

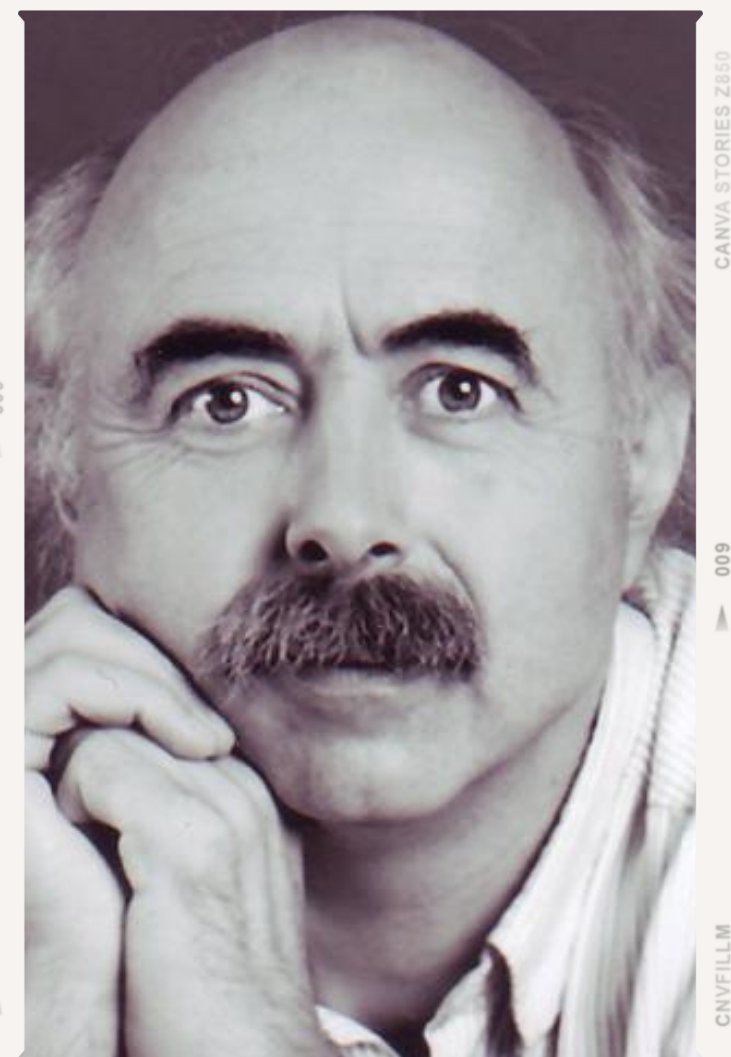
SPECIAL LECTURE BY **HELMUT ZANDER**

## HOW TO GLOBALIZE A QUINTESSENTIALLY GERMAN PRACTICE? Anthroposophy in the Vortex of Globalization

Anthroposophy is a product of the esoteric fever around 1900 and one of the few groups which still exist as institutions today. Its founder, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), claimed that a supernatural world could be recognized with certainty, as in the natural sciences. Central ideas came from the Theosophy of Blavatsky and Olcott, but Steiner connected, hybridized and framed this Theosophy with "German" ideas. More important are the fields of practice that Steiner conceived, especially after World War I: the concept of an alternative society, Waldorf education, anthroposophical medicine and agriculture, and a church inspired by him. Since the last third of the 20th century, anthroposophy has globalized at a rapid, sometimes dizzying pace. One example: Today we have 256 schools in Germany, more than 1,200 schools worldwide and almost 2,000 Waldorf kindergartens. This inevitably involves transformation processes that are almost completely unexplored. I present five case studies: Waldorf education (China/USA); agriculture / education of farmers (USA); conflicts with state religious policies (France); concept of "the Christ" (Egypt). I will develop hypotheses – it is too early for theses – on the following questions: Who controls the transformations in this globalization process? How do cultural contexts change anthroposophical practices and ideas? In more detail: What happens to Steiner's German-influenced ideas? What is the minimal consensus of a pluralized Anthroposophy? The research approach is limited, because not only scientific literature is lacking, but also analyses from an anthroposophical perspective. The open source-material will be evaluated through content analysis.

### HELMUT ZANDER (Université de Fribourg)

Helmut Zander (born July 13, 1957, in Oberaußem) is a German historian and Catholic theologian. He was best known for his scientific criticism of anthroposophy. Zander studied history, political science, and theology. With a critical work on the history of anthroposophy and theosophy in Germany, he settled in at the Humboldt University in Berlin in 2002, where he taught as a private lecturer in modern and contemporary history and is a fellow at the International College for Research in the Humanities at the Ruhr University Bochum. Since 2011, he has been teaching as a professor of comparative religious history at the Theological Faculty of the University of Freiburg. The focus of his research is European religious history and current developments in anthroposophy. He has been a member of the board of the Swiss Society for Religious Studies since 2014.



WEDNESDAY

19.06.2024

11.15 a.m – 12.45 p.m

Room 000.235, Seminar Room, Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen

Link for Virtual Attendance: <https://fau.zoom.us/j/63672581746>.



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