

MILLENNIAL EXPECTATIONS IN THE GRAIL MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT: Although millennialism has recently been the subject of much scholarly discussion, no research has been done on the millennial expectations of the Grail Movement, which has been influential in Europe. This article describes the beginnings of this millennial group in central Europe before the Second World War and sums up the basics of the Grail Message. After the death of the founder and the restoration of religious freedom in postwar Europe, the Movement overcame disappointment by replacing the emphasis on the imminent millennial kingdom with an emphasis on individual spiritual evolution. The millennial expectations of the Grail Movement, however, are still alive, especially in offshoots. They were reintroduced in a dramatic way in the early 1990s by a Czech, Jan Dvorsky. The rise and the fall of his group, the Imanuelites, are described to show how millennial ideas can be renewed.

The Grail Movement, which originated during the 1920s in German-speaking countries and drew on concepts found in Western Esotericism, Theosophy, and medieval Christian legends, expected the advent of the millennial kingdom in the mid-1930s. It was able to overcome the disappointment following its founder's death in 1941 and keep growing. Today, the Movement has approximately 20,000 adherents in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and in some African countries; the number of Americans is estimated at 300.¹ Despite its broad influence, the millennialism of the Grail Movement has not previously received scholarly attention.²

Although millennial expectations have weakened in the mainstream Grail Movement over time, they have recently reappeared without regard for the leadership's official rationalizations for millennial disappointment. Moreover, new Grail-related groups with intense millennial expectations have emerged. These outbursts of millennial expectations remind us that even in cases of "managed millennialism,"³ a sense of the imminence of the transition to the millennial kingdom can be renewed unexpectedly and result in situations requiring public attention.

RISE OF THE GRAIL MOVEMENT

Not many millenarian groups originated in central Europe in the second quarter of the twentieth century; however, the Grail Movement is one. To understand the Grail Movement, we must take into consideration at least three facts concerning its context. First, in the first half of the twentieth century, German-speaking countries were deeply influenced by nineteenth-century German Romanticism, which was fruitful not only in the fields of literature and art but also influenced esoteric teachings and societies. Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical Society, founded in 1912, is an example of such a society. Second, the Grail Movement came into existence in Germany and Austria, countries militarily and economically humiliated by the First World War. Initial followers were German-speaking Europeans who experienced a burning desire to see Germans in leading positions among the nations of the world—at least spiritually, if not economically and militarily. Finally, German-speaking countries were not the only ones in Europe to suffer disillusionment as a result of World War I. For example, postwar Europeans felt deeply disappointed by the role the Roman Catholic Church played during the war. Allured by Romantic philosophies and estranged from their mother church, some Germans and Austrians were drawn to the prospect of salvation offered by the Grail Message in the 1920s and 1930s.

Oskar Ernst Bernhardt, founder of the Grail Movement, was born in Bischofswerda, Germany, in 1875. As a businessman he traveled frequently and succeeded in publishing some travel essays and dramas. The key period in Bernhardt's life came during his forties, when he was not allowed to return to Germany from a business trip to New York. Rather, as a German citizen, he was interned by British authorities from 1915 to 1919 on the Isle of Man. In 1917 Bernhardt also suffered the loss of his mother. And, when his son fell in combat, Bernhardt "experienced during the years of his confinement the inner need of many people, who suffered a great deal and could not find their way out of the collapsing old system of values. The wish awakened in him to help [people] through a knowledge that was alive in him."⁴ Bernhardt probably developed the basis of his religious system during this time of internment.

Bernhardt returned to Germany in 1919. In 1924, he divorced his first wife, Martha (m. 1897), and married Maria Kauffer (1887-1957). The new family had three children from Maria's previous marriage to August Freyer: Irmingard (1908-1990), Alexander (1911-1968), and Elizabeth (1912-2002).

On Good Friday in 1923, Bernhardt started his career as a messenger of a new religion. On that day it was "spiritually seen that the Son of God Jesus came down to the Earth in order to transfer his task of the Mediator between God and mankind to the Son of Man."⁵ In 1924 Bernhardt started to publish under the name Abdruschin, which is usually translated today as "The Son of Light," though, originally, Bernhardt interpreted this alleged Persian-Arabian name as "The Son of the Holy Spirit."⁶ He claimed in a later lecture that Abdruschin was the name of his former incarnation in the time of Moses, when he led the alleged nation Is-Ra.⁷

Bernhardt's early religious writings were collected in the periodical *Gralblätter* (*Grail Papers*), published by his own publishing house of the same name.⁸ This publishing house started by publishing Bernhardt's appeal "What Seek Ye?" followed by six issues of *Gralblätter* from 1923 to 1926. In the first series of *Gralblätter*, thirty-six Bernhardt lectures were published. These lectures, together with seven new ones, were published in 1926 under the title *Im Lichte der Wahrheit. Gralsbotschaft* (*In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message*).⁹

At the end of 1926 the second series of *Gralblätter* was started, with one double and one triple issue published in 1927. It was replaced by another periodical, *Der Ruf* (*The Calling*), published in the same publishing house, which had been renamed *Der Ruf*.¹⁰ In the first issue Bernhardt joyfully welcomed the rise of the first communities of his followers.¹¹

By the end of the 1920s Bernhardt had several thousand followers—mainly Germans, Austrians, Swiss, and Czechs. According to Bernhardt's wishes, his followers formed free fellowships under different names. He refused to head any of them, but gave lectures at group-organized meetings.

In 1928 Bernhardt and his family moved to Vomperberg, an estate located at the foot of Vomp Mountain near Schwaz in Tyrol, Austria. Their house was declared to have been constructed exactly at the place where Abraham saw the "Mountain of Salvation."¹² With this, the "Grail Settlement" at Vomperberg came into existence, and 1928 is usually regarded as the beginning of the Grail Movement. The Vomperberg Estate has been in the possession of Bernhardt's family ever since.

