

# KING KORESH

## **The Man From Inside the Earth**



Being the biography of one of America's great eccentrics,  
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### **PART ONE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **“Koreshanity in a Nutshell”**

In which a summary of Teed's religious and scientific tenets are presented. It sheds light on the sometimes arcane and difficult nuances of Teed's thought and teachings and sets a foundation upon which to understand the activities of his life as the messiah of Koreshanity.

#### **CHAPTER ONE**

##### **“Experiments”**

###### **1**

Described here is the first “scientific” experiment by which the Koreshan Geodetic Staff believed they had proof of Teed's basic premise – that we are living on the inside surface of a sphere. The experiment was conducted in July of 1896 along the Old Illinois Drainage Canal near Summit, Illinois.

###### **2**

The Koreshans believed they had established an even more definitive proof of the earth's true shape. An absolutely straight line constructed through a wooden post set perpendicular to the earth's surface will form either a tangent to the earth's surface, a line parallel to the earth's surface, or a chord that eventually cuts into the earth's surface in two places. Such an experiment would allegedly prove, respectively, that we are living on the outside of a sphere, a flat earth, or nestled inside the concave surface of a sphere. We learn how the experiment was conceived, experience the excitement as it is carried out, and witness how the results of this experiment impact humankind.

#### **CHAPTER TWO**

##### **“Beginnings: *Into You a Child is Born*”**

Here officially begins the biography of Koresh, with an extensive family history that eventually leads to the birth and young childhood of Cyrus Romulus Teed. We then follow Teed as a young man. He begins a medical apprenticeship under the tutelage of his uncle. He marries his third cousin. Soon they have Teed's only child, a son. They move to NYC where Teed joins the Union's medical corps. Upon discharge from the army, Teed attends the Eclectic Medical College in NYC, after which he sets up a practice in Utica, NY with his uncle. Becoming interested in magnetic healing, alchemy, and the occult, soon Teed has a vision that changes his life forever.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **“The Illumination of Koresh”**

Here is Cyrus Teed’s complete and unexpurgated first-hand account of his encounter with the Goddess and the enlightenment she bestowed upon him. One of Teed’s more interesting and readable works, he shares with the reader how he learned of the earth’s true nature and of his role as the new messiah.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **“First Steps”**

Mystical, magical, and, most likely, mythical beginnings, complete with nimbuses and angels, Teed and his family nevertheless must succumb to the practicalities of daily life. Teed initially proselytizes through his practice but soon he is labeled “that crazy doctor” and loses most of his patients. Searching for a first foothold, he establishes a small communal household in Moravia, NY, subsisting upon the manufacturing of mops. He later moves his group to Syracuse, NY where he finds short-lived success until a newspaper campaign against him, brought on by a disenchanted follower, drives Teed and his early followers from town.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **“Chicago Messiah”**

Many Chicagoans in the 1880’s developed a curiosity and penchant for viewpoints beyond their mundane “Sunday” Christianity. Mysticism blossomed there and the town was ripe for Teed and his ideas. He was invited to speak before the National Association for Mental Scientists. Igniting his small audience, Teed attracted a following large enough to firmly establish his colony in Chicago’s Washington Heights, a base from which to proselytize the unbelievers.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **“Celibacy and Children”**

Teed believed that celibacy was a necessary prerequisite for immortality and that immortality is to be valued above all else. Here these beliefs are developed and explored. Teed’s exploitation of the woman’s restoration movement towards this end is discussed. Two aspects of Koreshan Society that had great impact on their small community were child rearing and education. These are spoken of in light of the Unity’s self-proclaimed right to raise the children “exclusively without any regard to what the parents may suppose to be the right thing.” Koreshanity’s economic views, based on “Christ’s communism,” are explored. We learn that the unbalanced distribution of wealth leads to debauchery which makes impossible the necessary celibate life essential for immortality. Only Koreshan economic views can rectify this.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **“Networking”**

Koreshanity wasn’t the only new religious cult being promulgated around late-19<sup>th</sup> century America. There were others who also claimed messiahship, celibacy, and holders of Truth. Teed had a plan to unite them all and consequently had run-ins with the Shakers, the Harmonists, and Thomas Lake Harris’ Brotherhood of the New Life. Everyone thought Teed was only out for their money.

## **PART TWO**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **“Plans for a New Jerusalem”**

The Biblical interpretations that convinced Teed of his role as the New Messiah also showed that he would establish and rule over a new holy city, the New Jerusalem. But even holy cities must be planned.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Estero Bay**

A mix of Koreshan mythology and historical fact tells the fascinating story of how Teed obtained, although “hoodwinked” may be more accurate, an old German homesteader’s 300 acres of land along and around the Estero River in Florida’s, then pristine and undeveloped, Everglades. Sixteen intrepid Koreshans left blustery Chicago for tropical Florida to begin construction of the New Jerusalem. Early life in Estero was hard. Mosquitoes, fleas, and rattlesnakes were their first enemies, but slowly they began to transform the unruly tropical landscape into an inhabitable home, ready for the first influx of new colonists.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **“Golden Years”**

During the Koreshan Unity’s heyday the small and energetic community thrived. Extensive acreage was purchased in and around Estero. Numerous buildings were erected utilizing lumber cut and shaped at their own sawmill. Food production was at a peak. A water well was dug. A dairy was embarked upon. A bakery was established. Meals were delicious. Extensive sunken gardens, containing all kinds of exotic imports, beautified parked areas along the Estero River. Avenues were planned and paved wide enough to accommodate the expected soon-to-arrive eight million believers who would populate Estero as soon as Koreshanity’s truth became evident to all. The Guiding Star Press was reestablished in Estero. Their magazine tracts and pamphlets were again being innovatively printed to help spread Teed’s gospel. There was now time for religious celebrations. Dramatic plays and musical concerts, from the Unity’s prize-winning brass band, were performed upon a floating stage with audiences sitting along the banks of the Estero River. These were truly Koreshanity’s Golden Years.



## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **“Trouble with Neighbors”**

With so many of Teed’s followers joining the colony in Estero, the Koreshan Unity was able to gain local political power. The Koreshans block voted, and as long as they voted along the same lines as the local Fort Myers regulars, relations between the two towns were good. But when the Koreshans voted Republican in the 1904 elections, the local Democratic leaders waged war against them. This prompted the Koreshans to establish a new local political party. It all culminated in a street brawl in Fort Myers with Teed getting clipped hard in the head.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **“Final Days”**

Teed and his followers believed him to be immortal. So when complications due to Teed’s street brawl brought on his demise, the colony was shocked. For days many sat praying over his decomposing body waiting for the decay to reverse itself. When finally ordered to bury the body, they sat vigil outside a quickly erected tomb awaiting his resurrection. A consequence of Teed’s death was the fracturing of the colony into several small sects, each claiming to be the true representation of Koreshanity.

German translations of Teed’s works found some acceptance in Germany where the Hollow Earth Doctrine was developed and promulgated by Peter Bender, plagiarizer of Teed’s ideas. Hitler became immersed in the possibilities of the doctrine and had top scientists experiment with newly developed radar in an attempt to spy on England by pointing their devices above them at a 45-degree angle. When it didn’t work, Peter Bender ended up in a concentration camp.

In Estero, the number of members belonging to the Unity slowly dwindled until only two members remained in 1960. One of them, Hedwig Michel, had been President of the Unity since 1948. She had arrived in Estero shortly before World War II as a Jewish refugee on the advice of her mentor, Peter Bender.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The book concludes with a full bibliography of over fifty sources.



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### PART ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

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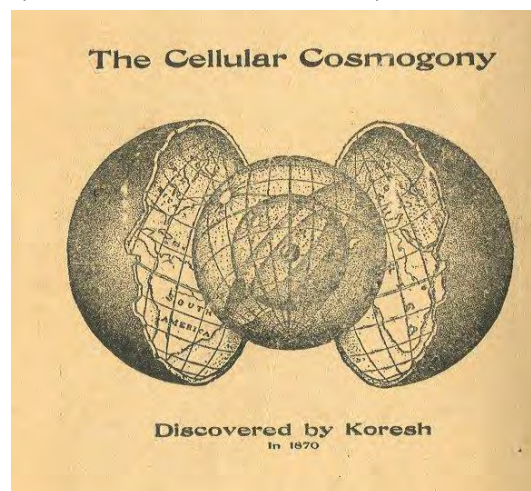
“Thy Will Be Done IN Earth As It Is In Heaven”

### *Koreshanity in a Nutshell*

**B**ecause of its deep and penetrating knowledge of our finite and all-encompassing world, Koreshanity is the *religio-science* through which the structural and spiritual form of our universe is revealed. Its form dictates its function, and, together, they dictate the true social, political, and economic state by which humankind should live. Once all humanity accepts Koreshanity, it will begin to rebuild a society that corresponds and mirrors the true structure of the universe. Only then can we hope to attain eternal life through the primordial process of Resurrection. Only then will we be fully absorbed by the Godhead, Jesus the Christ!

Because Koreshanity is omniscient, it is therefore UNIVERSOLOGY: the explanation of all existing things and their true relationship to one another. It is predicated upon the thoroughly demonstrable and therefore indisputable premise –

*THE EARTH IS THE CONCAVE SURFACE OF A SPHERE!*



The cosmos is *biune* - duality existing as one. There exists both the *Alchemico-organic* and the *Anthropostic* world. They were simultaneously created and exist as a primordial thought of the Godhead. The *Anthropostic* world is considered as primary, and thus the “higher” of the



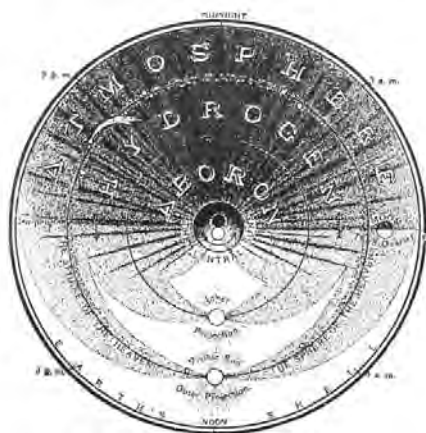
two, yet the two worlds of the cosmos are in reality co-eternal and are coordinated into one system. One cannot exist without the other.

The *Alchemico-organic* world is the physical world, fixed and stationary. It is a spherical egg within which incubates life. “Life is in the kernel. It lies in the center of all natural spheres. It is the middle of the egg, the seed in the orange, the meat in the nut, the heart of the acorn. Likewise mankind dwells on the inside of the world.” (6:261) Man is a microcosm of this world, for within man dwells his soul.

Earth *IS* the cosmos. It is indeed spherical. Yet humankind does not live on the outside shell of this ball – we live our lives upon the inside surface. All existence is contained within. Outside the rind or outermost shell, there exists nothing; there is only void. “Form is a fundamental property of existence; therefore, that which has no form has no existence. Limitation is a property of form. The universe has existence; therefore it has form, hence it has limitation.” (37:15)

There are seventeen *laminae* or layered shells to the physical limitation of our universe. Altogether they are approximately 100 miles thick. There are five geologic *laminae*, of which the innermost is the surface of our familiar earth. We exist on its concave surface. It curves upward eight inches to the mile. Thus the diameter and circumference of our universe are, respectively, 8,000 and 25,000 miles. Surrounding the five geologic *laminae*, there are five mineral *laminae*, followed by seven metallic *laminae*. The outermost rind is pure gold and several miles thick. The seven metallic *laminae* correspond to the seven Noble Metals (i.e., iron, tin, copper, zinc, silver, mercury, and, finally, gold). Our oceans, which are filled with these metals and minerals, are continuously capturing and recycling these materials back to these outer shells.

Within the hollow of these 17 shells exist three atmospheres. We exist and live our lives amidst our familiar oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Beyond this is an atmosphere of pure hydrogen. And beyond that is a region of *aboron* – a solar electro-magnetic atmosphere called the *solar limbus*, which has at its center the *stellar nucleus*, the true, yet directly unobservable, sun. The sun we daily perceive, along with all the other observable astronomical bodies, are actually a variety of reflections stemming from this true sun.



The *stellar nucleus* is bright on one side and dark on the other. Its rotation is the cause of day and night. It is the “Perpetual Pivot and Pole” of the cosmos. It is always at your azimuth, that is, the location directly above your head, regardless of where you presently are. Yet it is



never directly perceived. It precesses, with a cycle of 24,000 years. The sun we do see is actually a reflection projected on the outside surface of the hydrogen atmosphere. Contrary to what you have been told, it is less than 1,000 miles away.

The unseen *stellar nucleus* spirals about an ethereal cone whose apex is pointed “northward,” while its base is directed toward the “south.” Its helical path is produced by “pulls” upon its bright (positive) and dark (negative) sides. Its varying position along this path determines the cyclical pageant of seasons upon much of the earth’s inner surface. These “pulls” are energized by a heaping of electro-magnetic forces upon the base of the cone that travels up along the cone to be spontaneously discharged in a spectacular display as the energy reaches the apex.

The *Alchemico-organic* world, that 17-layered sphere and all that within, is in fact a great electro-magnetic battery. Energy is perpetually moving within due to a continuous ascension and decline of electro-magnetic waves. The *stellar nucleus* is its positive pole, while the shells, that “gigantic voltaic pile,” (37:18) is its negative pole. The true sun, not more than 100 miles in diameter and only 4,000 miles away, is the materialization of 17 electro-magnetic radiations, generated from the 17 outer shells, “materialized through voluminous and high-tension convergence” (37:18). At the positive pole the energy converges only to be radiated back to the surface, where the energy diversifies back into its corresponding *laminae*. There the energy again rematerializes as minerals and metals disintegrate and are once again radiated (heavenly) inward to converge upon the perpetually materialized sun. The stars, though weak, are also manifestations of this focalized energy within the aboron atmosphere. Thus there is a constant exchange between the shells and the nucleus, and between energy and matter.

