

## **Theological Conviviality in “The Religious Banquet”: The Case for Reconciliation between Erasmus and Luther**

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The relationship between the two well-known theologians, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther, has been thoroughly discussed over the centuries, especially concerning their debate over free will. Although this debate would eventually lead to a parting of the ways, there was a time during the Reformation when Erasmus and Luther worked to bring about reconciliation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Protestants. As a humanist, Erasmus communicated his religious ideas and opinions through a variety of texts and discourses. His dialogue, "The Religious Banquet," is an unexpectedly useful prism through which to view Erasmus' commentaries on the Church. The banquet topos itself reflects the convivial desire to unite opposing groups in the hope of avoiding discord and hostile confrontation. Throughout "The Religious Banquet," Erasmus alludes to disputes that Luther had with the Church, while at the same time issuing warnings to his audience – and perhaps implicitly to Luther – about the dangerous consequences that these theological arguments might bring about. Although he never directly mentions Luther in this work, Erasmus' choice of the banquet genre suggests that he may have been trying to extend the proverbial olive branch in what was quickly becoming a heated theological debate.

### *Information about the Author:*

Kathleen Borchers is a senior international service and French double major. She wrote a senior dissertation in French on this topic last semester, and because she's also seeking a minor in theology and is a Lutheran deaconess student, she became interested in further exploring the debate between Luther and Erasmus through the lens of one of Erasmus' works. She would like to work abroad doing mission work, teaching, and doing Bible translation after graduation.

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