After purchasing the Vomperberg Estate, Bernhardt (now known as "the Lord") and approximately 120 of his closest followers continued to develop the Grail Settlement, constructing new houses, temple buildings, a funicular, and temporary housing for festival participants. They also planned an immense Grail Castle of white marble and precious stones large enough to hold 12,000 people and a new temple for 10,000 visitors. The enthusiasm of this first generation of converts was caused by their strong conviction that the Messiah as the Son of Man was among them and that the final judgment and the millennial kingdom were at hand.¹³

In 1931 an expanded version of *Im Lichte der Wahrheit* (*In the Light of Truth*) appeared.¹⁴ Although it had the same title as the first one, it was a much larger book containing ninety-one essays and including all the lectures published in the first volume. Though the majority of these lectures had been published in the periodicals *Gralblätter* and *Der Ruf*, several new ones were added. At the very end of this most important Grail Movement book was the "Conclusion" which declared the completion of Abdruschin's earthly mission and his transformation into the Son of Man, called Imanuel.¹⁵ The declaration ended with an appeal to humankind to wake up from their spirits' sleep.

Bernhardt discontinued the monthly *Der Ruf* in 1930. Since founding the Grail Settlement at Vomperberg, he preferred to communicate to his followers by means of spoken lectures. These lectures were then stenciled by the publishing house *Der Ruf*, numbered from 1 to 59, and sent to subscribers only. In 1934 Bernhardt revised and supplemented the lectures and published them as *Nachklänge zur Gralsbotschaft von Abdruschin, Band I* (*The Grail Message Fades Away, Volume I*).¹⁶

In 1934 and 1935 thirty-eight other lectures (numbers 60-97) were stenciled, but additional volumes of *The Grail Message Fades Away* were not published. The German authorities closed the publishing house *Der Ruf* in 1936 and confiscated its property.¹⁷ Bernhardt transferred his publishing activities to Switzerland, where in 1936 he founded a new publishing house, *Die Stimme*, and produced twelve issues of a new monthly periodical, *Die Stimme* (*The Voice*).¹⁸ For this new periodical, Bernhardt changed his pseudonym from Abdruschin to the more Arabic-sounding Abd-ru-shin.

Strong opposition, mainly from former members, accompanied the development of Bernhardt's new religion. There were headlines alleging that Bernhardt was greedy for money. In March 1936 he was put under arrest for several months because of infractions against foreign-currency laws. It was revealed that he had previously been sentenced three times, mainly for cheating and falsification of documents.¹⁹

As a result, the majority of his twenty-four closest followers left their Lord, followed by hundreds of other "Seekers of the Truth." Almost none of the awaited 144,000 "German spirits" joined the group.²⁰ The Vomperberg

projects, including the Grail Castle, had to be stopped. The estate had to be guarded to keep out curious journalists and embittered apostates. Bernhardt blames his followers for the failure. At an important feast on the Grail Mountain in July 1936, he drew his sword from its sheath “and pointed it at mankind as the sign of beginning judgment.”²¹ One of his followers, Josef Wagner, took this as the declaration of war against the Darkness.²² In order to calm the public and hide his messianic claims, in 1937 Bernhardt ordered that the “Conclusion” be cut out of all unsold *In the Light of Truth* books. He wrote to his closest followers: “The message will be inviolable by our enemies from now on.”²³

At the beginning of March 1938, immediately after the Nazi occupation of Austria, the *Grail Message* and other publications were banned, and Bernhardt was arrested and kept in prison until September. During the following years, he and his family lived under police custody in Germany. The Grail Settlement was confiscated and occupied by Nazi soldiers. Later, a school was established there.

As reported by his closest follower, Josef Wagner, who stayed with him until the very end of his life, Bernhardt felt lonely and discouraged. His family had been estranged from him since the first failure in 1936.²⁴ In December 1941, “as a result of the failure of mankind to such an extent that had not been expected,”²⁵ the Son of Man left his earthly vessel in Kipsdorf, Germany. The “Lord was called back by his God, the Father. The Beam of Imanuel was separated from the Matter”²⁶ and went back to its Source. Bernhardt died unexpectedly, without bringing the last judgment and the millennial kingdom for his followers.

THE GRAIL MESSAGE

Post-World War II Changes to the Grail Movement Scripture

The four-volume, postwar edition of *In the Light of Truth* is considered the sacred text for the Grail Movement. The first three volumes have been published frequently, both separately and together in one book.²⁷ Since 1950 they have appeared in fifteen languages, some reprinted several times, and are easily available to the public. These contain 168 lectures, 87 of which had already been published in the 1931 edition. The text of some of the lectures was changed slightly in this later edition, and their sequence differs from the old edition. These old lectures form half of the first volume and the second volume. The rest of the first volume and the third volume consist of lectures and essays produced after 1931. Four lectures and the “Conclusion” published in 1931 are omitted in the authorized postwar version. The reason for dropping three of the lectures is probably the same as the reason for omitting the “Conclusion” in 1937: they were too explicit in pointing to Bernhardt (Abd-ru-shin) as the Messiah. Of the omitted lectures, the fourth was probably unacceptable after the war due to ideas that might be considered racist.²⁸

The fourth volume has been published separately under the title *Ermahnungen (Admonitions)*,²⁹ and contains twenty-two of Bernhardt’s speeches to his inner circle, dated 1934 to 1937. These are intended only for those who “have intuitively perceived”³⁰ the message of the first three volumes. Their content does not differ essentially from that of the first three volumes, but their voice is more urgent, more dramatic, and more clearly expresses Bernhardt’s disappointment and wrath as he neared the end of his life. Indeed, vivid, dramatic, persuasive language is the primary characteristic of Bernhardt’s religious writings.

