



Oskar E. Bernhardt and the Grail Movement

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Introduction

Oskar Ernst Bernhardt (1875–1941) was a German businessman and author. In the early 1920s, a group that later became known as the Grail Movement (Gralsbewegung) formed around him, based on his lectures. Maria Freyer (1887–1957), his second wife (from 1924), worked alongside him as a healer, and brought three children from her first marriage into her union with Bernhardt. In 1928, Bernhardt's family bought a house in the Austrian Vomperberg in the Tyrolean Alps and founded a 'Grail Settlement'. Bernhardt published a compendium of his lectures in 1931, under the pseudonym Abdruschin (later Abd-ru-shin), in his book *In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message by Abdruschin—Great Edition (Im Lichte der Wahrheit: Gralsbotschaft von Abdruschin—Grosse Aufgabe)*. The publication became revered as a canonical text by his followers. In it, Bernhardt interprets the world through the lens of an original teaching, inspired by Western Esotericism and influenced by German Neo-Romanticism. Thanks to the book's translations, the movement would spread from Germany and Switzerland to mainly Brazil, Czechoslovakia, and France, although in Bernhardt's lifetime it never reached more than a few thousand people. In the 1930s, the movement was strongly influenced by anticipation of the Last Judgment and the onset of the Millennium. It was envisaged that the eschatological process was to be led by Abd-ru-shin as the Son of Man Imanuel and the German nation, which had been formed for millennia so that the Son of Man could be born into it. Abd-ru-shin believed the decisive 'Cosmic Turning Point' ('Weltenwende') had come in 1929. From 1936 onwards, the movement showed clear signs of millennial disillusionment. It fell apart ideologically and structurally in 1938; shortly after Austria had been annexed by Germany, Abd-ru-shin was arrested, the Grail Settlement was occupied, and the Grail Movement was officially disbanded in the German-occupied European territories. Bernhardt died in Kipsdorf, Germany, where he had been ordered to live by the authorities.

After the end of World War II, Maria Bernhardt reclaimed her Vomperberg assets and gradually revived the Grail Settlement and the local congregations (called Grail Circles) in Germany and other countries. A major success of this period was a new edition of *In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message*, which was published with significant modifications in three volumes in 1949–1950. The edition was called the *Final Authorized Edition (Ausgabe letzter Hand)*. Before her death, Maria Bernhardt appointed her son Alexander Freyer (1911–68) the leader of the international Grail Movement. At this time, he took the name Bernhardt. After his death, the movement was led by Irmgard Freyer (1908–90), who had taken the name Bernhardt during

the war and who was known as 'Miss Irmingard' in the movement. In 1944 she adopted a child and named her Marga (b. 1943). As a young woman, Marga gave birth to a daughter, naming her Claudia-Maria (1961–99). At the end of her life, Irmingard Bernhardt adopted her granddaughter as her daughter and appointed Claudia-Maria's husband, Siegfried Holzapfel (b. 1955), to be her successor in the Grail Movement leadership. Holzapfel took his wife's name, Bernhardt. As Siegfried Bernhardt took up the leadership of the movement, there were a number of conflicts, which escalated into a schism in 1999. The movement split into two parts, with Siegfried Bernhardt representing the smaller one. Herbert Vollmann (1903–99), the husband of Elisabeth Freyer (1912–2002), Maria Bernhardt's youngest child, was active in the other part. After Herbert Vollmann's death, this branch came to be represented by a Disciple, Jürgen Sprick.

According to the stronger of the Grail Movement's branches (led by Sprick), *In the Light of Truth* has been translated into twenty-three languages and it is now (in 2020) available in more than ninety countries (see Sprick 2009; *Stiftung Gralsbotschaft*). Grail circles are apparently active in over forty countries. The Grail Movement has not made the number of its sealed followers public; current estimates put it at approximately forty thousand across both branches.

Oskar E. Bernhardt

Oskar E. Bernhardt was born to an innkeeper's family in Bischofswerda, Saxony. He graduated from business school and in 1897 started his own business and got married. However, both his marriage and his business venture were plagued with problems, and they ended with him facing prosecution: his mother-in-law accused him of fraud and several years later similar accusations were made in another case by his former business partners. He spent thirteen months in prison. From the beginning of the twentieth century, he started spending more and more time travelling and writing. From 1910 onwards, his plays started becoming popular with the public, and by the time the religious period of his life started, he had published around thirty works of literature.

