**“Truth” and Christian Unity**

Some Catholic critics, including Cardinal Ratzinger, dismissed *Unity of the Churches* at the time of its publication as an ill-judged attempt to promote Christian unity at the expense of Christian truth. For the critics, the Rahner-Fries proposal denied reality in its assertion, particularly in *Thesis 2*, that unity did not require ultimate resolution of the conflicting claims to truth expressed in the doctrines of the divided churches. This presentation takes up that critique.

The first part of the presentation locates *Thesis 2* in the context of the wider corpus of Rahner’s post-Vatican II writings on ecumenism. It seeks to identify in those works the roots of his approach in *Unity of the Churches*.

The second part of the presentation will focus on Rahner’s insistence that the context of the churches in the late twentieth century, specifically the church’s situation in the world of secularism and pluralism, called for new responses from the churches. In Rahner’s assessment, those new responses needed to include a shift in emphasis away from the doctrinal dispute that had their origins in the Reformation. The question underpinning this part of the presentation is whether the weight that Rahner gave to context as a determining factor in ecumenism was a denial of truth or a prophetic insight, challenging the churches to a more authentic embodiment of their faith.

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