Cosmology, Human Nature, and Salvation

The Grail Message begins with a concept of the cosmos. Bernhardt describes God as eternal Light that “cannot but radiate.”³¹ This Divine Radiation forms concentric spiritual planes inhabited by different species. “Thus Creation is actually the deposit formed through the increasing cooling of the White Light, of the Radiation of the Living Light!”³²

The highest and most sublime is God Himself in His Divine Unsubstantiality. Next, and somewhat lower, comes Divine Substantiality. Both are eternal. Adjacent to this, going deeper and deeper, follows the work of Creation which, descending in planes or spheres, becomes denser and denser down to the World of Gross Matter, which is finally visible to mankind.³³

The spheres of Creation are differentiated according to their distance from the Light. The more distant the sphere the denser and heavier its substance. “The gradations thus produced form planes in which definite species link together and settle.”³⁴ The fundamental spiritual planes are: “Spiritual Substantiality in the uppermost region of Creation, under which successively range the Spheres of Animistic Substantiality, of Ethereal Substance, and finally of Gross Matter, with their many sub-divisions.”³⁵ Unconscious human spirits (“spirit-germs”³⁶) come from the

Spiritual Substantiality; the Spheres of Animistic Substantiality are inhabited by elves, gnomes, nymphs, and other elemental beings;³⁷ Ethereal Substance is the realm of substantial thoughts;³⁸ and Gross Matter, the lowest and the heaviest in the cosmos, forms the visible world.³⁹

The Light, or God, is subject to three spiritual laws. The Law of Gravitation determines for each spirit exactly the right place it deserves in the spiritual planes. Once unconscious, human spirit-germs move from Spiritual Substantiality down to Gross Matter in order to gain consciousness.⁴⁰ The task of all humans is to be freed of the bondage of matter and return to the spiritual world. If a person aims for the good, that person's spirit becomes lighter and lighter until it reaches the upper planes. Finally, it will achieve the spiritual plane that is its real home.⁴¹ This goal may be achieved in several incarnations, but now, when the last judgment is very near, one's good will and strong effort is decisive. That is why Seekers of the Truth are often reminded to "keep the hearth of your thoughts pure."⁴²

The Law of Homogeneous Species states that similar characteristics attract each other. Therefore, it is very important for each person to control not only deeds but also thoughts, which are believed to materialize and hold a person in a web of fatal threads that can prevent spiritual advancement.⁴³

According to the Law of Reciprocal Action, human thoughts, words and deeds sow seeds that are bound to come to fruition either in this life or in future lives.⁴⁴ According to Bernhardt and his followers, the idea of reincarnation was a part of original Christian teaching.⁴⁵

In order to help human spirits achieve their eternal destiny before the end of the substantial world, two messengers have come down to Gross Matter and accepted human bodies. Originally, they both lived in Grail Castle. As Bernhardt put it, "at the summit of the eternal Sphere of Spiritual Substantiality there stands the Castle of the Grail, spiritually visible and tangible, because it is still of the same species of spiritual substantiality. This Castle of the Grail contains a Sanctuary . . . In this Sanctuary, as a pledge of the eternal Goodness of God the Father, as a symbol of His Purest Divine Love, and the point from which Divine Power issues, stands the *Holy Grail!*"⁴⁶ Contrary to the traditional understanding, Bernhardt claimed that the Holy Grail was not identical with the cup Jesus used during his Last Supper.⁴⁷ Rather, it was "a chalice in which it bubbles and surges unceasingly like red blood without overflowing."⁴⁸ Once a year, on the feast of the Holy Dove,⁴⁹ "the Dove appears above the Chalice" and "the Love of the Creator radiantly flows forth...pulsating downwards and diffusing itself through all the universe."⁵⁰ Despite its name, Bernhardt asserted that the Holy Grail "will remain a mystery to the human spirit for all eternity."⁵¹

From the Grail Castle the first knight of the Grail, Parsifal Imanuel, came as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to Gross Matter to point the way to the spiritual heights. Unfortunately, he was killed and his teaching distorted by the church. At the end of the ages, the Grail Knight Parsifal Imanuel, as the predicted Son of Man, Abd-ru-shin, came again to reveal the Truth and bring the last judgment and the Millennium. Recognizing Bernhardt as this Son of Man is the most important challenge of the complicated and complex Grail Message. As he put it, "therefore, be on your guard, so that you may recognize Him as soon as His time is come, for that will also be your time!"⁵²

DECLINE OF MILLENNIAL EXPECTATIONS

Reinterpretation and Institutionalization

Soon after the end of World War II, the Bernhardt family was allowed to return to the Grail Settlement in Vomperberg. Bereft of husband and stepfather, the family consisted of Bernhardt's second wife, Maria, and her three children. Each of these, however, is believed to be a very high, if not divine, spiritual being, having come down to Gross Matter from the very highest spiritual realm. Maria, for example, is called "Love of God," Irmingard, "Pure Lily," Alexander, "The Lion," and Elizabeth is believed to be connected with the spiritual "Swan Island by Means of Divine Radiance." In addition, together with Bernhardt as Abd-ru-shin, Maria and Irmingard are believed to form the "Divine Triad."⁵³

Religious life came back to Vomperberg soon after the Bernhardt family returned. After an absence of seven years, for example, the Rose Festival was held at the end of 1945. "I am standing here before you in the name of Imanuel," Maria is reported to have proclaimed, "in order to finish his work together with Irmingard."⁵⁴

The fact that Bernhardt, as Abd-ru-shin and the Son of Man called Imanuel, did not carry out the judgment and initiate the millennial kingdom was rationalized as the fault of his followers: "The Lord was burnt down in his own power . . . he fulfilled his task, but almost all who were called failed."⁵⁵ According to the official history, the failure of humankind prevented the Son of Man from establishing the collective salvation.⁵⁶

Although originally the last judgment and the Millennium were connected with the earthly life of the Son of Man,⁵⁷ after Bernhardt's death this part of the teaching was no longer stressed. Instead, the Seekers of the Truth

were to strive to raise their spirits into higher spiritual planes without concentrating on the coming Millennium.⁵⁸ The last judgment is near, but no one can give an exact date.

Soon after the new edition of *In the Light of Truth* was published in 1949-1950,⁵⁹ some of Bernhardt's followers cast doubts about the reliability of this edition and even about the leading role of Bernhardt's wife, Maria, in the movement.⁶⁰ Indeed, they suspected that Maria edited the posthumous publication of the book.⁶¹ The disturbances caused by the different versions of the sacred book did not stop, even after Irmgard wrote a circular letter in March 1988 to persuade all followers that "the Grail message in the version and arrangement that was created by the Lord himself is definite. All texts that have never been part of it or that are not part of it now should not be available for people anymore."⁶² Even now, some groups of Bernhardt's followers insist that the only valid edition of *In the Light of Truth* is that published in 1931.⁶³

The tension between Bernhardt's followers and the general public was reduced after the war. This tension reached its peak in the 1930s when Bernhardt expected the imminent end of the world, and the media reported on his group's beliefs and activities. Since that time, except for one lawsuit in 1953-1954,⁶⁴ the relationship between the Grail Movement and the general public has improved steadily.