At the beginning of World War I, Bernhardt was living in London after having separated from his wife and children. Between 1914 and 1919, he was interned on the Isle of Man by British authorities because he was a German citizen. In the internment camp, he found out that his mother had died in 1917 and that his son had fallen in the war in 1918. It was most likely there that he laid the foundations of a new religion and its teachings.

After his return to Germany, a circle of followers started forming around him and in 1921 Bernhardt named this group 'Order: the Grail' ('Orden: der Gral'). A religious experience in April 1923 cemented his belief that he was the Son of Man, tasked with serving as an intermediary between God and humankind, just like Jesus, the Son of God had in the past. Also in 1923, he published the first issue of his religious journal *Grail Papers* (*Gralsblätter*), subtitled *The Collected Lectures of Abdruschin* (*Gesammelte Vorträge von Abdruschin*). The first volume of this journal had seven issues published up to 1926. It only contained lectures and Abdruschin's answers to questions from readers. In 1926, thirty-nine of these lectures and four new texts were collected to form the book *In the Light of Truth: The New Grail Message by Abdruschin*. Bernhardt's pseudonym, Abdruschin was explained in a 1931 lecture as meaning the 'Son of the Holy Spirit' but the interpretation that became prevalent in the 1930s was 'Son of the Light' or 'Servant

of the Light'. Abdruschin was supposed to be the name of Bernhardt's previous incarnation as an Arabic prince in the time of Moses.

During this period, a community consisting of Bernhardt's family and some of his followers from the Order of the Grail was active in the town of Bad Heilbrunn. Maria Bernhardt (as mentioned, Oskar's second wife) was in charge of a private sanatorium as a healer, while Bernhardt himself answered visitors' questions, prepared his lectures, and performed religious services on Sundays. In 1925, for the first time the community celebrated a new holiday based on Bernhardt's teachings: the Festival of the Holy Dove. The Bad Heilbrunn community soon broke up, but the model of Bernhardt's family and some of his followers living together persisted in other settlements. It was fully realized in the Vomperberg Grail Settlement between 1928 and 1938. Apart from the Grail Settlement, local associations of Bernhardt's followers started to form in Germany and abroad from 1932 onwards. An example in Germany was the Natural Philosophy Association of Grail Followers (Naturphilosophischer Verein von Gralsanhänger).

The second series of the *Grail Papers* journal was published in 1926 and 1927 and later also in 1930. This interruption was caused by the founding of a new journal, *The Call (Der Ruf)*, subtitled *Journal for All Progressive Knowledge (Schrift für alles fortschrittliche Wissen)*. Apart from Bernhardt's lectures, *Der Ruf* also published texts by his closest followers. Bernhardt's lectures published in these journals were later used for the revised edition of *In the Light of Truth*, published in 1931 under the full title *In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message by Abdruschin—Great Edition*. The author saw this as the final, closed edition and his followers came to revere it as a sacred, canonical text. It ended with the following message:

Abdruschin has now completed His Message to mankind. In him has arisen the Son of Man sent by God, IMANUEL, the Envoy of God, the Son of Man, whose coming to judge and to save those who have not cut themselves adrift from salvation, was foretold by Jesus the Son of God in corroboration of the prophecies of the prophets of old. (Abdruschin 1931, 567)

The book was complemented by two interpretations: *The Ten Commandments of God (Die zehn Gebote Gottes)* and *The Lord's Prayer (Das Vaterunser)*, which had been published in one volume in 1929.

In the first half of the 1930s, the Vomperberg Grail Settlement quickly grew, and so did the number of Bernhardt's followers in local Grail Circles. The 1931 German version of *In the Light of Truth* was soon translated into Czech (1932), French (1933), English (1934) and Portuguese (1934). At this time, while awaiting the imminent Last Judgment and the Millennium, Bernhardt was writing new lectures and publishing them in individual issues in a publishing house of the same name as his second journal: *The Call (Der Ruf)*. In 1934, he composed an edition of his first fifty-nine lectures, adding two unpublished texts. This gave rise to his book *Reverberations of the Grail Message, Volume 1 (Nachklänge zur Gralsbotschaft von Abdruschin, Band I)*. Bernhardt's other lectures were published by *The Call* publishing house in issues 60–97, but they were never included in a book, since Bernhardt's collaboration with the publishing house ended at the close of 1936. In 1937, Bernhardt founded a new journal, *The Voice (Die Stimme)*, in Switzerland, subtitled *Journal for Strengthening Knowledge and Abilities (Schrift für Erstärkung im Wissen und Können)*. Here, he published his new lectures in twelve issues.