Energies emanating from the *stellar nucleus* are expressed radially in all directions from that center. Specifically we find *gravic* energy pushing down on us from above. This is the true explanation of the phenomenon of gravity. Light and heat are alternate forms of *gravic* energy. *Gravic* energies are considered “cathode,” remembering the symbolic battery. Again, these energies descend. Ascending from the “anode” are the *levic* energies. There is a constant flow between *levic* and *gravic* energies. Functionally, they correspond to the two extremes of space where we find the heaviest material preponderating farthest from the central sun and the lightest surrounding the sun. Thus all substances find their planes of rest as some things rise and others fall.

*Caloric* and *cruosic* energies, both specific types of *levic* energy, begin their ascension from the metallic laminae. Caloric energy causes an expansion of these shells, while the *cruosic* energy results in a contraction. Their alternate action is called *actinic* energy. *Actinic* energy “breaths” circular gaps, called *discular vacui*, into the spaces between the metallic laminae. These gaps fill up with a *mercurial amalgam*. (37:27) Descending energies reflect off of these gaps forming the illusion of planets. Their movements are actually movements of the discs caused by the electro-magnetic impulses between them. Comets are small lenticular reflections of *levic* energies through *crystallic lenses* spiraling about the central solar sphere. They eventually plunge into and feed the *stellar nucleus*. Each planet and every comet has a slightly different function necessary for universal perpetuation.



Eclipses occur at regular intervals on a cycle of 18 years and 11 days. During the time of one cycle of 24,000 years, 29 lunar and 41 solar eclipses occur. Within each cycle the same sequence of eclipses occurs. Once this sequence is learned, it will only be a matter of referring to a table of dates and times to prepare for a future eclipse.

What causes an eclipse? It has nothing to do with shadows as you may have been led to believe. The moon cannot block the light of the sun to cast its shadow upon the earth's surface as presently thought. This is because the celestial bodies are not solid. They originate in the earth's shells. The moon is merely a reflection of the earth's surface which is modified by the chaos of the geologic strata. When this reflection becomes impeded, an eclipse is produced. Occasionally, processes occurring within the metallic shells are capable of cutting off the levitating currents. This occurs at regular and predictable schedules. The result of this impediment is the creation of the misperceived "shadows."

Within the *Alchemical-organic* world resides the *Anthropostic* or *Organo-vital* world which encompasses the vegetable, animal, human, angelic, and God kingdoms. It is "prior [as] to quality ... [and] as to positive power to create and perpetuate." It corresponds directly to the *Alchemico-organic* world where the *stellar nucleus* is duplicated as Jesus, the Godhead; the laminae as his quality.

Jesus is the "source of being, the point, and origin of creative power ... the Divine Man, the bright and morning star, whence originate the voluntary redemptive will and creative power." (37:21) He visits humankind in their image on a cycle equal to the precession of the equinoxes, every 24,000 years. He once arrived as Adam, then Christ, and now, "the coming of the Messiah is as inevitable as the reproduction of the seed. The Divine Seed was sown 1900\* years ago; the first fruit is another Messianic personality. The Messiah is now in the world, declaring the scientific gospel." (22:482) Seven churches will be built to correspond to the seven laminae of metals. Within these churches will be developed seven human qualities reflected in the seven planets.

"When a man so understands the Laws of Life as to know their application, and through obedience to Law overcomes the sensual tendencies of his nature, he reaches the point of biologic absorption. The visible and tangible dematerializes, and the outer consciousness enters into unity and blends with the inner and spiritual. The visible man consumes and thus enters, by *transabsorption*, into the unity of the invisible Godhead, and, by descent, into the church prepared to receive the *precipitate afflatus*." (37:25)

"We are now approaching a great biologic conflagration. Thousands of people will dematerialize, through a biological electro-magnetic vibration. This will be brought about through the direction of one mind, the only one who has a knowledge of the law of this bio-alchemical transmutation. The change will be accomplished through the formation of a biological battery, the laws of which are known only to one man. This man is Elijah the Prophet, ordained of God, the Shepherd of the Gentiles and the central reincarnation of the ages. From this conflagration will spring the sons of God, the biune offspring of the Lord Jesus, the Christ and Son of God." (37:24)



“To know of the earth’s concavity and its relation to universal form is to know god.” (37:9) When understood, man can adjust and transform himself into a universal being and become immortal. Completing his union with the Godhead, his physical molecules and atoms, together with atmospheric and numerous free energies of space, whirl into a vortex of vibration. His mind remains conscious as it contracts into a nebulous of tightly wound knots. The atoms converge swiftly towards the *stellar nucleus*. They suddenly merge! This joining of nucleus and knot becomes one with the Godhead. Thus the physical being is transmuted into pure energy, which is rapidly ejected from the *stellar nucleus*, soaring back to the earth’s concave surface, forever activating and reactivating the process of *material-electro-magnetic* exchange. Hence, spiritual thought is the primitive cause of motion, and it is the charging of the *Battery* that makes the *Organo-vital* world the preeminent world.

“Koreshan Cosmogony ... explains the universe. It holds that there are no mysteries it does not reveal, no problems it does not solve. The secret is claimed to have been found, the „philosopher’s stone” is being applied, the circle has been squared, baser metals have been transmuted into gold, the Bible is now understood, and its laws clearly analyzed by the Founder of Koreshanity.” (37:161)

*"All that is opposed to Koreshanity is Antichrist"* (37:9)

\*Recall that Koreshanity flourished at the turn of the last century.



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## The Man From Inside the Earth

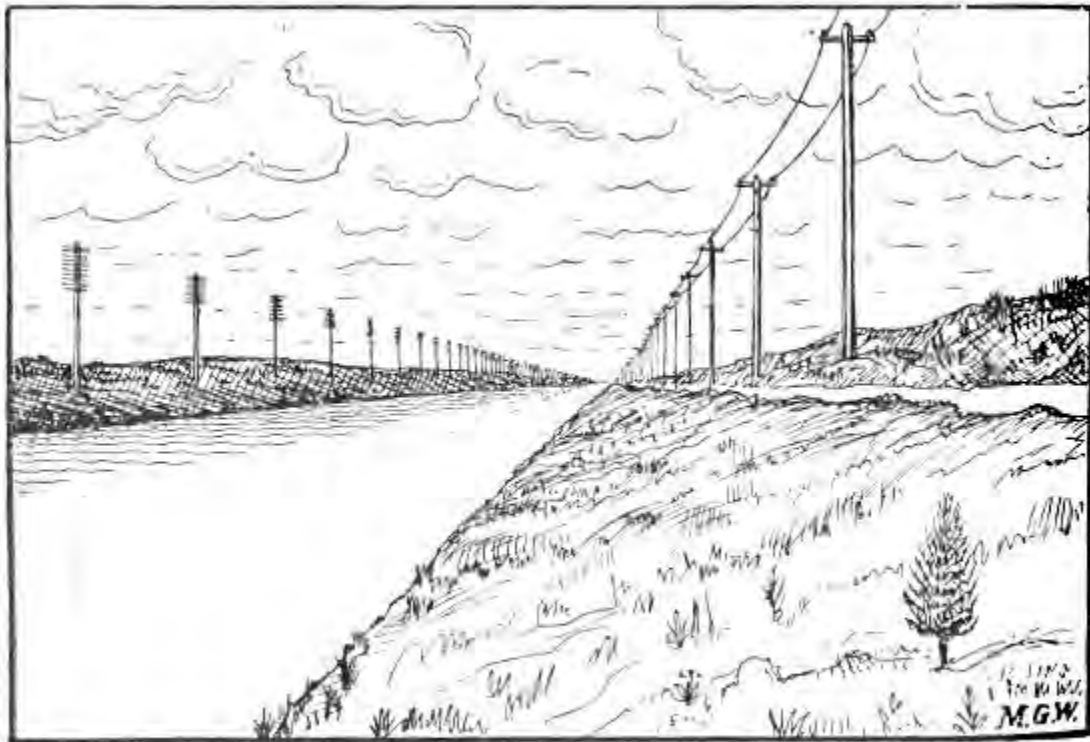
### Chapter One

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#### *1. Experiments along the Canal*

Have you ever stood upon the North Shore of Long Island and gazed across the sound? On a clear day Connecticut is easily visible even though it is almost ten miles away. But, if the earth curves down and away from us, as we are told (eight inches to the mile), then there should be a “bulge” between you and Connecticut, taller than yourself. In fact, the “bulge” is calculated to be about 60 feet tall. So how can it be that Connecticut can be seen at all? Perhaps the premise that the earth is convex is false!

Thus, on July 25, 1896, the Koreshans began to conduct the first of their monumental experiments. Precision was the key. The site was the Old Illinois Drainage Canal beginning at a bend in the canal near Summit, Illinois.



Old Illinois and Michigan Drainage Canal. Site of Experiments, July 25, 1896.



There it was a straight line to travel north-eastwardly up the canal to the first bridge – a distance of five miles. At the beginning of this “line” they drove a stake deep into the floor of the canal. Upon this stake they placed a circular target, 22 inches in diameter with circular bands of red, white, and black. The base of the target hovered seven inches above the water.

The sun “burned brightly” (37:71) as the three members of the Koreshan Geodetic Staff rowed their small boat three miles upstream, anchored, and made some astounding observations. According to the Copernican view of the earth, the telescope placed 12 inches above the water should have made visible only five inches of the target’s top. Yet, when these men actually peered through their telescopes, a surprisingly accurate view of the entire target was possible. Nothing was there to impede their view of the target!

Data recorded, observations sketched, the three intrepid geodesists proceeded up the canal for two more miles. They dropped anchor underneath the bridge and again set up their telescopes. Peering through them precisely 12 inches above the water, the entire target could still be seen. In addition, there happened to be a tow-barge now located nearby the target. Although five miles away, the entire hull of the barge could be seen and men could easily be seen laboring upon the barge.

What would happen if they lowered their telescopes to a height of only six inches above the water level? At this height the “horizon” should be three-fourths of a mile away. Beyond that point nothing but sky should be observable. The target, the barge, and the working men should all be invisible, hidden behind the bulge of the earth. Calculating, the top of the target should be nine feet, seven inches below the top of this bulge that represents our horizon. Yet again, gazing through the telescopic apparatus, all was easily observable. The implication of this is overwhelming – the surface of our earth CANNOT BE CONVEX!

The scientists wanted to be careful. The impact of their discovery was much too profound to allow for any error. They cautiously proceeded to double-check their data. Under this distant bridge they newly erected two rectangular targets, 21 by 27 inches and 26 by 38 inches. Both were completely white and, again, placed seven inches above the water’s surface. Side by side they stood.

The men rowed back to Summit, stopping along the way to make further observations, recording the accumulating data. Back at their starting point the two white targets, now five miles away, were clearly visible to the unaided eye of each observer sitting 30 inches above the water’s plane.

Professor U. G. Morrow, the expedition’s leader, slowly lowered his head, cautiously gazing at the easily visible targets. Not until his eyes were a distance of 15 inches above the surface of the water did the view of the targets become occulted. (Remember, the horizon should have been at three-fourths of a mile and the targets should have been nine feet, seven inches below that.) Professor Morrow steadily remained at this height as he picked up his telescope. Not only did this give him a clear view of the two targets, but he was now able to see the water directly below the targets, mirroring their reflections, “elongated and with the slightly rippling surface.” (37:71) “The timbers to which the targets were fastened, and the stones of which the piers were built were visible down to the surface of the canal.” (37:72)



As the torrid and revealing sunlight began to crumble into shards of darkness, the cosmos resounded with the triumph of Professor Morrow's words:

"300 years ago, it was with the greatest difficulty that scientists could be induced to look through the magic tube<sup>\*</sup>; at that time observations through it meant conversion to the new system. Today, this scientific instrument is put to a new use, and the principle difference now is to induce leaders of modern scientific thought to use it upon the surface of any body of water. We will escort any number of surveyors, engineers, or scientists to the surface of still water, where the experiments and observations can be repeated with the results as given above. *LET IT BE PUT TO THE TEST!*" (37: 73)

## 2. The Gulf Coast Experiments

The earth is a concave sphere and we, along with the rest of the kosmos, are all inside of this sphere. This is no allegory or wishful thinking. It is not the expectionation of a feeble mind. It is irrevocable fact, for it has been proven thus.

Easy. Place a wooden post perpendicular to the surface of the earth. Along this perpendicular, choose a point through which an absolutely straight line will be constructed at right angles to the post. When this is done, we can expect one of three possibilities in respect to the distance between this straight line and the earth's surface as the line is extended along either side of the chosen point. Traveling along this line, the distance will either increase, remain the same, or decrease.

- If the distance *increases*, it is a tangent to the sphere that is being constructed. Hence, the earth is curving below and away from the line. Thus it would be proven that we are living on the outside surface of a sphere, just as we have all be indoctrinated to believe.
- If the distance remains *constant*, then a line parallel to the plane surface of the earth is being constructed. This proves the earth to be flat.
- Finally, if the distance were to *decrease*, then the line would intersect the earth in two points, thus forming a chord within the sphere. Hence, the earth is curving upwards toward the line. This would show the earth to be spherical and further show that we are on its inner, concave, surface.

Therefore, our earth is either convex, flat, or concave; and if this experiment were to be performed, the answer as to the shape of our world would be answered – forever.



“The only geodetic survey ever made for the purpose of determining whether the surface on which we dwell is convex or concave, was made by the Geodetic Staff of the Koreshan Unity in the year 1897.” (37:13) The results literally turned the earth inside-out. Antithesis became a way of life.

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It may have been a simple matter to realize the Gulf coast experiment. Simple: Construct a straight line (i.e., an “air line”) above and “parallel” to the earth’s surface. As this line is extended, the true relationship between the earth and this line will become apparent. But how is such a line actually constructed?