Life at Vomperberg is marked by three regular festivals each year: the Festival of the Holy Dove (30 May), the Festival of the Pure Lily (7 September) and the Festival of the Radiant Star, which is also called the Festival of the Rose (29 December).⁶⁵ A pyramid-shaped tomb was constructed, and Bernhardt was buried there in 1949. Inhabitants of Vomperberg completed the third hall for religious services in 1952, and it is still in use today.⁶⁶

In 1954 Maria's son Alexander assumed leadership due to her illness. She died three years later. After Alexander's death in 1968, Irmgard, oldest of the three siblings and last of the Divine Triad, served as the spiritual head until her death in 1990. During these years the number of Grail Movement adherents increased slightly and is now estimated by the movement at over 20,000.⁶⁷ The Movement has succeeded in establishing centers outside Europe, especially in Nigeria, Zaire, Canada, and Australia.

The rite of sealing,⁶⁸ understood as a new contract with God, is necessary for a newcomer to be allowed to take part in worship and festivals. While being sealed, an isosceles cross (a cross with arms of equal length) is traced with water on the forehead of the newcomer, who is then believed to bear a radiant cross visible to all those who are "called." Sealed adherents are called cross-bearers. The silver cross-bearers form the bottom of the hierarchy. At the higher stage⁶⁹ are the golden cross-bearers, the "called ones" who are typically full-time workers for the Movement. A very small portion of followers are appointed as holders of the golden cross with a precious stone. These few are called "disciples,"⁷⁰ and are allowed to lead the various rituals.

All cross-bearers, together with those who have not yet been sealed, usually call themselves Seekers of the Truth. This indicates that the Movement does not want to be seen as a religious group, church, sect, or novel religion.⁷¹ The Seekers of the Truth declare that the Grail Movement is an informal spiritual association lacking any official structure. However, in order to take part in any Grail Festivals or Grail Acts, Seekers of Truth must be accepted by the local Seekers' community or Grail Circle. Some of these Circles have their own houses of worship (Tabernacles of Light), while some meet in rented rooms. Additionally, the International Grail Movement is in charge of the national structures of Grail Circles, led by the appointed member of Bernhardt's family, who is also heir to the Vomperberg Estate. The present leader is Siegfried Bernhardt (b. 1955), the husband of Irmgard's adopted daughter who took his wife's surname. But, as we will see, this man has not been accepted by an important part of the Movement since 1999.

At all stages, the financial needs of Grail Circles are met by local foundations related to the international Grail Foundation (*Stiftung Gralsbotschaft*)⁷² in Stuttgart. The Foundation controls Stiftung Gralsbotschaft Publishing Company⁷³ which issues books by Bernhardt and other Grail leaders. The periodical *Gralswelt* (*The World of the Grail*) has been in circulation since 1950.

Schism

Grail Movement leadership began to change in 1985.⁷⁴ Five years before her death in 1990, Irmgard Bernhardt made out her will declaring the independence of the Grail Foundation (*Stiftung Gralsbotschaft*) from the international Grail Movement. Her will granted the copyrights of Oskar Bernhardt's books to *Stiftung Gralsbotschaft*.

Thirteen years later, the division of power between Siegfried Bernhardt, as spiritual leader of the international Grail Movement, and Herbert Vollmann, a key figure in the Grail Foundation, precipitated a dramatic split. Vollmann, who married Bernhardt's youngest stepdaughter Elizabeth in 1935, had been the most respected figure ("the Apostle")⁷⁵ before his death in 1999. Because of what adherents regarded as Siegfried Bernhardt's moral transgression,⁷⁶ Vollmann prevented him from exercising leadership in 1998 and designated the German disciple Jürgen

Sprick as leader of the Grail Movement. While Bernhardt at first agreed to this arrangement, he soon changed his mind and refused to resign as spiritual leader.

The split culminated in 1999 when Vollmann called upon all Seekers to decide between “the Mountain” (Vomperberg, with Bernhardt as its owner) and “the Light” (Jürgen Sprick and other leaders).⁷⁷ Since then, the larger portion of the Grail Movement has lost the main symbol of its faith, the Mountain of Salvation, and performs its most important rituals outside the Holy Mountain. Vollmann, Sprick, and other leaders of this part of the Grail Movement are not allowed to enter Vomperberg. Meanwhile, Siegfried’s invalid wife, Claudia-Maria Bernhardt, died in 1999, as did Vollmann. His wife, Elizabeth, the last of Oskar Bernhardt’s three stepchildren, died in 2002. Now, the two parts of the Grail Movement act without regard to each other. The Grail Settlement on Vomperberg serves as international headquarters for those who follow Siegfried Bernhardt, while the Grail Foundation, led by Jürgen Sprick, is headquartered in Ditzingen, Germany.

Continuing Millennial Expectations

Millennial hopes are not entirely dead in the Grail Movement. Soon after Bernhardt’s death the idea emerged that he would return via reincarnation, bringing the judgment and Millennium with him. Grail Movement leadership admits that this idea “is spread again and again,”⁷⁸ and they respond by declaring that Bernhardt’s message has been completed and that “there is no other message” for humankind.⁷⁹

The expectation of something special to come, if not expressly the final judgment and Millennium, increases in the Grail Movement when comets appear. This anticipation is based upon Bernhardt’s lecture, “The Great Comet,” which announces that a comet “of exactly the same nature” as the Star of Bethlehem “is to be expected soon.” “Its core is filled with high spiritual power” and will strongly influence the Earth. “And *then* the earth is *purified* and *refreshed* in *every respect* for the blessing and joy of its inhabitants. It will be more beautiful than it has ever been.”⁸⁰ In 1997 many Seekers of the Truth associated this prophetic lecture with the Hale-Bopp Comet’s close proximity to Earth.⁸¹ But no official declaration of a connection between Hale-Bopp and the comet mentioned by Bernhardt was made by Movement leaders, who instead sought to calm adherents by publishing reassurances that in internal periodicals that Hale-Bopp presented no threat to the planet.⁸²