In this period, Bernhardt was already experiencing disillusionment over his followers' lack of loyalty and he

felt attacked by apostates and the hostile surrounding world. In 1936, he was arrested and detained for over three months, which he found hard to bear. The cause of his arrest was suspicion of a so-called foreign currency offence: the authorities presumed he would know that his German compatriots in the Grail Settlement in the Austrian Vomperberg had arranged for German banknotes to be transported across the border. Bernhardt was released in the end, due to insufficient evidence, but the interrogations and house searches took a heavy toll on community life in the Grail Settlement.

The German authorities saw the Grail Movement as a suspicious community and in 1937, the Natural Philosophy Association of Grail Followers was disbanded in Germany. Soon thereafter, right after Austria was annexed by the German Reich in March of 1938, the Grail Settlement on Vomperberg was abolished as well. Bernhardt was detained in Innsbruck, the Bernhardts' assets were confiscated, and the inhabitants had to vacate the settlement within several months.

One of Bernhardt's followers had sufficient political influence to ensure Bernhardt would be allowed to stay at a farmstead in Schlauroth, near the town of Görlitz, in September 1938. His stay was monitored by the authorities and in 1939 he was allowed to move to Kipsdorf in the Ore Mountains. He was called in for questioning several times, but at the beginning of 1941 the judge terminated the investigation. People who were close to Bernhardt (Hellmuth Müller-Schlauroth, Josef Wagner) testified that he had spent the last years of his life disappointed that his expectations for the world had not been fulfilled. He died in December 1941 ('Mein Weg zur heiligen Botschaft').

In 1949–50, the renewed Grail Movement published a revised version of Bernhardt's core book *In the Light of Truth*, in three volumes intended for a wider readership. A fourth volume, *Admonitions (Ermahnungen)*, is only meant for his sealed followers. In 1953, a collection of Bernhardt's smaller journal texts was published in a book titled *Questions and Answers: 1924–1937 (Fragenbeantwortungen: 1924–1937)*. Several of Bernhardt's previously unpublished liturgical texts were collected in 1981, in a small publication titled *Prayers Given to Mankind by Abd-ru-shin (Gebete, den Menschen gegeben von Abd-ru-shin)*.

Core Teachings of the Grail Movement

The Grail Movement's teachings are based around 168 lectures in the canonical book *In the Light of Truth* in the post-war (1949–50) *Final Authorized Edition*. A core concept of their doctrine is radiation: everything, apart from the "unsubstantiated" God, generally called the 'Light', is created by the divine radiation of a life-giving energy, which gradually cools down and becomes denser as it gets further away from the source. The distance from the centre of this radiation thus determines spheres of substance—from spiritual to material. Different beings of creation reside in different spheres. One of these spheres, the 'Sphere of Divine Substantiality', contains the Grail Castle. It also serves as a radiation node that connects God and his Creation. Our known material world is composed of the densest radiation, belonging to the 'gross matter' sphere. Creation is undergoing a development process and it is nearing its end, at which point it will be destroyed and restored. This end is coming in our times.

All of the cosmos is governed by the laws of Creation, meaning God—Light does not have to and cannot interfere. The most important laws are the three 'Primordial Creation Laws'. The first one, the 'Law of Gravitation', applies not only in the material world but also in the spiritual one, meaning the human spirit

can either rise up based on good desires and good thoughts or fall down into denser matter. The 'Law of the Attraction of Homogeneous Species' dictates that atoms in nature are attracted to each other, and so are similar spirits and similar thoughts. That is why Bernhardt's followers are often taught: 'Keep the heart of your thoughts pure, by so doing you will bring peace and be happy!' (Abdruschin 1923, 15.) The last primordial law, the 'Law of Reciprocal Action', states that everything is connected to everything else in this Creation and that every action has inevitable consequences.

Unconscious human spirits are driven out of one of the immaterial spheres, the 'Spiritual Sphere', in order to become conscious of themselves and to return to higher spheres as conscious spirits. To reach this maturity, they are supposed to stay in the gross matter in a body inhabiting our 'World of Matter'. However, mostly due to the 'one-sided cultivation of the intellect', human spirits have very little ability around 'intuitive perceiving' (Abdruschin 1931, 620). They have lost all contact with the higher spheres and remained arrested in matter. As such, after the death of the material body, the human spirit reaches only the 'ethereal sphere', which is also material, even though its matter is subtle and invisible. From there, it has to reincarnate. This locks the human spirit in a chain of incarnation, causing it to lose its awareness of its origin and the purpose of its time in the material state. This turned the 'unrestricted rule of the intellect' into 'hereditary sin' and the cause of all evil in the world (Abdruschin 1927, 25).