Teed tells us, “After twenty-seven years of almost fruitless effort to find a man capable, honest, and efficient, with capacity to comprehend the principles of foreshortening ... and [capable of] experiencing the weight of responsibility which a knowledge of the truth imposed upon the discoverer ... Professor U. G. Morrow has the honor of the invention by which the mechanical proof of the concavity of the earth is so absolutely demonstrated.” (37:5-6)

Ulysses G. Morrow was soon titled “Astronomer and Geodesist for the Koreshan Unity” and was established leader of the various geodetic expeditions in both Illinois and Florida. At the same time he was editor of the Unity’s periodical, *The Flaming Sword*. Because of his extensive involvement in the experiments to prove the truth of Teed’s vision, he actually authored the bulk of the cult’s most important written document, *The Cellular Cosmogony*, while Teed limited himself to a lengthy introduction and various appendices.



“Professor” Morrow was not trained in any of the sciences and acquired his title as a teacher of the Isaac Pittman System of Shorthand while living in Corning, Iowa. He also self-published a little book on the subject entitled *Phonography or Phonetic Shorthand: What It Is and How to Learn It*. It was printed in 1888. On the title page, Morrow tells us that he was a “stenographer to the First National Bank, of Corning, Iowa, and the Treasurer of the Iowa State Sunday School Association, Principal of the Corning School of Shorthand, and Author of Improved Method of Postal Instruction,” the later being a method of teaching shorthand through the mail. While the book did not teach any shorthand, it was instead a lengthy advertisement for



the virtues of shorthand in general and the talents of Morrow's teaching specifically. When or how he met Teed or became interested in Teed's ideas is unknown.

Morrow's invention was given the name, "Rectilineator." He invented the Koreshan geodetic apparatus in 1896 as an instrument for surveying a straight line. In essence, it is a number of 4x12-foot rectangular panels designed to be attached end to end. By continually removing the rear panel and connecting it to the foremost, a moving straight line is possible provided the greatest precision and care in both construction and technique is practiced. "The Rectilineator consists of a number of sections in the form of double-T-squares, each 12 feet in length, with braced and tensional cross-arms four feet in length ... The material of which the sections of the Rectilineator are constructed, is inch mahogany, seasoned for *twelve years* in the shops of the Pullman Palace Car Co., Pullman Ill. The horizontal bar of each section is eight inches in width, while the cross-arms are five inches wide. Steel tension rods crossing the horizontal bar transversely and extending through the extremities of the cross-arms, are adjusted to maintain the constancy of the right angles. Finely trimmed brass facings at the extremities of the cross-arms constitute the adjusting surfaces. Through flanges on the facings, ingenious screws were placed for securing the adjustments when made... Each section was supported by two strongly built, platformed standards, with adjustable castings to receive the horizontal sections between the body of the castings and adjustable cleats with clamps and set screws. The sections rest in the castings edgewise, the cross-arms extending perpendicularly."

"On the evening of March 17, 1897, the Rectilineator stood at the beginning of the line of survey, at Naples, Florida, ready for the first adjustment in the *first* and *only* geodetic survey ever made in the history of the world, to determine whether the earth is flat, convex, or concave!" (37:100)

The Koreshan Operating Staff, the Visiting and Investigating Committee and the Corps of Witnesses (see this chapter's appendix) all arrived in Naples, located on Florida's west coast, as guests of Col. Walter N. Haldeman. Naples was an attraction for many travelers anxious to escape the North's cold and bitter winters. There were even a few who had come from as far as Europe. As a resort, Naples was very secluded. There was as yet no easy access. There was no railroad; not even a major road. Most arrived from Punta Gorda, the end of the railroad line, by boat. The Naples dock, known as the "Long dock," extended 1,000 feet out into the Gulf. Unfortunately it can no longer be seen today. It became ripped apart as a victim of hurricane Donna.



Walter N. Haldeman



Haldeman, along with as Henry Watterson, winner of the 1917 Pulitzer Prize for his editorials celebrating the entrance of the United States into World War One, had developed an interest in Teed's ideas. As the editors and founders of Louisville, Kentucky's major newspaper, the *Courier-Journal*, they were able to give Teed and Koreshanity much favorable publicity. Haldeman also happened to be the owner of a very beautiful winter home in Naples and was willing to open it up to the Koreshan cause. There they could set up a Staff Headquarters and Operating Station. The Koreshans happily accepted the invitation.

Many of the Koreshan Staff had traveled from Chicago. Their first stop was in Estero where a Koreshan colony had already been established. Here they visited for the day to renew friendships. All of their equipment was stored in a shed on Estero Island, off Florida's gulf coast. When it was finally time to begin "The Work", the sloop Ada was loaded with the equipment and pointed in the direction of Naples. Robert Gilbert, its captain, had offered the Koreshans his services. He later converted to Koreshanity and became a permanent member of the Estero community.

They arrived at the Long Dock with all of their experimental equipment and survival needs. With them was Morrow's Rectilineator and his Mercurial Geodetic Levels (also his invention), their telescopic apparatus, and the Check and Daily Record Books. The date was January 2, 1897. Professor Morrow was in charge. They had come "in an effort to enlighten the world as to cosmic form" by conducting the most revolutionary experiment of the century.

A campsite was constructed on the beach just below Haldeman's house. Several tents were erected for sleeping quarters. A palm-thatched shack was constructed to serve as a dining room and a general meeting place. Here the Koreshan scientists could meet each day after their long hours of work.

Several days after the work began, a near tragedy struck. A fire broke out on Estero Island. It destroyed the colony's lucrative saw mill and machine shop. The shed that had temporarily housed the expedition's experimenting equipment also burned. They were lucky that they had chosen to begin procedures when they did, otherwise the experiment may never have been performed – perhaps not even to this day!

Naples Beach was an ideal setting for such an experiment. Most important was that the coast line both north and south of them was relatively straight and level for a number of miles. This was a necessary prerequisite. In addition, the warm Florida climate allowed experimental operations to occur during the winter months. Finally, it was close to the Unity's communistic and cooperative colony in Estero.

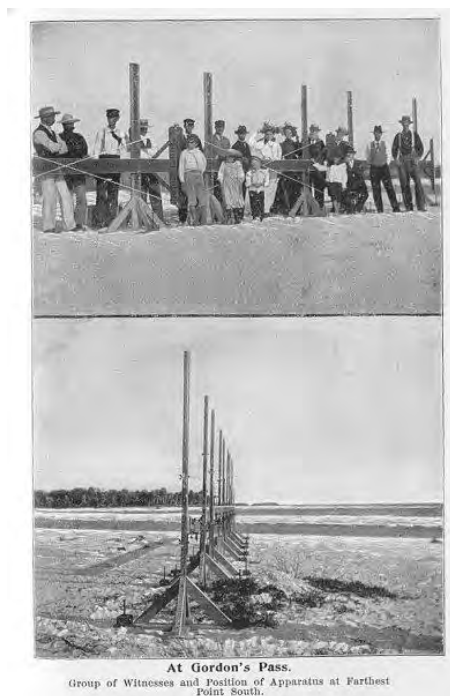
The first several weeks were devoted to learning the proper manipulation of Morrow's apparatus. Articulation and precision would be of immense importance. Trial surveys were conducted. The staff's Check Record Books were constantly on hand to record the procedures, observations, and data. Daily journals were kept. They were learning to be fluent in their task.

An "ingenious system of reversals" (37:102), invented by Reverend E. M. Castle, allowed the Staff, after choosing a starting point, to make nineteen forward adjustments, and then retrace them. After constructing a straight line through 228 feet and back again, a total of 456



feet, they found at the starting point a deviation of less than 0.001 inches. They were now ready to begin major experimentation. A line would be constructed southward along the coast for six miles. The preliminary testing had taken until March 17<sup>th</sup>. The major experiment would not be completed until May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1897.

Establishing the first section needed absolute accuracy. They had to be certain that the air line was “parallel” to the earth’s surface at the starting point. Given even the most minute tilt, the line would be sabotaged from the outset and their efforts would all be discredited. To attain this accuracy they employed Morrow’s twelve-foot Mercurial Geodetic Level. The perfection of the panel was established by 8:50 on the morning of March 18<sup>th</sup>, outside the Operating Station. The second panel was then established and then the third. Now the task of removing the rear panel and adjusting it to the foremost could begin. Slowly, the line progressed.



At each junction the adjustments were made and then they were readjusted, checked and double-checked. There were many staff operators, each with his own specifically defined function. Groups of Naples’ visiting tourists were at hand to watch and observe the goings on. The skies were clear and the days were warm. One could always be reminded of the certainty of the work as ships slipped in and out of view, obscured only by “perspective foreshortening.” At night guards slept in tents erected about the panels that stood before them like pagan gods. They made certain the experiment was not tampered with.

Morrow constantly kept near him his “convenient” chest in which was carried important tools and apparatus needed as each section was moved to extend the air line. The chest held a thermometer, microscope, calipers, rulers, compass, spirit level, triangles, protractor, telescope, thumb bolts, adjusting gauges, a celluloid test card, and notebooks. Each item had its function and use. Most important were the books of the staff. Every item of adjustment, every test and observation, and each measurement was recorded into the Check Record Book. Subjective

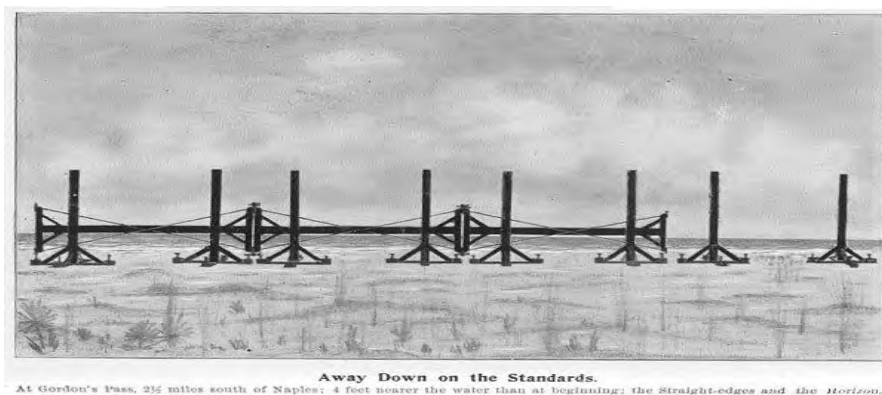


descriptions were described in detail within the Daily Record Book. They were only content when absolute precision at each junction was attained.

Soon after the experiment got going, another tragedy struck. The financier of the expedition, Mr. L. S. Boomer, a successful and wealthy Chicagoan contractor, died. This did not change the expedition's financial situation, but it did mean the loss of their general manager and secretary: Boomer's two sons, Lucius and Harrison. All of the Boomer family were compelled to return immediately to Chicago upon receipt of the telegram containing the sorrowful news.

Mrs. Boomer had become infatuated with the Koreshans many years before when still living in Chicago. She then became one of the very first to arrive with Teed in Florida to help choose a site for the cult's "New Jerusalem." She later allowed her daughter Bertha to travel to Estero for her health, where the salubrious climate indeed helped the young and delicate child. Her two sons had come with the Chicago Koreshans to aid in the experiment. The young men had been very active in the early preparations and were a great loss to the Experimenting Staff. After attending their father's funeral, Lucius was the only Boomer not to immediately return to Estero, but did so many years later after he had made his own fortune by establishing the famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

Several weeks after the major experiment got moving, the visitors of Naples began to see 2x6-inch stakes sticking high out of the white sand every quarter of a mile as they strolled down the beach. Whereas the first stakes they encountered were taller than they (the first measured at ten feet, ten inches – the arbitrarily chosen height of the air line), as they walked further along the shore, the stakes seemed to be getting shorter. And indeed, they were! As the air line proceeded, the Koreshans were meticulously recording their progress, the stakes being a visible testimony.



At Gordon's Pass, about two and a half miles south of the line's starting point, the stakes had decreased to the height of a six-foot man. This happily helped encourage the workers to continue. And when after four-and-one-eighteen miles their absolutely straight line had become submerged into the water, all hands cheered. It had thus been proven, for the earth had curved upward to touch the air line; a chord to the earth had been constructed.

*The earth is indeed a hollow sphere, and we are residing within!*



## POSTSCRIPT

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### “Honors to the Operating Staff”

#### DIVISION A

**Professor U. G. Morrow**, Geodesist, Head of the Expedition; Inventor of the Rectilineator; in charge of the Field Operations, Experiments, and Observations; Director of Hypsometric Operations,” Special Newspaper Correspondent; directed and tested every Adjustment and Measurement of the entire Survey, and personally checked same in the Record Books.

**L. M. Boomer**, General Manager

**Rev. E. M. Castle**, of the University System of the Koreshan Unity; Inventor of the System of Reversals of Sections of the Rectilineator, and witness of important operations.

**George T. Ordway**, Operator; manipulated Set Screw No. 1; detached each rear section, and transferred same for forward adjustment; made reversals in accordance with the Formula of the Castle System; signaled tide measures from Stationary Caisson.

**J. Jackson Williamson**, Assistant Operator; manipulated Set Screw No. 2; assisted in detachment of each rear section, and in the reversals; Watchman.

**H. B. Boomer**, Secretary.

#### DIVISION B

**George B. Hunt**, Engineer; in charge of Division B, operating in advance of Division A; directed emplacement of the 8-foot platformed standards, and adjustment of castings which received the sections of the Rectilineator; in charge of all excavations, and setting to Tide Staffs.