INTENSE MILLENNIAL EXPECTATIONS RESTORED BY THE IMANUELITES

The expectation of great events such as the final judgment, the Millennium, or a spiritually empowered comet is stronger in some Grail-related offshoots. The Movement has been successful in distributing its sacred text, *In the Light of Truth*, to a large number of bookshops and public libraries, and some peripheral groups can be formed by independent readers of Bernhardt’s book.⁸³ Strong millennial expectations can be seen in one of these groups founded in the Czech Republic by Jan Dvorsky (b. 1965) in 1993. The group refused to accept any name and its adherents called themselves simply Helpers of the Son of Man. Scholars usually call these adherents Imanuelites.⁸⁴

As early as 1990, Dvorsky embraced the Grail Message. According to his own testimony, he was fascinated by *In the Light of Truth* and its claim to contain the complete truth about both the present life and the coming millennium.⁸⁵ He came to the conclusion that the author of this book, Abd-ru-shin, needed to be incarnated once more to fulfill his task of creating the millennial kingdom. At the beginning of 1991, after months of terrible inner struggle, Dvorsky discovered that he was Bernhardt’s reincarnation.⁸⁶ “I am the one who is called the Son of Man in the Bible,” Dvorsky stated in his autobiography.⁸⁷ He adopted the name Parsifal Imanuel. That name—according to Bernhardt—belongs to the knight of the spiritual Grail Castle who represents the Son of Man. Dating 1991 as the year of his conversion, Dvorsky started a new calendar characterized by the letters P.I., derived from Parsifal Imanuel.⁸⁸

Dvorsky made a few attempts to convince the Czech Grail Movement that he was Abd-ru-shin reincarnated, but he was ridiculed and rejected. Meanwhile, his friend Lucie Dvorsky (b. 1964) was converted. She came to play the role of the Messiah’s mate, called the Swan Virgin or the Queen of the South.⁸⁹ In 1992 the couple started distributing Dvorsky’s book, *The Son of Man*, which is subtitled *The Messiah’s Living Word for Restoration of Mankind*.⁹⁰ On the cover, in addition to the name Parsifal Imanuel are the words, “The Most Important Book of the Millennium.” Initially, the book sold with relative success in many bookshops in the Czech Republic, and the next year, a second edition was published with supplements.

The first part of *The Son of Man* contains Dvorsky’s autobiography, detailing his slow journey to realizing his responsibility for humankind. At the end of his journey he recognized himself to be the Son of Man, i.e. ,Parsifal Imanuel, descended from the spiritual Grail Castle. Dvorsky claimed to have discovered the “Law of Perversion”

and the ability to sweep all evil out of human souls. The divine ability “to answer every question” was given to him as well.⁹¹

The second part of the book, “The World without Men and Women,” deals with the Law of Perversion. Written immediately after the author’s conversion in 1991, it was originally distributed in manuscript among his closest friends. According to the Law of Perversion, all contemporary human beings are perverted because all females possess male souls and vice versa. Dvorsky introduces a number of examples of misconduct and evil deeds committed by “perverted ones” in politics, culture, religion, and other social settings. Dvorsky’s sharp critique of society together with his knowledge of culture and politics make his arguments sound convincing. The only people who are not perverted are Parsifal Imanuel (Jan Dvorsky) and Swan Virgin (Lucie Dvorsky).

The final part, more than three times longer than the initial sections, is called “Supplements and Thoughts.” It discusses a range of different topics from the point of view of the Law of Perversion, and enables Dvorsky to explain all troubles of the present world.

Dvorsky’s *The Son of Man* concludes with the author’s address, and many of his adherents came into contact with him by means of letters. After a period of correspondence, some of the inquirers were invited to become Helpers of the Son of Man, to participate in the realization of the millennial kingdom.⁹² They should not leave anything valuable to the “perverted” world, but give their property to the community.⁹³

After entering the community of Helpers, a new follower was told by a clairvoyant how to cleanse himself or herself in order to be allowed to enter the millennial kingdom.⁹⁴ Diets and fasting were recommended.⁹⁵ Because both the teaching and its way of life were atrocious to the “perverted” world, community members were expected to sever ties with family members and friends,⁹⁶ and to change their names. According to *The Son of Man*, all human institutions, including marriage, education, and health systems, were corrupt, perverse, and disgusting.

According to Dvorsky, the final judgment was imminent. The first prediction concerning the destruction of Prague in 1993 was soon forgotten. After communities had been established, Josef Klimes, a clairvoyant who took the name “Mr. Vidon,” predicted catastrophes at the end of August and the beginning of September 1994.⁹⁷ Before this period, some members of the communities personally contacted the media and urged them to warn the public, especially against tornadoes. Large earthquakes were predicted to hit southern Europe and cause the Apennine Peninsula to sink into the sea.⁹⁸

The clairvoyant specified a place in northern Italy where the City as a nucleus of the future kingdom should be constructed. Many people were expected to come to this City, shocked by the catastrophes and attracted by those living peacefully there. In this way, step-by-step, the millennial kingdom would spread into the whole world. In the spring of 1994, the Messiah and his family, together with the clairvoyant and his wife, left for Italy to choose the exact place of the future City. They wanted to make preparations for buying the land immediately after the catastrophes had taken place.⁹⁹

The exhausting and controlled way of life in the community and the intense expectation of the imminent Millennium caused many to leave the group. The total number of Imanuelites can be estimated at 60 persons, but there were rarely more than fifteen at any one time. Some left very soon of their own choice. Some were expelled by Dvorsky because of a clairvoyant’s disclosure of their “bad aura,” a yellow color considered evidence that such persons were still perverted, too lazy to improve themselves, who would prevent others from spiritual progress, and who were thus not able to enter the kingdom. Those expelled were advised to “lay aside the body”; their lives were considered to be hopeless failures.¹⁰⁰

Some of those expelled left the community in despair, having been denied their purpose in life and their future in the kingdom. More than ten people attempted suicide by starvation while living alone in deep woods for a week or more. Their early deaths would mean that there would be some hope of being reincarnated soon enough to regain their chances to enter the kingdom. Fortunately, no deaths have been reported and all expelled followers were able to obtain psychiatric care.