In this situation, two beings descended from the highest sphere as Sons of God. They were the Son of God, incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth, and the Son of Man, Imanuel, who is also known in the spiritual spheres as Sir Parsifal. In this form, he rules the Grail Castle, which lies on the border between the uncreated spaces and the spheres of Creation. From the Castle, the Son of Man incarnated into Abd-ru-shin, an ancient prince in the Middle East who lived about three thousand years ago, and then again into Oskar Bernhardt in the present. Jesus was murdered by his enemies and his tidings were only recorded long after his death, with many errors and inaccuracies. In contrast, Abd-ru-shin's *Grail Message* is the pure Word of God, capable of opening the spiritual eyes of human spirits and restoring their 'intuitive abilities', directing them back into the spiritual spheres that they came from and where they belong (also known as 'Paradise'). The Son of Man's incarnation as Bernhardt is the last helping hand extended to humanity right before the world's end.

Millennialism and Ethnocentrism in the Grail Movement

The millennial concept in the Grail Movement revolves around awaiting the Last Judgment and the Millennium, when 'only peace and joy can reign on this earth plane' (Abdruschin 1934, 213). The imminent Judgment is therefore not just a catastrophic event but mainly an opportunity for human spirits to progress in the Millennium. After the Millennium, the world will meet its final end and its inhabitants will go on to a final reward or punishment: human spirits will either return to the spiritual sphere or they will be completely annihilated.

Before the Last Judgment, Bernhardt was supposed to receive 144,000 chosen human spirits, which had once sworn an oath of loyalty to the Son of Man in the spiritual realm and which were to become his helpers. Before the Judgment, the message of the Grail was to spread around the world and reach all people. The Last Judgment is supposed to be announced by omens in nature and in human society. The omens include the Star of the Son of Man, which is of the same nature as the 'Star of Bethlehem', as well

as pollution of the environment, natural disasters, and failing morals. The greatest omen will be that the Son of Man will come to reside in this world, as the Judgment shall follow him.

The Last Judgment will happen on its own as radiation changes: the power of Light will increase and all Darkness will be destroyed. The coming of the Millennium will be announced by the binding of Lucifer, who will be defeated by the Son of Man. The planet Earth will be restored, and it will only be inhabited by those who will succumb to God's will. It will be filled with peace and joy.

The pre-war Grail Movement expected this millennial concept to come to pass in the near future. Bernhardt announced the start of Judgment times, the 'Cosmic Turning Point', for the first time in 1929 and then several more times in various forms. At the time when the Judgment was most awaited, in the first half of the 1930s, Bernhardt's followers found omens—for example, in the political development of Germany, finding it to be a cause of both concern and hope. The Grail Settlement also prepared for the Judgment and the Millennium: in anticipation of the great flood of the world, its members gathered supplies and prepared for the construction of a huge Castle of the Light, a sanatorium, and other buildings for the Millennium. Because of the planned construction, they also built a cargo lift to Vomperberg.

The millennial concept of the Grail Movement had significant ethnocentric elements. Bernhardt believed that every race and every nation underwent a specific spiritual development in history and that in his time, the White race and the German nation were the most developed. He thought it important not to mix races and not to bring any foreign influence into a nation's development. Like the Jewish nation before the coming of the Son of God, Jesus, the German nation had also undergone centuries of preparation so that the Son of Man could be born into it. The German language also developed to vibrate in harmony with the Creation, so that it was able to carry the *Grail Message* in its purest form. Vomperberg, the plateau that hosted the Grail Settlement, was the centre of the word, the 'Mountain of Salvation', the 'Place of Light', and the biblical Mount Zion.

In some of its motifs, the Grail Movement's ethnocentrism aligned with the contemporary German nationalism, but Bernhardt was never hostile to the Jews and there were Jews among his followers. He was decisively against anti-Semitism and despised it. He also believed that every nation would develop in its own geographical territory in the future. He emphasized that the *Grail Message was meant for people regardless of their religion and nationality*.

