke with the fathers and the prophets, but that none of them had ever been asked to intercede for them. Why, even Jacob the patriarch did not ask the angel with whom he wrestled for any intercession. Instead, he only took from him a blessing. In fact, one finds the very opposite in revelation as the angel will not allow itself to be worshipped by John. [Rev. 22] So the worship of saints shows itself as nothing but human nonsense, our own invention separated from the word of God and the Scriptures.”

Notice that Luther sought to justify a religious practice by scripture, and it was not possible. He found no **command** (“single passage” or direct statement), **approved scriptural example** (“example of such in the Scriptures”), or place where such doctrine was **demand**ed (“demanding us to” perform the necessary practice). Notice how Luther uses “the logic of Sir Bacon” with scripture, yet Luther died in 1546, and Bacon was born in 1561! Did Luther have a time machine to use this “Church of Christ authority”?

Of course, Luther is not our authority: Jesus is our authority. The word Jesus spoke, He sent through his messengers and it was recorded in Scripture (Rom. 10:17). Faith comes from the report, and the report comes from Christ. Let us be as that certain soldier who, by faith, looks to his master when the master speaks. Hearing the report: “Do this” and he does it, by faith. Are we men and women under authority of Jesus or not? Let our good works follow our good faith, in good faith, by God’s grace.

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