Unfulfilled predictions of catastrophe also precipitated a crisis in the group. Dvorsky did not stop expelling his followers and by the middle of 1995, the Dvorsky family was almost left alone. That same year, because they refused to allow them to attend basic school, Dvorsky and his wife were prosecuted for neglect of their children.¹⁰¹ During the summer of 1995 the family went into hiding from the police and they have not reappeared. The last few adherents lived together in the outskirts of Prague, but since 1999 there has been no record of any group activity.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Grail Movement enables us to trace a typical developmental trajectory of millennial movements. Expectations of the final judgment and establishment of the Millennium grew very strong among the first adherents in the 1930s. These expectations were dashed quickly, however, with the banning of the Movement

and the imprisonment of its founder, Oskar Ernst Bernhardt. After his death, the new leadership of the Movement assumed his charisma, rationalized millennial disappointment, and was able to supply adherents with new moral concerns, rituals, and spiritual practices. Adherents were united into a strong institution by means of a regular religious life and a rearranged sacred text. The process of institutionalizing charisma was completed with the installation of a new bureaucratic leadership in the main Grail group at the end of the last century.

In spite of the development toward the institutionalization of charisma and rationalization of the initial millennial expectations, the sense of the imminence of the millennial kingdom was renewed several times in the 1990s. It is probably the founder's declared distrust of any religious leadership¹⁰² that encourages some of his current adherents to doubt the Movement leadership's official rationalizations of why it cannot be known when the millennial kingdom will come. Another manner in which the sense of the imminence of the millennial kingdom can be revived is seen in the fact that the founder's scripture is relatively easy to access outside the Movement, and therefore new developments are beyond the leadership's influence. By the end of the last century, renewed millennial expectations could be observed both in the mainstream Grail Movement and in some splinter groups. The adherents of one of them—the Imanuelites—found themselves on the edge of destruction. The history of the Grail Movement and its offshoots supports the contention that no millennialism can be considered to be managed once and for all.

ENDNOTES

¹ "The Grail Movement: History & Evolution..." <www.grailmessage.com/gmevo.htm>, accessed 2 September 2002; J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Detroit: Gale, 1999): 692.

² Descriptions of the Grail Movement can be found in Kurt Hutten, *Seher, Grübler, Enthusiasten (Seers, Meditators, Enthusiasts)* (Stuttgart: Quell-Verlag, 1950), and in Karin Verscht-Biener and Hans-Dieter Reimer, *Die Gralsbewegung (The Grail Movement)* (Stuttgart: Evangelische Zentralstelle Für Weltanschauungsfragen, 1991). However, the millennial expectations of the Grail Movement are mentioned neither in Ted Daniels, *Millennialism: An International Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), nor in Richard A. Landes, ed., *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

³ Jacqueline Stone, "Japanese Lotus Millennialism: From Militant Nationalism to Contemporary Peace Movement," in *Millennialism, Persecution, and Violence*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000): 279. Stone uses the term "managed millennialism" to refer to instances in which the sense of the imminence of the collective salvation is kept low by institutional leaders. Thus the organization cannot become or be perceived as a severe disruption to the status quo.

⁴ "Abd-Ru-Shin, Oskar Ernst Bernhardt, Detailed Biography," <www.grailmessage.com/ABD_Page.htm>, accessed 26 March 2002.

⁵ Herbert Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni Abd-ru-shina, Marie a Irmingard na Zemi 1875–1990 (About the Life and Activities of Abd-ru-shin, Maria, and Irmingard on Earth in 1875–1990)* (Vomperberg: Alexander Bernhardt, 1991): 12; emphasis in the original.

⁶ Abdruschin, *Ve svetle Pravdy. Poselstvi Gralu (In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message)* (Zlin: Hlas, 1931): 619. This lecture ("And It Has Been Fulfilled") is not included in postwar editions.

⁷ *Verwehte Zeit Erwacht, Band II (Past Eras Awaken, Volume II)* (Stuttgart: Verlag der Stiftung Gralsbotschaft, 1990).

⁸ *Gralsblätter (Grail Papers)*, owned by O. E. Bernhardt, located in Bad Heilbrunn, Germany (1925-1926): then in Tutzing, Germany (1926-1929).

⁹ Abdruschin, *Im Lichte der Wahrheit. Gralsbotschaft (In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message)* (Tutzing: Gralsblätter, 1926).

¹⁰ The publishing house Der Ruf (Der Ruf, G.m.b.h., Munich) was in operation from 1927 to 1936.

¹¹ Abdruschin, "Der Ruf" ("The Calling"), *Der Ruf 1* (1927). Quoted in Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*: 20.

¹² Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 13. The Vomp Mountain in Austria is identified with Mount Moriah where, according to the Bible, Isaac should have been offered as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2) and where Solomon's Temple was built (2 Chronicles 3:1).

¹³ In 1929 Bernhardt repeatedly revealed his divine origin and identified himself with Imanuel, the Son of Light who is to judge the world. See Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 15; Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta ke svatemu poselstvi*

a k Panovi az do doby, kdy opustil Zemi (My Way to the Holy Message and to the Lord until He Left the Earth) (Brno: n.p., 1994): 47.

¹⁴ Abdruschin, *Im Lichte der Wahrheit. Gralsbotschaft. Grosse Aufgabe (In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message, Large Edition)* (Munich: Der Ruf, 1931).

¹⁵ The “Conclusion” differs from all preceding lectures in size and format. *Ve svetle Pravdy. Poselstvi Gralu od Abdruschina. Velke vydani (In the Light of Truth. The Grail Message by Abdruschin. Large edition)* (Munich: Der Ruf, 1932): 657. The “Conclusion” is not included in postwar editions.

¹⁶ Abdruschin, *Nachklänge zur Gralsbotschaft von Abdruschin, Band I (The Grail Message Fades Away by Abdruschin., Volume I)* (Munich: Der Ruf, 1934).

¹⁷ Josef Stefek, *Jak bylo nam, lidem, predavano Poselstvi ze svateho Gralu (The Way We, People, Got the Message from the Holy Grail)* (Brno: Integral, 1998): 33. O. E. Bernhardt was accused of illegally transferring money from Germany to Austria and arrested. This alleged crime was probably the reason why the publishing house was closed and the property confiscated. A substantial part of the property was given back to Bernhardt after he had settled the required amount.

¹⁸ The publishing house Die Stimme (Verlags A. G. Die Stimme, Zürich) ended its activities in 1938 after Bernhardt was put under arrest. Almost all lectures Bernhardt wrote after 1931 were published later in the postwar edition of *In the Light of Truth*.