**P. W. Campbell**, Mechanic and First Assistant Engineer; Assistant Watchman.

**Allen H. Andrews**, Second Assistant Engineer; Assistant Watchman.

#### CORPS OF STAFF ASSISTANTS

**Gustave Favre**  
**Charles Mealy**  
**Leroy L'Amoreaux**  
**Laurence Bubbett**



## VISITING AND INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

**Victoria Gratia:** Pre-Eminent of the Koreshan Unity

**Rev. E. M. Castle:** Of the Koreshan University, Estero, Florida

**Prof. O. F. L'Amoreaux:** A.M., PhD, 31 years in Chair of Languages, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

**C. Sterling Baldwin, M.D.**

**Mrs. Ada Welton**

**T. R. Ehney:** Postmaster at Naples, Florida

**W. D. Puerifoy:** Naples, Florida

**S. L. Green, M.D.:** Marco, Florida

## OTHER WITNESSES AND VISITORS

**Hugh McDonald:** Covington, Kentucky

**Mrs. Hugh McDonald:** Covington, Kentucky

**Miss Ann Haldeman:** Louisville, Kentucky

**Miss Lucy Lemon:** Louisville, Kentucky

**Miss Elsie Frederickson:** Louisville, Kentucky

**J. T. Smith:** Springfield, Illinois

**Mr. Strauss:** Of Louisville *Courier-Journal*

**Capt. Robert Gilbert:** Estero, Florida

**Richard Gilbert:** Punta Rassa, Florida

**Mrs. Elizabeth Robinson:** Chicago, Illinois

**R. B. Gilbert:** Punta Rassa, Florida

**Mrs. Ester Stotler:** Estero, Florida

**Miss rose Welton:** Estero, Florida

**Carl Leutich:** Estero, Florida

**Lester Wintersgill:** Estero, Florida

**G. R. Calhoun:** Plant City, Florida

**Thos. E. Hart:** Marco, Florida

**D. N. Walker:** Marco, Florida

**N. Walker:** Marco, Florida

**Miss K. M. Large:** Naples, Florida

**Neal Harris:** Marco, Florida

(37:112-3)



Staff Headquarters, Operating House

\* "Once more the telescope is used to revolutionize science." (37:72-3)



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### CHAPTER 2

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#### *Into You a Child is Born*

### *Beginnings*

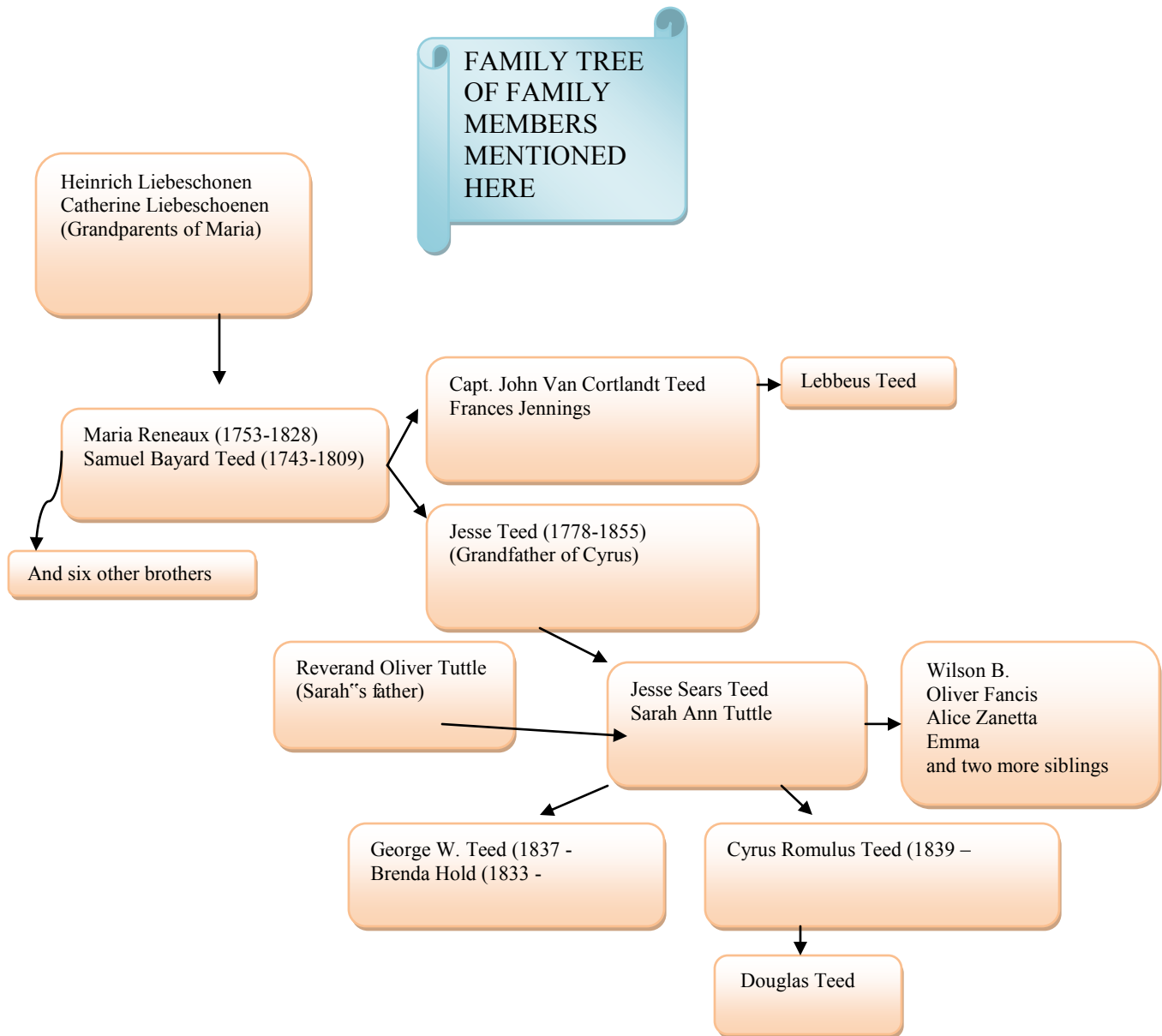
An entire cosmogony has been disclosed. Proof of its veracity has been rigorously and definitively established. Yet these perceptions are far from the view most people believe and accept. What kind of person was it that could conceive of such a contrary world and then persistently groom it into an all encompassing cosmos? The “true cosmogony” was the result of a mystical vision of a single man – and this man was *Koresh*.

Koresh was born with the more mundane name of Cyrus Romulus Teed on October 18, 1839. No miracle coincided with his birth, except perhaps the miracle of another child born in the hills of New York’s Delaware County. He was born “on a farm where the road widened out” (5:266) in a small hamlet village along the rippling Trout Creek by which the town today has derived its name. When Cyrus was born, though, it went by the name of Teedville.

Among the first of the Teed’s to arrive in Delaware County was Captain John van Cortlandt Teed and his younger brother Jesse (c. 1778, Schenectady – ca. 1855 Moravia), Cyrus’ grandfather. Their parents, Samuel Bayard Teed (1743, Huntington, Long Island – 1809, Teedville) and Maria Reneaux (1753, Schenectady – 1828, Teedville) had invested in several lots in the Rapalje Patent in 1788 and had moved their family from Huntington, Long Island where the traditionally Anglo-Dutch family had been substantial millers since 1652. Maria was the granddaughter of Heinrich and Catherine Liebeschonen Reneaux who had emigrated from Alsace to the Mohawk Valley in the 1720’s. She was a superior woman who apparently managed affairs well enough to pull the family through in spite of Samuel’s apparent lack of ambition and his years of illness. It further appears that it was through the Reneaux line that future Teed’s developed a propensity for the Baptist Church and schismatism of various sorts, perhaps culminating in the religious views of Cyrus.

Life in Teedville was difficult. The soil was infertile and their settlement isolated. Shrewdness and hard labor made prosperity possible for very few. Captain John Teed, as was his right as oldest son, paid off and pushed out his siblings. His marriage to Frances Jennings helped as her social and economic status greatly ranked that of her sisters-in-law.





It has been recorded that their father, Samuel Bayard Teed, on April 3, 1798 was elected, along with several other men, to be an “overseer of highways” at a town meeting in nearby Walton, a town of some substance. Lebbeus Teed, Captain John’s son, we are told, was a prominent and substantial farmer and lumberman. An early map of Teedville (Beer Atlas-1867) describes an L .L. Teed as “Postmaster and Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes and general Merchandise; also Manufacturer and Dealer in Lumber.” The map also shows many of the houses then owned by various Teeds and the old Teed cemetery.

Jesse, Cyrus’ grandfather, was not long in Teedville. It was typical for the Teed family to give the oldest son the dominant social-economic role while the others politely migrated away from the home area. Thus, provided with funds to begin anew, Jesse and a half dozen brothers scattered, all hopeful in establishing homes of their own.



Jesse first traveled to Utica where he sought out a job as a millwright for the Bleeker-Williams iron foundries. There he was found to be a clever mechanic but his skills as a manager were surprisingly found to be lacking. "Surprisingly" because, apparently not enjoying the idea of working under another's rule, he traveled to Moravia, New York and successfully established his own mills and foundries there. (Yet, in later life he lost all his property due to the extension of too much credit.) It was in Moravia that Cyrus' father, Jesse Sears Teed, was born.

Jesse Sears Grew up in Moravia and became a millwright like his father. Also mechanically clever, he later invented, and then manufactured, the Teed Turbine Water Wheel. "This wheel is fast superseding all others of the kind. The principal factory is at Moravia; and there is one at Colbertsville, NY, and several in other states." (40:256)

For a short time he moved to Meredith, New York, a town not far from Trout Creek. He worked as a millwright and supervisor in the Bostwick-Law grist, saw and textile mills in the nearby and beautiful little village of Meredith Square. While there, he met Cyrus' mother, Sarah Ann Tuttle (b. October 27, 1815). Her father, Reverend Oliver Tuttle, was the Pastor of the Meredith Baptist Church and he agreed to marry the two young people. The date was set for April 24, 1836.

Little more than a year later their first child was born - a son they named George W. Teed. He left New York State to become a photographer and portrait artist in Chicago, later returning to Moravia. Back home he met and married Belinda Hold (1853) with whom he had two children, both who died in infancy.



George Teed's Photography

Next came Cyrus. He was born in a substantial squared log house, lather and plastered on the inside, weather boarded on the outside. The house was 24 by 80 feet and one and three-quarters stories high. It was set long the creek. It had four fire places which were necessary for cooking meals and keeping the family warm during New York's cold and blustery winters. It had been built in 1804 by Cyrus' great-uncle, Captain John, upon his marriage to Frances Jennings.

After Cyrus there were six more children, three boys and three girls. All were eventually married, except one sister, Alice Zannetta. All the sons proudly served in the Union army during the Civil War. Wilson B. and Oliver Francis both lived with Cyrus for short periods at various



times in their lives, but it was only Emma, Cyrus' youngest sister born in the first days of 1857, who would become an ardent follower of her brother's religious beliefs and remain near him until the end of his life.

Little is really known about Cyrus' early years in Trout Creek. We are told that in his youth he was a devout Baptist, and no doubt he was. Although there was no Baptist church built or established in Trout Creek until 1852, a year by which Jesse Sears Teed had already moved his family out of Trout Creek, there was the family Bible. His mother was a minister's daughter and she saw to it that the lessons he had taught his family, she taught hers. One can imagine the children, one after the other, learning to read from the Bible and learning these lessons well, for all the children by the time they were grown had learned the skill of reading and writing.

We are told that Cyrus had proper schooling until he was eleven. Where and by whom he was taught, and under what circumstances, is not recorded. But we are told that at age eleven his schooling ended. For it was in 1850 that Jesse moved his family to New Hartford, a small town outside of Utica, New York, where young Cyrus took a job as a driver on the, then active, Erie Canal.

We can try to imagine what life must have been like for a young boy growing up so long ago in the quietness of Trout Creek. There is still little there except a gas station and the surrounding countryside with its mountainous farmlands. Surely lumbering is still going on there, too. Yet back before the automobile and readily available information, Trout Creek must have been even more secluded. Cyrus probably learned much about living in a primitive setting, including the arts of farming, lumbering, and the numerous chores required to keep a family and community thriving. He must have learned much about the quirks and subtleties of Nature's wildlife. One can see him fishing in the nearby creek, for trout no doubt, and hunting for small game in the quiet forest. This country life would later become useful when Cyrus Teed would help to pioneer Florida's Everglades. Most important, with few people about and little entertainment, Cyrus must have had a lot of time to freely wander, quietly think about his life and to wonder about the things existing all about him. There must also have been sufficient time to dream...

#### *A Footnote:*

Cyrus Teed's birth date is somewhat uncertain. There is no question as to the year; all records indicate 1839, as do Teed's own prophetic writings. Contemporary Koreshans tell us, "The year of Dr. Teed's birth, 1839, is clearly indicated in the mathematical structure of the Great Pyramid." (45:iii) It is the month and day that are often confused. Most sources give October 18<sup>th</sup> (6, 22), and this is the date I believe to be correct. Yet Fogarty, in the introduction of Teed's *Cellular Cosmogony*, gives both October 13<sup>th</sup> and July 3<sup>rd</sup> and lets the reader choose. The first of these dates can be derived back to the *Syracuse Standard* of August 10, 1884, page 1, which I believe to have been in error due to a misprint or careless reporting. This article is a summary of a major story featuring Teed and was carried the day before in the *Syracuse Daily Journal* where his birth date was given as October 18 as is noted in the Syracuse City Directory where Teed was required to register his name, birth date and place of birth, and schooling. Further, there was no reason for Teed to lie in this instance. The date July 3<sup>rd</sup> was derived from Tuttle's genealogical work (page 256) and I believe to be an error, inevitable somewhere in a



book of such undertaking. He gives Cyrus' brother, Charles Jackson, the same birth date, and perhaps here is the source of the error.

The second uncertainty is Cyrus' middle name. It is recorded in various places as "Romulus," "Romulus R.," "Read," and "Reed." I believe that his true name was Cyrus Romulus Teed. It was this name given in Tuttle, and I believe it is more difficult to make an error in reference to a name than the seemingly infinite number of dates set forth in the book. Further, many knew Cyrus in his father's home town, Moravia, when Cyrus was still relatively young. This town always referred to him as Cyrus "Romulus." In Teed's earliest periodical, *The Herald*, he signed his name Cyrus "Romulus R." Teed. By the time Teed had arrived in Syracuse, he had dropped the "Romulus" completely and substituted the "R." for "Read," which the Koreshans believed to be his true middle name. "Reed" is found in the records of the Library of Congress, most likely their error, and quite harmless, probably due to the similarity of his last name. The following quote written by Cyrus "Romulus" Teed to George Tuttle I believe to be a sufficient answer to the question as to why Teed would want to slowly transform his middle name from "Romulus" to "Read."