Bernhardt's death and the decline of his movement in Central Europe were the cause of great disillusionment in his followers, since Bernhardt had cast himself as the cause and main actor of the millennial events: mainly the Last Judgment, but also the start of the Millennium. At the end of his life, Bernhardt explained that the Millennium did not begin because both the 144,000 spirits and the whole of humankind failed to answer the call. Bernhardt also believed this failure to be the cause of his premature death and the reason why his [prophecies](#) had not come true. After World War II, the Grail Movement did not want to speculate about when the Millennium would start. It believes that humankind is now in the last stages of the Last Judgment, finding confirmation for this belief in current events and global processes. Since 1999, this has changed in the branch of the Grail Movement led by Siegfried Bernhardt. He believes that the Millennium came into effect with the 'Cosmic Turning Point' in 1929, but it only applies to those who were trying to rise to the Light and the Truth.

Organization and Liturgic Practices of the Grail Movement

Oskar Bernhardt wanted to create a community based on a model he found in the Gospel: concentric circles fanning out from the closest (Apostle) circle to the audience at his lectures in Vomperberg and in local Grail Circles up to independent readers of his book *In the Light of Truth*, and possibly even to the broadest circle of those who live in harmony with his *Grail Message* without knowing about it. It was supposed to be a free and open community, as he wrote in this oft-quoted passage:

I am bringing no new religion, I do not wish to found either a new church or any sect, but in all simplicity I give a clear picture of the automatic activity in Creation, which bears the Will of God, and from which man can clearly recognise what ways are good for him. (Abd-ru-shin 1936, 17.)

However, this ideal was always offset by the need for some organization, taking the form of the Order of the Grail, the Grail Settlement, Grail Circles, natural science associations in various countries, and foundations that managed national Grail Movements after World War II. Up to the schism in 1999, the international Grail Movement was managed by the Grail Message Foundation (Stiftung Gralsbotschaft), which last resided in Stuttgart and in Ditzingen, Germany. However, the movement never found a good legal entity to manage the immovable assets at Vomperberg, which therefore remained in the private hands of the Bernhardt family. After the 1999 schism, they passed into the hands of Siegfried Bernhardt's branch, to be managed by the Grail Administration Vomperberg (Grals-Verwaltung Vomperberg), known as Gralswerk. The main structural unit in both branches is a Grail Circle, which organizes 'hours of worship' every Sunday and works towards ownership of a suitable temple space called the Place of Light.

The free community ideal was somewhat diluted by the highly developed hierarchy among Oskar Bernhardt's followers, which started forming even while he was still alive. Sealed followers stand on the lowest rung of the ladder, bearing the Silver Cross of the Grail. Followers responsible for some of the work in the Grail Movement can be elevated as bearers of the Gold Cross. Only a few dozen followers of the Grail Movement have become Disciples or Sealing Disciples so far. Additionally, the founder of the Grail Movement, Oskar Bernhardt himself, could call on followers to be Apostles or Knights. Every sealed follower is called a 'Crossbearer'.

Sealing and Calling, alongside with celebration of the movement's three festivals, are the main liturgic events, with detailed and strictly observed rules, specific dress for the participants, splendid decoration, and liturgical objects. The celebrations regularly take place in the central Place of Light at Vomperberg. After the Grail Movement spread to other continents, they also started taking place there. Jürgen Sprick's branch, which has not been allowed at Vomperberg since 1999, organizes these celebrations in the larger Places of Light owned by the branch.

Every year, 30 May sees the celebration of the Festival of the Holy Dove, the earthly reflection of a spiritual event when divine life force spreads from the Grail Castle in the Sphere of Divine Substantiality unto all of the Creation. The Festival of the Pure Lily is celebrated on 7 September, commemorating purity and most importantly womanhood, which has 'stronger intuitive ability' (Abdruschin 1924, 26). On 29 December, the movement observes the *Festival of the Radiant Star*, which celebrates Jesus's message of

love. If a Sealing Disciple or Apostle is present at a celebration, a meal of bread and wine may be served. According to Bernhardt's teaching, the Christian holidays of Christmas and Pentecost as well as the sacrament of the Eucharist are inaccurate interpretations of Grail events, which are commemorated correctly by the Grail Movement. Other liturgical practices usually also take place on the major holidays, namely weddings and Blessings for children.