¹⁹ Hutten, *Seher, Grübler, Enthusiasten (Seers, Brooders, Enthusiasts)*: 707.

²⁰ Bernhardt and his closest followers were sure that 144,000 people would join the Movement before the final judgment. These people did not necessarily have to be Germans but should possess “German spirit.” See Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 16, 47.

²¹ Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 17.

²² Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 17.

²³ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 32, 33.

²⁴ Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 24, 31, 27-28.

²⁵ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 43.

²⁶ Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 44.

²⁷ Abd-ru-shin, *Im Lichte der Wahrheit. Gralsbotschaft (In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message)* (Vomperberg: n.p., 1949-1950).

²⁸ Lecture 83, “The Called Ones” begins with this claim: “The Germans should be called to become a leading nation both spiritually and worldly!” (Abdruschin, “Berufen,” *Im Lichte der Wahrheit [In the Light of Truth]*, 597).

²⁹ Abd-ru-shin, *Ermahnungen (Admonitions)* (Vomperberg: Alexander Bernhardt, 1984).

³⁰ Abd-ru-shin, *Ermahnungen (Admonitions)*, 1.

³¹ Abd-ru-shin, “Life,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:396; emphasis in the original.

³² Abd-ru-shin, “Life,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:402; see also “The Primordial Spiritual Planes I–VII,” 3:399-445.

³³ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:173.

³⁴ Abd-ru-shin, “Life,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:397.

³⁵ Abd-ru-shin, “Life,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:397.

³⁶ Abd-ru-shin, “Spirit-Germs,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:375-82.

³⁷ Abd-ru-shin, “Germs originating from Animistic Substance,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:383-90.

³⁸ Abd-ru-shin, “Man in Creation,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:25.

³⁹ Abd-ru-shin, “Spirit-Germs,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:375-82.

⁴⁰ Abd-ru-shin, “Spirit-Germs,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:375-82.

⁴¹ Abd-ru-shin, “I am the Resurrection and the Life, No Man Cometh to the Father but by Me!” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:280-86.

⁴² “Then the hour of the ‘either-or’ has come for every human being. Either he is raised high towards the Light if he strives for the spiritual, or he remains chained to the World of Matter...and on the last stretch of the way he is drawn with it into

disintegration. This then is spiritual death!” Abd-ru-shin, “The World,” *In the Light of Truth*, 1:73. See also “The First Step,” 1:67.

⁴³ Abd-ru-shin, “Morality,” *In the Light of Truth*, 1:22-27; see also “Thought-forms,” 2:70-75, and “Behold, Man, How You Should Wander through This Creation so that Threads of Fate Will Not Hinder but Further Your Ascent!” 3:94-100.

⁴⁴ Abd-ru-shin, “Fate,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:11-16.

⁴⁵ Bernhardt asserts that the resurrection of Christ was in fact his reincarnation. Abd-ru-shin, “The Resurrection of Christ’s Physical Body,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:249-57.

⁴⁶ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:173-74; emphasis in the original.

⁴⁷ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:172.

⁴⁸ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:174.

⁴⁹ The Day of the Holy Dove takes place at the approximate time of the festival of Whitsuntide (Pentecost). Abd-ru-shin, “The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:339.

⁵⁰ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:174.

⁵¹ Abd-ru-shin, “The Holy Grail,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:172.

⁵² Abd-ru-shin, “The Redeemer,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:38-44; see also “The Crucifixion of the Son of God and the Lord’s Supper,” 2:236-39; “Christ said...!” 3:57-66; “Let there be Light,” 3:270-80; “The Son of Man,” 2:262-67; “The World Teacher,” 1:185; “The Millennium,” 1:173-76; “The Mystery of Lucifer,” 2:177-84; and “World Events,” 2:200.

⁵³ Abd-ru-shin, “The Primordial Spiritual Planes V,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:431 states:

Maria did come into holy union as a Part of the Love of God, which is Jesus, and as a Part of Imanuel. She has nothing to do with womanhood *as such*, but as the Love of God She faces the *whole of mankind!* The womanhood of Creation as such has *only* to do with Irmingard. And She descended to the Grail Castle into Primordial Creation, out of the Divine Plane, and there merely stepped into a Primordial Spiritual vessel which had already been prepared for her.

See also Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 89, where it reads: “The Triad of Imanuel in Creation is: Parsifal-Maria-Irmingard, thus Justice, Love and Purity! Therefore in the last, most sacred fulfillment Imanuel now works in Creation simultaneously in Parsifal, Maria and Irmingard”; and Abd-ru-shin, “The Primordial Spiritual Planes V,” *In the Light of Truth*, 3:431.

⁵⁴ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 61.

⁵⁵ Josef Wagner, *Moje cesta (My Way)*, 43-44.

⁵⁶ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About Life and Activities)*, 43.

⁵⁷ Abd-ru-shin, “The Development of Creation,” *In the Light of Truth*, 2:216, states, for example: “The time will arrive when a reflection of the real Paradise *must* come on earth under the rule of the Son of Man at the beginning of the Millennium!”

⁵⁸ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 44.

⁵⁹ *Im Lichte der Wahrheit. Gralsbotschaft von Abd-ru-shin. Drei Bände. Ausgabe aus letzter Hand. (In the Light of Truth: The Grail Message by Abd-ru-shin. Three Volumes. Last Hand edition)* (Vomperberg: Maria Bernhardt, 1949/1950).

⁶⁰ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 68-69.

⁶¹ The mainstream Grail Movement steadfastly maintains that the post-war edition is as O. E. Bernhardt intended it. See Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 78-79; Stefek, *Jak bylo nam predavano Poselstvi (The Way We Got the Message)*, 68-69.

⁶² Letter from Irmingard Bernhardt (30 March 1988), quoted in Vollman, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 106.

⁶³ One such group in Zlin, the Czech Republic (consisting of several families), survived both Nazism and Communism. In the last fifteen years, it has published Bernhardt’s books in pre-war editions in the Czech language. Their publishing house Hlas (The Voice) has also resumed the publication of the pre-war journal of Bernhardt’s Czech followers, *Hlas*.