"I claim to unity myself through three families, Tuttle, Read and Teed, to the ten tribes of Israel who were carried captive, or to the eight tribes of the ten in which the ten were lost in the Assyrian captivity, 3,755 years ago. The Tuttle, Teed and Read family constitute one family, the name of which was Tut, pronounced in Hebrew with the long sound of „u“ or Toot. The lost tribes located in Media and Cyrus, who conquered Babylon, was descendent, through Media of the lost tribes of Israel. The Welsh people are the descendents of the lost tribe of Isachar. The promise of restoration through the male will was made to this tribe and the family named Toot was to be the antitypical name of the restoration or the second coming of Christ. The Hebrew word Toot means the collector of the people. Of course I have not time to give now the evidences, but I give you the above simple facts. You do not realize the bearing of your present work as a part of a chain of natural evidence of the natural line of the descent of the branch promised as the restorer of Judah and Israel." (40:256)



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### CHAPTER 3

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### *The Illumination of Koresh*

There is a large gap in the record of Cyrus' life from age eleven to twenty when we learn of his employment as a worker on the Erie Canal. Between these years there is only a comment that as he grew older "his friends urged him to study for the ministry because of his natural oratorical ability." (Reeves:3)

At age twenty Cyrus left the Canal to begin his medical studies with an uncle, Samuel Teed, at his Utica office. A year later, Cyrus married his second cousin, Delia M. Rowe, who grew up in Meredith, New York. Shortly after she gave birth to a son they named Douglas Arthur. In 1862 the family moved to New York City and during that year they lived in both Manhattan and Brooklyn. While there, Cyrus enlisted, sometime in August of 1862, in the Union Army Medical Corps associated with Company F of the 127<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry. He served for 15 months as a private attached to field hospital service after which he was discharged from a hospital in Alexandria, Virginia. His discharge papers stated "Paralysis of left leg following sunstroke on the march, as he says, has been getting worse ever since admission. Degree of disability: Total – so not fit for Invalid Corps". As soon as the war ended, he attended the Eclectic Medical College in New York City, where he graduated in February of 1868.

Eclecticism was the smallest and weakest of three major medical sects in the mid-nineteenth century America. Eclectic practitioners were more poorly educated than the regular physicians of the day. Their methods combined both mainstream and homeopathic ideas, while relying mostly upon herbal remedies. They usually kept practices in the smaller communities where there were few doctors available. While some eclectics were discovered to be disreputable charlatans, most worked in botanical drug trade and served their communities as well as the other sects.

After Teed's graduation, he moved his family back to Utica where they moved in with his uncle Samuel Teed, then living at 45 Fayette Street. A medical sign was hung outside 169-171 Genesee at the corner of Columbia "over Buckingham and Ketchum's Music Store." (42) Both Samuel and Cyrus Teed were listed in the directories as physicians and surgeons under the generalized heading "Allopathic." Cyrus Teed quietly began to establish his practice, but a year later an event occurred that would drastically change the direction of his life.

To help explain this event, it is important to know a little bit of what was occurring around Teed at this time and place. (For a detailed exploration, see references 8, 12 34, 44, and 46.) New York State of the mid-1800's has been described as "an area seared by the flames of



revivalism” (15) and as “the psychically fertile earth of a broad mystic highway running across central New York State.” (6)

To name just a few events occurring at this time, we begin with the Shakers. This group began in England in the mid-1700s when it was revealed that Christ had once again returned to this world, but this time in the form of a woman, Mother Ann Lee. This woman-led celibate religious group believed that the original sin was sexuality. Therefore, their members foreswore marriage upon entering the sect. On the whole, their life was very simple and they made a living by selling their crafts and wood workings. When they met together to worship, they incorporated, along with their hymns and anthems, marching and dancing. Not infrequently the spirit would overtake one or more of the congregation and the dancing would take on a wilder mode, hence their name. It was in the middle of the 1800’s when the sect migrated from England to begin a variety of communities in Central and Western New York.



On the other hand there was John Humphrey Noyes’ Perfectionists living in Oneida, New York. Here men and women could become perfect and thereby free themselves from the possibility of sin. His community was communistic in bias, where, not only was property shared, but so were husbands and wives. Children were raised communally and not by the parents who conceived them. Marriages were abolished. Match-ups were temporarily arranged, specially chosen by Noyes and focused on his desire for “perfect” children. His can be considered the first eugenic experiment. Noyes established his community in 1848 and there began to preach his “Bible Communism, Complex Marriage, and Male Continence,” the latter being the practice of “coitus reservatus” or the complete withholding of the male orgasm. Noyes’ converts believed that this practice would conserve the male’s energy and lead to increased health and virility. The community thrived for more than thirty years.





It was around this time that the Fox Sisters of Rochester, New York began to produce spirit rappings from the Beyond, which actually, as much later confessed, was, more mundanely, the crackling of the first joint of their big toes vibrating through the wooden table the girls and fellow searchers were seated around. Despite the confession, they hoodwinked an era and thereby began the quick spreading modern spiritualist craze.



Kate, Margaretta and Leah Fox

Last cited is Joseph Smith, purported by Carl Carmer as Teed's distant cousin, though not true at all. Introverted, slim, and with a prominent nose, Smith was the famed founder of the Mormon religion. While seeking treasure in Palmyra, New York, in September of 1823, he claimed an angel appeared to him, directing him to dig in a particular spot. Accustomed to the angels that had been visiting him since he was a young teenager, Joseph did as he was bid and uncovered a box within which was held several golden tablets. Written upon these mysterious tablets was a strange scribbling. The angel handed him a pair of magic spectacles through which the hieroglyphics became comprehensible. Thus was revealed the history of the original inhabitants of North America, which included tales of Jesus visiting the New World to spread his gospel. It further revealed that Joseph had been selected as the prophet who was to spread these newfound truths. Hence was born the *Book of Mormon*.



Cyrus Teed's own pursuits were developing in areas of the occult and in alchemy. He had become extremely interested in magnetic healing. He began using those mysterious "occult" energies that magically act upon the body to heal his patients. He went so far as to turn a part of his medical office into an "electro-chemical" laboratory in which to discover the relationship between matter and energy.

The vastness of our universe with all its uncertainties and unknowns must have been terrifying to Cyrus Teed. Thus he was bent on restoring the universe into a womblike environment with all questions answered and in which one could always feel safe. At midnight in late October of 1869, Cyrus Teed had his own vision. Through it he learned that the universe is comprised of one substance; it is limited, integral, balanced, and emanating from one source: God. It further revealed that Cyrus had been selected as a prophet to reveal the True Path.



*"In the autumn of 1869, I sat contemplating in my electro-alchemical laboratory. For some hours previous to this I had been experimenting, in the hope of discovering some occult or hidden principle or power..."*

This introduces the *The Illumination of Koresh: Marvelous Experience of the Great Alchemist Thirty Years Ago at Utica, N.Y.*, Teed's testimony of perhaps the most important event of his life. [All italicizations that follow are quotations from this work.]

Cyrus Teed had spent that windy, cool evening totally absorbed in his experiments in alchemy, the science intent on transforming baser elements into gold. This night was a culmination of months of such evening. This was the night he had suddenly *penetrated the subtle depth of the mysterious science upon which the philosophers of ancient and medieval times had exhausted their mental energies*. He had finally stumbled upon the impenetrable Law of Transmutation! Transfixed, he *beheld the precipitation of golden radiations, and eagerly watched the transformation of forces to the minute molecules of golden dust as they fell in showers through the lucid electro-alchemical fluid*. He became utterly ecstatic. His whole being vibrated as he *contemplated the wondrous disclosure*. He felt the finger of the Divine upon him. He had *succeeded in transforming one of the grossest of metallic substances into the golden dust of precipitation*. He had transformed lead into gold! *"The philosopher's stone had been discovered, and I was the humble instrument for the exploitation of so magnitudinous a result."*

Cyrus remained alone in his office late into the night. He *sat in a thoughtful attitude, occupied in considering the results attending my chemical elaborations*. Suddenly he experienced a relaxation at the back of his brain. Simultaneously a buzzing sensation started at the forehead. The dual sensations were not unlike that of a small electrical current passing through his skull. This stirring gradually spread out from his brain to all extremities, soon passing beyond his physical body for miles. It was *a vibration so gentle, soft, and dulciferous* that he willingly yielded to this *vibratory sea of...my newly found delight*. Each of his earthly thoughts and desires departed from him. Only *a lingering, vague remembrance of natural consciousness and desire* remained. As his feelings of self left him, he reached with his material arm to experience some familiar touch, but *no tangible sensation answered to the touch*. This startled him. *"Has my thirst for knowledge consumed by body?"* He no longer was able to experience the ability to feel. He tested his sight and found that to be absent as well. *It was not dark, neither was there anything which appeared as common light*. Could he still hear? He *listened intently, and painfully solicitous, and heard a sweet, soft murmur which sounded as if thousands of miles away, resonant with the harmonious coalescence of ten thousand most dulcet and varied unisons*. The *dulcet murmurings brought forth...in most melodious accents*:

*"Fear not, my Son, thou satisfactory offspring of my profoundest yearnings! I have nurtured thee through countless embodiments. I have seen thee as thou hast wandered through the labyrinthine coilings of time's spiral transmigrations. I have seen*



*thee in superlative altitudes of earthly glory, and thence descending to the lowest depths of degradation into which the human animal can decline. The arms of my spiritual ambition for thy exaltation were never withdrawn from thee. I have lifted thee up, and succored thee when thou hast fallen, and have restrained thee when thou wert ambitious in thy glory. When my ardent desires have failed to check thee, and thou didst slip from my own direct exalting efficacy, I have yielded thee in anguish to the fiend of thine own creation, to destroy thy body by some loathsome disease, or by the munitions of thine enemies whom thou didst, in thine own ambitious and grasping ego, rise up against thee. Then I have clothed thee in another body, and watched thee therein."*

*"Through thy earthly and spiritual careers I have been with thee; and can I forsake thee now, when I have brought thee to the pinnacle of thy celestial aspiration, and behold thee as in symbolic signal, eliminating the final vestige of that which hath hitherto chained thee? Thou hearest my voice; thou shalt see me as I am, for thou hast desired it. Offspring of Osiris and Isis, behold the revealing of thy Mother."*

Teed was unable to determine from whom these words were spoken, for a light of dazzling brilliancy obstructed his vision. But slowly, emerging before him, coalesced the most fascinating gloriously regal and majestic vision possible to human conception and contemplation. Before him was a Goddess! He fell upon his knees, resting upon an invisible support, amidst the vibrations that still entertained his body. He experienced the zephyr breath of her holy respiration, full of delicious fragrance, as she, in sweetest cadence, most musically orate, so tender, with voice so unaccountably modulate as to thrill me with profoundest and most intense passion, revealed herself to him.

Gradually crystallizing into view, he watched a spherical aurora of purple and gold slowly bifurcate into two hemispheres. Both were striated in layers of purple and gold, in an effulgent prismatic bow like the rainbow, with a surpassing brilliance passing through them. Set in this corona or crown were twelve magnificent diamonds, the brilliancy of which was like the luster of a star. Unhurriedly there emerged the outlines of an exquisitely chiseled female face of great beauty, vivacity, and grace. Soon the stunning details of the rest of her body came into sight, right down to the most delicate, matchless, consummate fingernails. She was magnificently dressed, covered in golden tresses of profusely luxuriant growth. She carried a staff entwined with serpents. Her caressing hair added to the adornment of her personal attractiveness. And suddenly, she disappeared, leaving a dozen diamonds in her wake. Nevertheless, he addressed her, bowing low:

*"Most August Motherhood, I feel the sanctity of thy sacred presence. I find myself face to face with thy pure presence, and in this chastity I revel so delectably that I prefer to dwell forever in this holy ecstasy and sanctuary of my newly-acquired delight. O Mother! My joy with thee is full."*

And so she revealed her purpose:



*"Thou art chosen to redeem the race. Luxuriate thee! for soon I shall withdraw and thou shalt go to the land of shade!"*

It was at this point that Cyrus began his return to consciousness. He discovered himself lying, disheveled, upon his couch. It was only just after midnight, and he recalled that he had been sitting in deep contemplation regarding his victorious conquest earlier that evening in turning common matter into gold. He concludes:

*"I left my laboratory and proceeded to my home, which I reached about half past two o'clock, and retired for a little rest. I fell into a pacific slumber, which lasted about two hours, when I was awakened by the noise of what sounded like a terrific wind-storm having reached the magnitude of a hurricane. There rushed upon me a feeling of extreme trepidation; the wind ceased suddenly, and I heard the noise of a great rushing; succeeding this, the noise as of great wings flying, and then the noise as of chariot wheels. All was hushed in silence for a few minutes, when again came the wind. I arose and looked out of the window, but all was as quiet as the utter stillness. The same succession of sounds repeated themselves. All was again hushed. Again, and for the third time, this routine of auditory phenomena was repeated, and again all was as still as the grave. I then felt the breathing of the most delicate accentuation vibrating the extreme ramifications of the sensitive fubriles of my hearing, and in sweet rhythmic cadence there came to the ear of my innermost consciousness from the voice of mystery, still and small the whispered secret of that which, later on, and by gradual unfolding, you shall become possessed."*

***IT WAS THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY OF IMMORTAL LIFE***



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Four

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### *First Steps*

The next day Cyrus called upon his cousin Myron Baldwin at his place of work. They had plans to walk to Teed's home at 45 Fayette to have dinner together. As Cyrus came into view, Myron noticed an aura of mystic light glowing around the periphery of Cyrus's body. Recognizing the origin of such a glow, Myron immediately placed a blessing upon his cousin. With joy they proceeded towards dinner. As they arrived, Cyrus's excited wife exclaimed that just before they arrived, there sat upon a pair of carved wall brackets, ordinarily used for bric-a-brac, two winged cherubim, resting from their angelic flight!