Grail Movement Development After the Founder's Death

After World War II, the Grail Movement experienced definite missionary successes, but also strife and schism. The postwar movement spread not only to countries where it had been successful during Bernhardt's life (Germany as well as Austria, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, France, Netherlands, and Switzerland) but also to Britain and the United States. From the 1970s, the Grail Movement also had successful missions in Canada and Nigeria. In Nigeria in particular, the number of Crossbearers quickly grew from the 1980s onwards and currently there are probably more Grail Movement followers in Nigeria than in all of Europe. The *Grail Message* has been spreading from Nigeria into other African countries, and Africa currently plays a major role in the Grail Movement. Missionary activity on other continents has not been as successful. Since the 1990s, missionary activity has also been directed into Eastern Europe (Romania, Russia, etc.) and at the end of the 1990s, *In the Light of Truth* was translated into Chinese and other languages.

This expansion was probably also fuelled by the literary production of the Crossbearers, which seems to be exceptionally rich for a movement of this size. During Abd-ru-shin's life, several of his closest followers took part in creating the book series '*Past Eras Awaken*' ('*Verwehte Zeit erwacht*'). The books that were published as part of this series have no specific authors, as their writers were supposed to receive their contents from superhuman sources. They focus on the religions in various parts of the world and at different periods, interpreting their founders and other major figures as the 'Forerunners' of the Son of Man, Abd-ru-shin. Apart from these spiritually inspired works, religious non-fiction books explaining Bernhardt's teachings—for example, in the context of science—were published in the pre-war period. The post-war journal *Grailworld* restored this tradition. It was subtitled *Journal for True Construction Through New Knowledge* (*Zeitschrift für wahren Aufbau durch neues Wissen*). It was published monthly between 1950 and 1974 and then bi-monthly up to 1988. In 1996, it was renewed but its contents and form were different: it became a representative quarterly aimed at a broad readership, focusing on social, cultural, life sciences, and religious topics from the point of view of the Grail Movement's teachings. It was published until 2014 and accompanied by other publishing and social activities. In the postwar period, the Grail Message Foundation publishing house issued several dozen books for the religious education of Bernhardt's followers as well as missionary books, some only in German and others also in other languages. The *Grailworld* journal motivated the establishment of a number of similar journals in Czech, English, French, Romanian, Russian, and Slovak, which generally existed for several years.

The Grail Movement has experienced a number of internal conflicts in the postwar period, but the longest lasting and perhaps the most sensitive one relates to the *Final Authorized Edition* of the canonical *In the Light of Truth*. Since its publication in 1949–50, there has been doubt among Bernhardt's followers over whether he really authored this version. Followers doubting the validity of the newer edition generally prefer the 1931 *Great Edition* and stand outside the mainstream of the Grail Movement. A different problem, a 1956 conflict with Alexander Bernhardt, motivated the largest group exodus from the Grail

Movement. A local organization in Brazil, which was especially successful among German immigrants, turned independent. Led by Roselis von Sass (1906–97), the organization was named the Order of the Grail on Earth (Ordem do Graal na Terra) in 1958. In the following years, dozens of smaller groups splintered away from the mainstream in various countries for various reasons: the belief that the onset of the Millennium was coming near, lack of trust in the postwar Grail Movement leadership, disagreement with the organization structure, and others.

As indicated above, the 1999 Grail Movement schism was caused by the formation of two centres of power. Since 1989, the Grail Message Foundation had been led by Disciple Jürgen Sprick, and under his leadership the foundation started widespread missionary activities, making and distributing *In the Light of Truth*

and other publications and organizing a great number of events. He was supported in his activities by Apostle Herbert Vollmann. The second centre was led by Siegfried Bernhardt, appointed by Irmingard Bernhardt as her successor in the Grail Movement leadership. After the death of his wife, Claudia-Maria, Siegfried Bernhardt inherited the Vomperberg assets. Since the schism, the branches have been acting independently and they generally have their own representatives acting in separate organizations in each of the Grail Movement countries.

Current State of Study

It is quite difficult to conduct any scholarly study of the Grail Movement as most of its publications are only meant for internal use and the members only give some information to people who are not Sealed, withholding the rest. The first description of the movement's core teachings was recorded by a German Evangelical theologian, Kurt Hutten, in 1950. He revised and added to his findings in later editions, somewhat revising his originally negative attitude to the movement. In 1991 the Institute for Research on Religious and Ideological Issues of the Evangelical Church in Germany provided a summary of the basic facts on the teachings (Verscht-Biener and Reimer 1991), mainly derived from the publicly accessible version of *In the Light of Truth*.

Further Reading

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