⁶⁴ Maria lost her lawsuit against Mr. Friedrich Jesacher, who described Bernhardt’s family as “a crafty, tricky, even criminal gang hidden behind the veil of religious freedom” (Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni [About the Life and Activities]*, 78)

⁶⁵ *Ukony Gralu na Zemi (Grail Offices on Earth)* (Vomperberg: Alexander Bernhardt, n.d.): 7-8; Herbert Vollmann, *O pusobeni Gralu na Zemi (About Grail Activities on Earth)* (Vomperberg: Alexander Bernhardt, 1991): 11.

- ⁶⁶ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 66-67, 69.
- ⁶⁷ "The Grail Movement," <www.grailmessage.com/gmevo.htm>, accessed 6 May 2002.
- ⁶⁸ *Ukony Gralu na Zemi (Grail Offices on Earth)*, 9-10.
- ⁶⁹ *Ukony Gralu na Zemi (Grail Offices on Earth)*, 12.
- ⁷⁰ Hutten, *Seher, Grübler, Enthusiasten (Seers, Meditators, Enthusiasts)*, 710.
- ⁷¹ Abd-ru-shin's 1936 declaration that he did not come to found a religion is quoted in Vollmann, *O pusobeni Gralu na Zemi (About Grail Activities on Earth)*, 13: "I do not bring a new religion, I do not want to establish a new church, let alone a sect...."
- ⁷² Stiftung Gralsbotschaft (Grail Foundation) was established in 1950 according to the proposal of Maria Bernhardt, the second wife of O. E. Bernhardt. The Grail Foundation "serves to further the public welfare in the spiritual and ethical spheres through dissemination of the work *In the Light or Truth: The Grail Message* by Abd-ru-shin" See "The Grail Foundation. History..." <<http://www.grailmessage.com>>, accessed 29 May 2005, especially by means of its publishing house Verlag der Stiftung Gralsbotschaft.
- ⁷³ Verlag der Stiftung Gralsbotschaft, Ditzingen, Germany.
- ⁷⁴ Letters sent to cross-bearers by national Grail Circle leaders to inform them about the split in the movement in 1998-1999.
- ⁷⁵ Herbert Vollmann was the last to hold the highest title "Apostle." The Apostles were appointed by Bernhardt himself.
- ⁷⁶ Reportedly, since 1993 Siegfried Bernhardt and his wife Claudia-Maria Bernhardt had lived separately "as brother and sister" in their house. In 1997 Siegfried Bernhardt "found a beloved companion" in Miss Birkeland, teacher of his children. He admitted to the Seekers of the Truth that Birkeland "occupied the place of woman by my side." Letter by Siegfried Bernhardt to Seekers of the Truth, April 1999.
- ⁷⁷ "Meeting of Disciples and National Leaders in Stuttgart," 1 May, 1999. Letter to Seekers of the Truth.
- ⁷⁸ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 43.
- ⁷⁹ Vollmann, *O zivote a pusobeni (About the Life and Activities)*, 43.
- ⁸⁰ Abd-ru-shin, "The Great Comet," *In the Light of Truth*, 1:182-83.
- ⁸¹ Personal communications with Czech followers of Bernhardt's teaching.
- ⁸² Artur Zatloukal, "Kometa" ("The Comet"), *Kruh* 2 (1997): 10-14. *Kruh (The Circle)* is the internal periodical of Czech Grail circles.
- ⁸³ It is claimed that more than a million copies of Abd-re-shin's *In the Light of Truth* have been sold. "The Grail Movement," <www.grailmessage.com/gmevo.htm>, accessed 6 May 2002.
- ⁸⁴ Zdenek Vojtisek, *Encyklopedie nabozeneskych smeru v Ceske republice (Encyclopedia of Religious Movements in the Czech republic)* (Praha: Portal, 2004): 184-87.
- ⁸⁵ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka. Mesiasovo zive slovo k vsenaprave lidstva (The Son of Man: The Messiah's Living Word for Restoration of Mankind)*, 2nd ed. (Velke Popovice: self-published, 1993): 26.
- ⁸⁶ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (Son of Man)*, 2nd ed., 26.
- ⁸⁷ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (Son of Man)*, 2nd ed., 28.
- ⁸⁸ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (Son of Man)*, 2nd ed., 26, 28.
- ⁸⁹ Although bearing the same last name, the couple are not married. The name "Dvorsky" is not unusual in the Czech Republic. According to Jan Dvorsky, the origin of his mate Lucie "must be found in the fourth Primordial Spiritual Plane on the Island of Swan Virgins." Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (Son of Man)*, 2nd ed., 27.
- ⁹⁰ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (The Son of Man)* (Velke Popovice: self-published, 1992).
- ⁹¹ Jan Dvorsky, *Syn cloveka (Son of Man)*, 2nd ed., 28, 32, 28.
- ⁹² Personal communications with former followers, Petr Konecny, Vladimir Kafka, Xenie Kafkova.
- ⁹³ A letter from Dvorsky to Jana Zikova (a future follower) dated 15 August 1993.
- ⁹⁴ No more than five houses served as Imanuelite communities. Two men served as clairvoyants in Jan Dvorsky's group. Besides prophesying they determined the color of a person's aura, thus indicating her or his spiritual readiness to enter the millennial kingdom. Dvorsky expelled the two clairvoyants when some of their prophecies failed.

⁹⁵ Interviews with former followers Vladimir Kafka and Xenie Kafkova, 18 June 1999.

⁹⁶ Petr Konecny, *Sekta. Jak jsem hledal smysl života a našel pravdu (The Sect: How I Looked for the Meaning of Life and Found the Truth)* (Plzen: self-published, 2000): 17.

⁹⁷ Petr Konecny, *Sekta (The Sect)*, 35.

⁹⁸ Personal letters signed by Helpers of the Son of Man, addressed to editorial boards of *Severocesky denik*, *Vecernik Praha* and other newspapers, dated 7 September, 4 P. I. (1994).

⁹⁹ Petr Konecny, *Sekta (The Sect)*, 40.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with former follower Marta Vaculikova, March 1995.

¹⁰¹ Six other parent couples among Dvorsky's followers were sentenced to conditional punishments for the same crime.

¹⁰² Abd-ru-shin, "The Call for the Helper," *In the Light of Truth*, 1:13-17. This lecture was originally entitled "The Call for the Leader" (Abdruschin, *Im Lichte der Wahrheit [In the Light of Truth]*, 449-55).