As the months passed on, the illumination brought other gifts to Cyrus. Among them was the gift of languages. He spontaneously learned both Hebrew and Greek. Later, a prominent Syracuse minister would mention this talent, although not its mystical source. It was during these influential months that Cyrus became ennobled with the revelation of the demonstrable facts of his Cellular Cosmogony.

As a result, Cyrus became more interested in spreading the Word of his vision than in doctoring. Yet, at this time he still needed to practice his livelihood to obtain enough funds for he and his family. His solution was to combine the two. He would tell his patients of his revelation while attempting to heal them. Although he did gain a few disciples during this early period, among them his sister Emma, the major result was that



Emma (Teed) Norton

She would become a lifetime member.

it didn't take long before he became branded as "that crazy doctor." This made life difficult for the Teeds. He began to seek clientele in neighboring towns. Yet, because of his bizarre doctrines, he was continuously denounced. His wife, becoming nervous and ill, was finding it difficult to deal with this new Cyrus. She felt it necessary to move to Binghamton, New York to live with a sister. Apparently Teed followed, and it wasn't long before Binghamton had labeled him a crackpot. His few patients further declined in number. He tried his luck in the nearby towns and villages of Deposit, Rockroyal, Burlett Hollow, and Apex, all towns quite close to his birthplace. Teed also attempted to establish himself in some of the bordering towns in Pennsylvania. Yet, with his continued conviction and insistence on revealing to his patients all his miraculously obtained revelations, inevitably there developed fear and segregation from this queer man and his ideas.



It was in Binghamton that Teed found his first important convert, Dr. A. W. K. Andrews, also a physician and surgeon, and apparently of some standing. Andrews would stick with Teed for the rest of his life.

Many of the particulars of Dr. Teed's early years as a prophet and messenger are clouded, obscured by the ascending years. It is understood that during the 1870's Teed made further attempts to establish himself north of Syracuse in the towns of Sandy Creek, Ruralhill, Pierrepont, and Loraine. But here again, his medical practice and views met with rejection.

Meanwhile, his father, Jesse Teed, had moved back to the town of his birth, Moravia, New York. He worked there as a "most responsible mechanic of that village." (36a) The local Moravia newspaper announced that J. S. Teed had just completed the building of a house on January 28, 1878. The house, located on Grove Street, was just one block from the main street of town. Soon after, in view of his son's repeated failures, Jesse Teed offered Cyrus a secure mop-making business to help him get back on his feet again. The idea was jumped at! It was plate silver and animal traps that financed the communal life of the Perfectionists at Oneida. The Shakers at New Lebanon sold herbs and elegant handcrafted furniture. So now, Dr. Cyrus Teed, with the help of Dr. Andrews, his sister Emma, and a handful of other women devotees, would establish the first communal household devoted to propagating the revolutionary ideas that Teed had been harassing his few patients with – and it would all be financed through the industrious making of mops!

Rose Welton and her mother Mrs. Ada Welton, both of Moravia, became enthralled with the group and joined the small communal household. Both women would remain ardent believers in Teed. Later, in the 1890's, Rose would quit her teaching job in Montville, a town just northeast of Moravia, to rejoin Teed and her mother in Estero, Florida.

Both younger brothers of Cyrus, Wilson and Oliver, were then living in Moravia. It appears that the family had established themselves there shortly before or during the Civil War, as both brothers were registered as Moravian veterans of that war. Wilson lived in Moravia for the rest of his life and an interesting story about him, perhaps providing some understanding of the psyche of his brother Cyrus, was recalled in a letter written by local Moravian historian Leslie L. Luthur to Howard Fine. He writes that "there evidently was a strain of imbalance in the family. Our electric lighting plant, two miles from the village on a stream in a gorge was started in 1891, and Wilson Teed was its first operator. One night the village lights kept getting brighter and brighter, and there was no answer to the primitive telephone in the plant. Teed was found on a hill above the plant waving his arms and talking with the spirits on the wires." (15:215fn)

The Moravia newspapers of 1910 "remembered" that Cyrus Teed's family at the time consisted of his invalid wife and son. Yet there are also records to show that Teed's wife had never left Binghamton and died in the home of her sister sometime in 1885. Perhaps the potentially stabilizing endeavor of Cyrus' mop-making business offered her hope for "redemption" from his most recent excesses and thus encouraged her, for a short period of time, to rejoin her husband. Yet, in actuality, the idea gave Teed a newfound energy in his determination to plant his ideas, firmly, in the minds of humankind.



Douglas Arthur Teed, the son, remained living with his mother. In Binghamton he studied to become a painter. A wealthy woman there must have found his talent quite promising for she sent him abroad so he could continue his artistic education – and she paid his way. He became a prominent artist of oriental subjects and southern landscapes who exhibited at the Boston Art Club, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Canadian Royal Academy, Guild Exhibition Hall in London, Crystal Palace in Munich, and the International Exhibition of Fine Arts in Rome. He was a member of the National Academy. One of his paintings can be viewed in the “Art Hall,” one of the Koreshan monuments, now a museum in Florida’s Koreshan State Park. He died in Detroit, Michigan.



It was in Moravia that Teed first began to record his religious and cosmological views in a periodical entitled *The Herald of the Messenger of the New Covenant of the New Jerusalem*. The headings of some copies indicated that they were published in Moravia (1877), others indicate the town of Sandy Creek (1879), while all are edited by “Cyrus Romulus R. Teed.” An introduction to one paper says, “*The Herald* is the free medium of the communication to the world of the Gospel of Genuine Science; the Ultimate Science of Immortal Life.” Later, under the heading of “Physical Science,” Teed wrote: “The diurnal rotation of the axis and all dependent, orbital motions, are governed by the impingement of the effluent momenta of the negative energy generated at the centre; the positive point of polarity, the positive energy generated at the circumference at sphere of negative polarity.” As you can see, Teed had already achieved his winning style of writing that makes the reading of so much of his work a joy.

I have been unable to locate any of these early publications; they no longer appear to exist. The above passage was quoted by the *Syracuse Daily Journal* (36a) along with quotes about Teed’s proof that the Bible predicted him as a prophet, all of which will be discussed later on.

The last note of interest occurring during Teed’s brief stay in Moravia was an apparent rumor that Teed had eloped with Mrs. Ella Wolsely, the wife of a local livery man. Perhaps she had merely become an admirer of Teed’s religious views, an act which often inflamed the jealousies of the husbands of Teed’s numerous women followers. Although Teed and his group always preached celibacy, few non-admirers really believed this to be the case. Teed claimed his choice of a celibate life was a necessary step to attain immortality. His critics often confused it as



a cover-up for a vast immorality. Teed was to convince many women to leave their husbands and families to join him, even though this was often a source of difficulty for Teed as several of the husbands attempted legal action.

The fact that Teed's disciples were primarily women and his encouragement that they, several at a time, accompany him wherever he ventured, may have been a more conscious (perhaps subconscious) choice than imagined. He had turned the universe into a womblike enclosure, and to be constantly surrounded by women, and yet remain celibate, as I believe he probably was, was a way to further obtain constant mothering and security. "With all the new terminology created by psychology, a most readable book could be written on Teed's fascination not only for young women but also for the motherly type of woman, such as his associate, Victoria Gratia," (3:172) of whom, more later. I don't intend on pursuing such a book, though, and shall thus end the discussion here.

Why Teed gave up mop-making and moved out of Moravia is a mystery. Perhaps local harassment was beginning to create a strain, or maybe it was family difficulties and tension. We know that his wife was finding it difficult to accept Cyrus' convictions that he was a messenger from God. I would imagine that parents, too, would find this unacceptable in a son. In any case, Cyrus Teed and his small group of woman followers journeyed northward to Syracuse. They arrived sometime in the latter part of 1882 and first rented a place at 2 Cook Block, Gifford. The official medical register was signed by Cyrus "Read" Teed on February 13, 1883 and listed his address then as 110 East Fayette Street.

Not long afterwards Oliver Teed followed his brother and together they opened up an office at 1 Wolf Block, West Onondaga Street, then considered "one of the most aristocratic streets in the city." (30a) Oliver was also a medical doctor. He had received his license from the Philadelphia National Eclectic Medical Association in 1868 or '69. A second certificate, allowing him to practice in Syracuse, was filed July 7, 1884. Together the two brothers built a lucrative practice among some of the best people of the city. Their advertising slogan read "Syracuse Institute of Progressive Medicine with a special Department of Medical Electricity. We are giving special attention to the treatment of Chronic Diseases. Office hours: till 10 AM, from 1 – 3 and 7 – 9 PM." Things were going very well, but then something unexpected happened. As a result, the two doctors and Cyrus' few followers were all forced to leave Syracuse forever. For it was on Saturday, August 9, 1884, that the following story burned the pages of the *Syracuse Daily Journal* (36a):

"Eleven weeks ago I was very ill with complete nervous prostration. Rev. Elijah Gaylord of Geddes, recommended to me Dr. Teed. A few weeks after receiving this advice, I concluded to go and see Dr. Teed, so I called upon him at his office, and told him my symptoms. I added that I had been treated when West by a graduate of the Physico-Medical College in Cincinnati and had much faith in this western school of medicine. He told me that he was also of that school, having studied with his uncle, Dr. Teed of Utica. After a diagnosis of my case, Dr. Teed told me that I must at once return to my home and go to bed, as I was in a dangerous condition. I followed his advice and he made professional visits, and treated me with electricity. After two or three calls he began talking of his religious connections. I did not pay much attention at first by he continued advancing his views until I finally found myself brooding over his ideas. Briefly he claims that he is the Second Savior of Mankind. That he can prove by Biblical Prophecy that he is come into the world for the purpose of saving it, and that he is the one that is to do it."



She claimed that Teed also stated that he would be translated to heaven when he was 46-years-old (at that time, only one year hence!) and that he would return 50 days later to found a kingdom “where all would be love, by love, he means only mind love of great purity and elevation.” He told her that all who follow him will live forever. The woman, who claimed she was publicly reporting Dr. Teed, not as a “public recital” of her “private trouble,” but “for the public benefit . . . to warn other respectable people who might be misled by Dr. Teed,” was Mrs. Ezra B. Cobb. She was the wife of Charles Cobb, a manager of the Avery Farm near Geddes. She belonged to the Plymouth Congregational Church. Mrs. Cobb continued her tale of woe:

“The man was a wonderfully plausible person, and I was prone to believe almost any ridiculous theory in my nervous condition. When I asked him for a bill for medical treatment, he said that he would not set a price. As the Lord’s servant and follower, he allowed each of his patients to pay according to their means. He added that his regular price was \$2 a visit, but if people were not able to pay it he made a reduction. As my husband is not wealthy, I paid at the rate of \$1.00 a call. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, for treatment, I paid him \$5; on the 12<sup>th</sup> \$5, on the 16<sup>th</sup> \$5, and for a visit to my husband, who had an attack of cholera morbus on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the same month, I paid him \$2; and on August 5<sup>th</sup>, for treating me, \$5. All of this while he continued telling me his religious view, and I became more and more interested in him. My mother is an aged woman, and she also believed in his views. One day he came to make a call and brought two cabinet sized photographs of himself. He complained of poverty, and my mother finally bought the pictures for \$1. We were all so firmly impressed with the truth of his belief that we thought it best to „give to the Lord,” as he expressed it, our substance. So my mother gave him \$10 and I also contributed. My son has been saving up his pennies to give to the Sunday School of Plymouth Church, but one day he proposed giving all he had saved to Dr. Teed, the amount was \$5, and I think in all we must have given him about \$20 during the past few weeks. I also pledged a ring of mine with him “for the Lord.” I finally made up my mind that I was not gaining in health very rapidly and concluded to go to his office for treatment. Going out in the air acted as a sort of counter-irritant, and I found my faith in Dr. Teed rapidly oozing away. I went to his office and his lady assistant treated me to electricity. Dr. Teed introduced me to an old gentleman named Kimball and several others, and said that they were his disciples. He also said the Rev. J. F. Clymer endorsed his religious views and preached them in his sermons. While he was in conversation with my mother, he asked her if my husband was kind to me. I told him in a moment that I was treated as well by my husband as any woman in America. When I returned home I found a letter from my old Pastor in Camden, N. Y., and I made up my mind that I was laboring under a delusion. I did not visit his office last Thursday, as I agreed, and he called the next day on my son, where he is employed, but was told to leave by R. Avery.”

“What do you intend to do about it?” asked the reporter.

“I cannot say yet. It depends much on the District Attorney’s decision and on other personal matters. I fear I am only one of many patients who have had a peculiar experience with Dr. Teed, and I intend to await further developments. I do not know where we should have been led by Dr. Teed if I had not recovered my judgment. My mother was on the verge of selling a house and lot she owns in Camden, N. Y., and giving it to him for his religious work, and I think I should have sold my piano for the same reason, but we are both glad we did not do so.”

Dr. Cyrus Teed was able to give his side of the story:

“The lady patient in question called with her mother at my office June 18<sup>th</sup>, to consult me regarding her treatment. I found her suffering from nervous excitement and prostration depending upon certain functional derangements. She was unable in her condition to make regular visits at my office and I advised her to return home where I would visit her till she was sufficiently recovered to come to the office for treatment. She remained prostrate in bed for some days, but gradually improved under my care. My regular price for single electro-thermal treatment is two dollars a treatment when administered at the office. I modify this according to circumstances of patients and number of treatments required, and so stated to this lady, specifying my price for her special case, for office attendance, making no allusion to the amount of fee while visiting her at her home. She resides, I think, about three miles from my office, and allowing \$2.00 to be a reasonable fee for visiting a patient at that distance, I made a regular entry of that amount



upon my book for each visit, and saw the patient no oftener than the interests of her case demanded according to my best professional judgment.”

“In the meantime my patient paid me some money, which I credited on the bill. While making one of my visits she said to me, „My Willie makes a principle of devoting one-tenth of his earnings to the Lord. In reckoning up for the past year he finds himself backward a little more than four dollars. He has made it up to five and wishes me to give it to you as a token of the interest he has in your principles and as his offering.” She then handed me five dollars to apply on the bill, and her mother gave me ten dollars which she wished me to accept as her gift to my special religious work. I did not hesitate to take the money as I knew my bill exceeded in amount all I had received. I still regarded, however, these offerings as free gifts. I had no previous expectation of this as the money came freely with no solicitation on my part. I then said to my patient that I did not propose to present any bill to her husband. I said this because I felt satisfactorily remunerated up to that date. About this time I learned that her husband’s jealousy was being excited, partially through the influence of a near neighbor, and this without the slightest provocation. My patient’s mother was nearly always present with her daughter when I made my visits. The patient had now sufficiently recovered to visit me at my office and made one visit, accompanied by her mother. An appointment was made for another visit which was not met, and I subsequently called at the office of Mr. Avery, in whose employ my patient’s son is, to make inquiries. I was met by Mr. Avery, who threatened me in behalf of my patient’s husband with mob violence, saying, „If you do not pack up your duds and get out of Syracuse,” (within a specifically short space of time, at the same time demanding a sum of money,) „I have men and neighbors who will help you out. Tar and feathers are too good for you.” Two or three times he repeated the threat to drive me out of Syracuse. I was subsequently visited at my office by a stranger to me who demanded a like sum of money on the grounds, with also a threat, that it would be made hot for me. Not being accustomed to mobs and blackmail I did not feel deeply impressed with the importance of the demand, and refused to comply, as I preferred a more honorable way of settling my account with the husband of my patient.”

Syracuse’s District Attorney Lewis was consulted and he said he was ready to proceed legally against Dr. Teed anytime.

The incident never did go to court. Instead, battle was waged through the *Syracuse Daily Journal*. For the next couple of weeks, every few days brought out a newly printed letter. Each letter was presented in the hope of furthering the author’s position and of thus bringing the matter to a close. Teed was the first to respond. Apparently Clymer had become annoyed with Teed.

“I emphatically deny having said of the Rev. J. F. Clymer as reported by Mrs. Cobb. I regard him a man of broad and liberal views and specially tolerant of men with religious convictions differing from his own. I believe him to be my personal friend, but not an expositor of my religious principles, as they are exactly diverse from any presentment of biblical interpretation made at the present day. There has evidently been a great misunderstanding somewhere.”

During this same time, Teed had written Mrs. Cobb a personal letter in an attempt to eradicate himself from the mess. After reading it, she handed it over to the *Journal’s* reporters. They printed this portion:

“Inasmuch as you voluntarily, without solicitation from me, offered your gifts, and inasmuch as great wrong has been done me by the course adopted, would it not be kind in you to state to me frankly that you would like the return of your free donation, not as a matter of legal justice, but from dissatisfaction of mind arising from change of purpose? Under such circumstances I can consistently place at your disposal the \$10 that you ask, or the amount of the entire bill if that is required to satisfy your feelings.”

Perhaps the entire business should have ended there, but by this time all of the major city newspapers had gotten hold of the story and had printed their versions of what had occurred.



Inevitable they quoted Rev. Clymer as being an ardent follower of Teed's beliefs. Clymer, at this point not wanting to have anything more to do with Teed, at least publicly, in a letter to the *Journal* wrote this disclaimer:

"The report in the *Journal* about my endorsement of Dr. Teed's system of theology is going the rounds in the press in all the large cities. I am a personal friend of Dr. Teed, but I cannot subscribe to his religious philosophy nor sustain his personal claims. In his letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> installment to the *Journal* he distinctly and clearly states that „*I am not an expositor of his religious principles.*“ But this truth does not travel fast enough to catch the falsehood that has gone abroad. The habit of connecting the names of reputable people with the public recital of private troubles because they happen to be in sympathy with any of the parties concerned, is a great injustice, jeopardizing the most precious treasures of life, namely, a fine character and a good reputation.”

"I hope the journals that have published me as a teacher of Dr. Teed's philosophy will deny it. I will be greatly obliged if the reporters of the *N. Y. Times* and the *N. Y. Tribune* in Syracuse will take note of this.”

Mrs. Cobb felt a need to retaliate her forces against Dr. Teed again. She did so in a letter as powerful and detrimental as the original article. Thus she concluded the entire business with the following:

"The Rev. J. F. Clymer in Saturday's *Journal* speaks of my connecting his name with a „public recital“ of my „private troubles.“ I published my „private troubles“ for the public benefit and not for my own, as I wish to warn other respectable people who might be misled by Dr. Teed.”

"I was sick in bed and too weak to argue with anyone, and the repeated use of Dr. Clymer's name had as much weight as anything he could say to convince me of the truth of his doctrines. If such a talented man as Mr. Clymer could accept such doctrines, why should not I? Dr. Teed distinctly stated to me in the presence of my mother that Rev. J. F. Clymer believed all his views when with him, and preached them in his sermons. He also said, „I attend his church sometimes and when I am there I am an *inspiration* to him;“ and that Mr. Clymer said he thought his doctrines were *grand, sublime*, and that he could not grasp them all at once, and much more to the same purpose. He also stated that he attended Mrs. Clymer in her illness the last four months of her life, making two or three calls a day; and again, that the nurse who attended Mrs. Clymer at the time was one of his disciples (as he calls his believers). In my opinion a minister of the Gospel should be more careful to whom he addresses as a „personal friend“ and „one of the purest men in existence“ and „the exponent of a peculiar religious belief which is altogether too advanced for the present materialistic world.“ It seems that Dr. Teed had deceived Mr. Clymer as well as myself, and is using his name to promote his personal interest.”

And there it lay. Several weeks later there was a small announcement reminding the citizens of Syracuse of Teed's notoriety and stating that he was lecturing at Shakespeare Hall that Sunday night. The subject chosen was, "The Science of Immortal Life." By 1885, Teed and his women were gone. Oliver headed for Jordan, New York where he remained for the rest of his life. Cyrus and his followers escaped to New York City.

Very little is known of Teed's short return to New York City. It is known that he occupied a third floor flat on 135<sup>th</sup> Street near 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. With him lived the nucleus of his colony, four women, among whom were his sister Emma and a cousin. What they intended to accomplish in this large metropolis, or how they planned to go about it, has never been recorded. All that is known is, whatever it was, it was considered a failure a year later. But very soon their luck was about to change.







# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Five

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## *Chicago Messiah*

It was the World's Columbian Exposition that put Chicago into the proper frame of mind. Designed to impress upon public opinion that Chicago was more than a Midwestern group of "rough-and-ready"s, they quickly erected their fabulous White City in Southside Chicago's Jackson Park. The fair opened in 1883 and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city. One of the many pavilions set up was the World's Parliament of Religions which became a worldwide religious conclave that included representatives from Hindus, Taoists, and Buddhists, as well as the more obscure Baha'is, Venantists, and similar groups. In the wake of all this, Chicagoan mysticism blossomed. Many of its citizens became dabblers in a kind of Americanization of these various Eastern religions. Belief in reincarnation became a popular fad. The city was ripe for all kinds of unusual escapes from mundane "Sunday" Christianity. The city was ripe for Teed.

The National Association of Mental Science was holding its own convention in Chicago in September of 1886, just two years later. One these "mental scientists" must have met Teed somewhere along the way. Impressed by Teed, he felt that here was a man with something to say. Consequently, Teed was invited to visit Chicago to give a talk.

Lectures were presented at the old Church of the Redeemer on Washington Boulevard and were scheduled each day for six days. They began on Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, and ended on the following day Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. Teed was not scheduled to speak until the last day.

Saturday afternoon, the day before Teed was scheduled to speak, the church was filled to its utmost capacity. There were about 50 people who were attending in hopes of finding miraculous cures for a variety of ailments. A still larger number of curiosity seekers filled the pews just to see what the metaphysical believers were like and to be entertained by whatever may happen. For more than an hour before the meeting, a steady stream of women filled the hall. It soon became necessary to place chairs in the isles and many had to find seats on the steps leading to the stage platform.

Mr. Swarts presided over this meeting. He spoke for a time and then attempted to cure some of the needy. His healing came to null, but disillusionment over the proceedings did not descend upon these onlookers until later, when contributions were asked for. "The hint of contributions cleared the church in quick time." (*Chicago Herald*: September 12, 1886, as quoted in 15:216)

As a result, on the last day of the convention, when it finally came time for Dr.. Cyrus Teed to deliver his own speech, the room was only half filled. Once again, the attendants were



primarily women. Teed's talk was entitled, "The Brain," and it began with a ten-minute interlude of silent prayer. Teed then took his place at the front of the room, positioning himself "between two buxom matrons." (15:216)

"Taking up a Bible, Dr. Teed held it out in full view of the audience. „This book," he said, „is sometimes called the word of God, but nowhere in the book itself is it stated that it is God's word." In his opinion there is but one God's word, and that was God himself. As a book, the Bible was the greatest scientific word extant... An exposition of metaphysical theory followed, in which the lecturer was assisted by a chart, showing „the longitudinal division of the brain and its left hemisphere." The scientific features of the subject were dwelt upon technically and the lecturer attempted to illustrate the battery which generates the brain forces and how it can be applied in restoring invalids to health... It was for the metaphysician to rid the world not only of suffering, but of death itself. Religion and science must be married and the result will be the wedding of heaven and earth." (15:216)

Teed must have been a magnificent orator. His speech was eloquent and it ignited and electrified its audience. An encore was demanded; another speech was given. And then a true miracle! It was his divine discourse that enabled a very fat woman, who because of her weight could only walk a few steps, to walk all the way home that happy Sunday!

Mystic-minded Chicago was at Cyrus Teed's feet. Disciples increasingly flocked to him. The National Association of Mental Science was so impressed that they quickly elected him president of their organization. Cyrus Teed had finally found acceptance.

Teed and his disciples wasted no time in establishing a solid root, deep in Chicago's mystic soil. In less than a month after the corpulent lady walked, the colony was already on the streets distributing a "throwaway" sheet entitled, *Metaphysics*. It discussed many of Teed's religious and communistic concepts. Mentioned also were the colony's initial endeavors into such establishments as The World's College of Life and The Church Triumphant.

The College of Life, as it was usually referred to, began as an educational institution with a tiny curriculum in mental science and metaphysics. It sounds as though Teed was playing it safe by giving the Chicagoans the "metaphysical" emphasis they wanted before replacing it with his own augmented religious concepts. As the colony grew, the College expanded this curriculum in a surprising variety of directions.

Before establishing the Church Triumphant, another church was attempted, one which immediately gave all of Teed's new followers an opportunity to join together and discuss the views being promulgated. Referred to as the "Assembly of the Covenant," this quick revelation of Teed's unique ideas tended to frighten away potential converts. The Assembly of the Covenant was renamed the Church Triumphant and was able to show some restraint. Teed and his followers now took care to ease new members into the true views of the colony.

At first the colony had difficulties for one reason or another in their attempts to establish themselves in one place. It took several moves among the tenement houses along Chicago's streets before they settled into a group of rooms at #2-4 College Place. Here the colony was able to grow in strength and blossom.

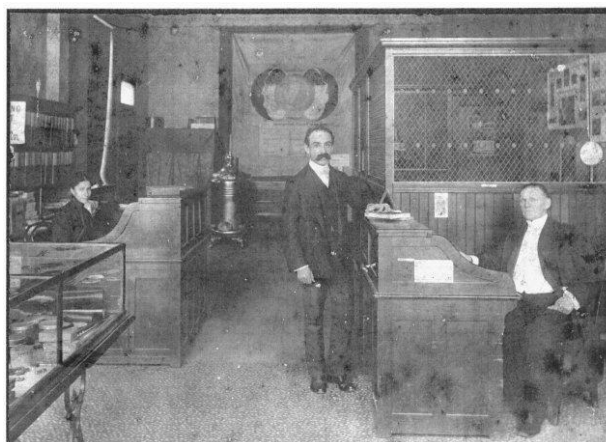




College Place

They began a new and quite professionally printed periodical entitled *The Guiding Star*. It was “A Magazine Devoted to the Science of Being” with “Spiritual Healing an Essential Department,” so tells us its first issue. It was also in this first issue that we initially come across the terms “Koreshan Theology” and “Koreshan School.” It was still several years away from Teed’s adopting the pseudonym “Koresh” to replace his own name.

The magazine was prepared by the colony’s newly purchased print shop, the “Guiding Star Publishing House.” It was located at 314 West 63<sup>rd</sup> Street in Chicago, with Teed, not only acting as the magazine’s editor, but, as president of the entire corporation. The first issue came off the press in the early days of 1887. Its purpose was, of course, to act as a sounding board for Teed’s ideas. The publishing house was soon printing numerous tracts and pamphlets also intended to teach and spread the word of the Koreshan theology.



The Englewood Printing Office (Teed seated at right)

The Koreshans were constant in their attempts to proselytize the people in and around Chicago. They used these publications as a primary means of acquiring new membership. Many



of the pamphlets and magazines were sold in booths set up along Chicago's main streets. A speaker would declare the new truth to passersby. In this manner, they would succeed in obtaining an occasional convert. One man later recounted the day he learned of the Koreshan truth:

"I was barbering in the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. I left my room for a walk down State Street. The nineteen-hundred elections were going on. Speakers were hollering about that on one corner and on the other the Salvation Army was holding a meeting, but I wasn't paying anybody any mind. I was out for a walk. Then I saw a fellow speaking beside a post that had a sign on it – same sign that you see there on the wall – WE LIVE INSIDE. What he said made sense, and I stopped to listen. I bought a copy of the *Guiding Star* from a man standing beside the speaker. It was 3 cents but I gave him a nickel and said, „Keep the change.“ I read it in bed that night. Before I went to sleep I was inside.” (6:262)

This story of conversion was related by Lou Staton to Carl Carmer. Lou joined the colony and eventually moved to Ester, Florida where the colony eventually had its base. He lived there, a believer in Koreshanity until the end, for the remainder of his life.



Lou Staton in his Later Year in Estero, Florida

New members were required to sell all their possessions and turn the money over to the communal trust. In return, they were promised to have their personal needs taken care of - as best as the colony was capable. Aside from whatever income they were able to obtain from the sales of their various publications, apparently it was the acquisition of new members that kept the Koreshans in business. Koreshanity was free, costing only one's life.

A second major move occurred in September of 1888. The Koreshan colony abandoned their College Place quarters for a highly decorated mansion, complete with spacious and well planted grounds, located at 99<sup>th</sup> and Oak Streets in what was then Chicago's Washington Heights. One hundred and twenty-six "angels" moved into this new "heaven." They christened their new headquarters "Beth-Ophra" (or occasionally "Home of Gideon" (Judges 6:11)), though, to many of their non-Koreshan neighbors, the large and luxurious mansion was still referred to as the Hilliard Mansion, after its former owner.

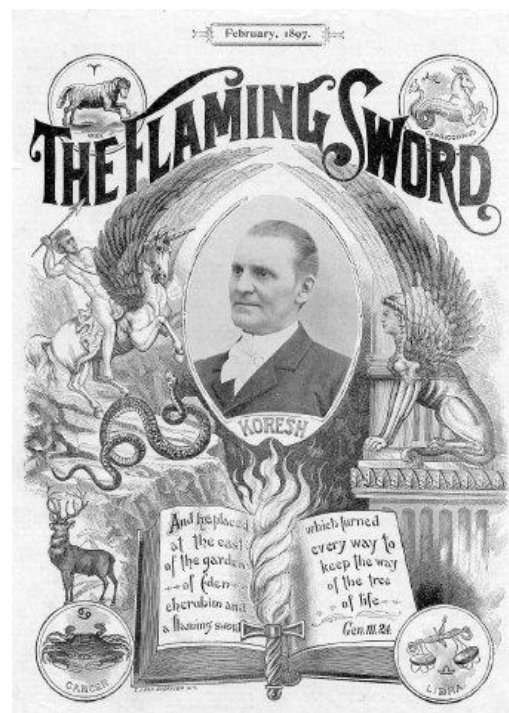
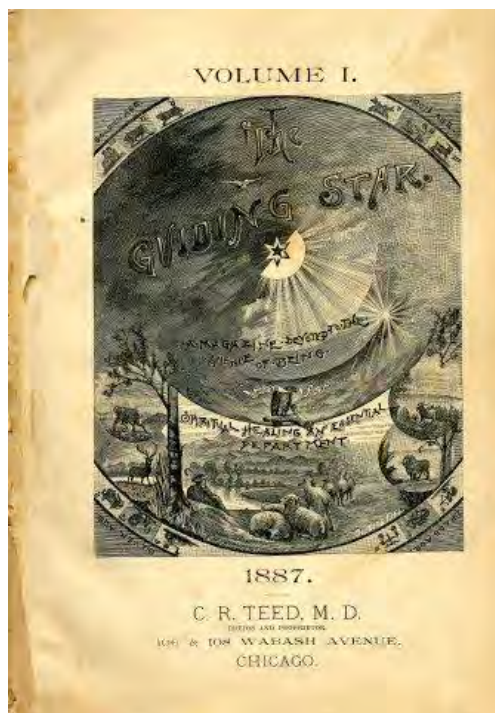




On the Lawn at Beth-Ophra

It was “a fine property ... surrounded by broad, shady verandas and magnificent grounds thickly studded with old trees and made attractive by grass plots and flower beds. With ... [Teed], in the same fine building, lived some of the prominent angels. There were seven cottages besides in which other members of the Koreshan community lived, and an office building – formerly a huge barn – in which was the printing office.” (*Chicago Herald* 4/8/1894, pg. 30, col. 2&3; 15:225)

In the final days of 1889, the printing press again changed location. Its new address, 6308 Wentworth Avenue, was only a few blocks from the main house.





It was also in December of 1889 that the *Guiding Star*, whose last issue was printed in May, was transformed into *The Flaming Sword*. Publication increased from once a month to a 16-page journal printed once a week. It continued thus until May 19, 1894 when it again became a monthly journal. (Then followed: 1894-1897, monthly; 1898-1906, weekly; 1907-July 1945, monthly; July 1945 – January 1949, quarterly.) Although the operation was still lead by Teed in the role of president, it was now being edited by Prof. U. G. Morrow. Mrs. Evelyn Bubbett was designated as associate manager. The *Flaming Sword*, advertised as the “most advanced, original and distinctive religio-scientific journal in existence,” was described by the Koreshans in the same advertisement:

“[It] ... departs from the usual stiff impersonality of journalism, and adjusts itself to the level of sympathetic association with its readers. It is the clearest search-light on the drift of current events, and the truest prophetic index to the world’s destiny.

It had made steady progress in its persistent and aggressive warfare against all modern shams, hypocrisies, evils, and fallacies. It is the fearless champion of the rights of the oppressed woman, in her bondage, and the laboring man under the weight of false capitalism.

It is foremost in all lines of Science, Religion, and Social Reform. It discusses astronomy, alchemy, geology, natural physics and phenomena, the problem of human life and destiny, the science of creation, theology, the science of history, the problem of social and economic reform, the impending revolution, and kindred subjects. It covers the ground of Universology.”

(From an advertisement for the *Flaming Sword*: 15:219)

Also being advertised around this time was an “interesting Game of Cosmogony, 52 cards in neat case, answering over 200 questions relative to Koreshan Astronomy. We send Game post paid, for 50 cents.” In addition, two charts were being printed and sold. One was the “Cellular Cosmos,” the other was entitled, “Human Brain – Left Hemisphere.” Both could be bought either „mounted or paper.”

In 1891 a cooperative business organization was established and was referred to as “the Bureau of Equitable Commerce.” It was organized in an effort to convert the laboring classes to the communistic attitudes of the colony. In its literature, the “Bureau” emphasized the cooperative and anti-monopolistic character of the “new society” and was highlighted by the Koreshan socialistic theory and practice. It is uncertain as to what became of it.

Things were booming for Cyrus R. Teed and it made him a happy man. His disciples called him “Master” and he had found himself a queen. Her mortal name was Mrs. Annie Ordway. Teed was rarely seen without her and as a consequence, despite the colony’s daim of celibacy, she was often rumored as being his mistress by non-Koreshans. One wonders how her husband, George, also a member, felt about her new role and the rumors created out of it. Annie Ordway was a refined woman, proficient in both music and art. She was a tall, large woman, and apparently quite beautiful. Her dark hair was elaborately waved, framing her face and wide mouth. As Queen of Koreshanity, she was given a divine name: “Victoria Gratia.” Teed took on a divine name of his own and was thereafter referred to as “Koresh I”, and this was first observable in print sometime in 1891. If Koresh was a most eminent leader, then Victoria Gratia would be “pre-eminent,” thereby designating her as grand ruler. According to Teed, she was even above himself. Yet, though Teed outwardly often stated this fact, while he was alive, he



was “the absolute, irresponsible, immaculate and inviolate high muck-a-muck if ever there was one. He was addressed with awe and trembling. Neither his acts nor his motives were inquired into and his word was law – the only law.” (As quoted from the *Chicago Herald*: 44:356) Still, Teed would explain to inquirers that all leadership was vested in a board of trustees.

In one of Teed’s prophecies, all of his power was to be transferred directly to Victoria Gratia. He told his listeners that in his 1869 illumination, a woman, destined to become the spiritual mother of the 144,000 sons of God after the global conflagration predicted in Revelations, was destined to walk beside Teed. Victoria was that part of the prophecy come true. Yet her great work would not begin until the martyrdom of Koresh “of which event Koresh himself freely conversed, though he confessed he was without knowledge of the time and manner of its accomplishment. (22:481) At the appointed time an angel would give Victoria the signal and she would then murder Koresh and thus “be exalted into divine motherhood and imperial pre-eminence.” (22:481) It has been recorded that in Victoria’s appearance “there were no signs of her dreadful mission in her face which, though it seems hard and arrogant, has no tragic expression.” (34:148)

Victoria was thoroughly imbued with the whole idea. She was constantly surrounded by beautiful things that were granted to her through the love of her people. Because of her high calling, she moved among her associates like the empress she was purported to be.

Other prominent members of the Chicago colony were Mr. and Mrs. James H. Bubbett, U. G. Morrow, and Mrs. L. S. Boomer, all of whom have been discussed to some extent earlier. Dr. A. W. K. Andrews, who had long ago been converted in Binghamton, NY and had helped Teed to establish the Moravia community, had dropped his practice and moved his family to Chicago so that they could be directly involved in the colony’s development. Andrews became the vice-president of the College of Life and served in many other capacities as well. His son, then about 20, became involved in operating the print shop. There was also an O. F. L’Amoreaux who was said to have been a professor of Greek and Latin at the Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Although he claimed 31 years service in that institution, the college today holds no records of his ever having been there. He had apparently written pamphlets and endless articles for publication on the colony’s presses, yet if this is true, it is surprising that none are extant today. In his spare hours, as in earlier years as a teacher and then as one of Koresh’s angels, he found joy in growing and experimenting with various nursery stocks in his Chicago backyard. He would later be called upon to use these experiences to help develop a nursery in the Estero Colony in Florida.

Even though the *Chicago Herald* credited Koreshanity with 4,000 followers, the total number of members in Chicago alone never exceeded over 300. Through Teed’s constant attempts for more universal acceptance by traveling and speaking in all parts of America, off-shoot colonies sprung up in San Francisco, Denver, Baltimore, Portland, Oregon, and Lynn and Springfield, Massachusetts. To Chicago’s 300, can probably be added another 15 believers from each of the cities named. It is doubtful if there were ever more than 500 followers at any one time.

Of Teed’s 300 angels in Chicago, three quarters of them were said to be women. Popular view considered these women the constituents of a harem. Yet, “if Mr. Teed does not practice his



teachings, if he is seeking personal gains for personal ends, if he loves his subjects with a more earthly than Platonic love, he is the most consummate, polished and best educated rogue the world ever produced.” (*Pittsburg Leader*, October, 25, 1891) He is elsewhere described as a “smooth-shaven little man of 54 whose brown, restless eyes glow and burn like live coals. He directs the destinies of a „new race of men,” the „sons of God.” He exerts a strange mesmerizing influence over his converts, particularly the other sex.” (*Chicago Herald* 1894: 20:25) There were also some articles written during the 1890’s that described Teed as being the founder of “the notorious Sunset Flat in Normal Park,” a reference that still eludes me.

The newspapers of the time would often refer to Teed as the “Chicago Messiah,” intending to poke fun at him. I don’t think Teed minded the reference too much, for after all, it *was* true. Teed, now more formally “Koresh I”, was the new messiah and he could prove it. “The Lord is in the world as Elijah the prophet,” wrote Teed. “He was born into the world in the fall of 1839, in confirmation of the great awakening, when the midnight cry was made by William Miller. That was the end of the 2,300 days, after which time the sanctuary should be cleansed. The process of cleansing the sanctuary continued 30 years, until 1870, or the fall of 1869. Then the truth – differentiated from fallacy – came into the world. The concavity of the earth was demonstrated and contrasted with modern astronomy ...” (38p: 11)

To prove his messianic mission one needs only to refer to Isaiah (11:10): “In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious!: And, as the son of “Jesse” Teed, Cyrus is surely the “root.” Furthermore, in Isaiah (44:28) does it not say that God exclaimed, “I am the Lord ... who says of Cyrus, „He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose.”” God has ordered it so. Cyrus has been chosen and he has little choice but to imbibe his mission. The Bible is true. Koreshanity is predicted upon that as one of its major premises. There are in fact 78 further proofs or credentials for messiahship. They may be perused in Dr. J. Augustus Weimar’s *The Divine and Biblical Credentials of Dr. Cyrus R. Teed (Koresh)*. Dr. Weimar was a follower and close friend of Teed’s. (See Part One of 45)

“Koresh” was derived from the fact that it is the Hebrew equivalent of “Cyrus.” Both are ultimately derived from the Persian “Kurush.” Teed probably came across the fact that “Koresh, King of Persia” was often in the textbooks interchangeable with “Cyrus the Great, King of Persia.” If the 5<sup>th</sup>-century BC king could be referred to as “Koresh,” then so could Teed. Besides, the Hebrew word signified the source of life. It stemmed from the root “koor” or “chur” meaning furnace or smelting place. “Chor-ashan” referred to a “smoking furnace.” Did this not describe the spiritual power fermenting inside Koreshanity? The word in other languages, such as Persian, pertained to the sun. Teed wrote of the Koresh/sun connection, and tells us that in these languages its meaning was “usually supposed to [refer to] the alchemico-organic luminary ... but in reality it has allusion to the biologic luminary, the source of love and wisdom, the divine solar center, the personal Deity.” (38i:1) This, in the imagery of the word, Teed found a powerful and inspirational tool and symbol.



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Six

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## *Celibacy, Children, and Money*

### 1

#### *CELBACY*

The chief postulates of Koreshanity were all brought to a fine polish during the years in Chicago. They consisted of i) a cellular cosmogony, ii) messianic law, iii) immortality through celibate practices, and iv) a new economic and governmental system based on a “Christian” form of communism. Messianic Law and the resulting Cellular Cosmogony were elaborated upon extensively in the Introduction of this work, followed in Chapter One with a depiction of the Koreshan’s proof of its veracity. Teed’s emphasis on celibacy has been mentioned several times, and it is now that we will investigate the benefits alluded to that practice as we explore what was referred to as the “Law of Immortality.”

One of the major tenets promulgated by the Koreshan philosophy was the practice of celibacy by both sexes. Teed preached that through celibacy, a state of immortality could be attained. According to Koreshan belief, the male potency (the *pneuma* or spirit of the nerve), when not wasted upon sensual indulgence, can be stored to enhance man’s spirit. The female potency (the *psyche* or spirit of the blood), when stored, enhances the soul. In a *biune* cosmos, a man and a woman may choose *divine marriage* in which, together, they form a unity of soul and spirit. Koresh and Victoria Gratia were such a unity and, upon such a platform, they were to rule the destiny of the cosmos.

It is wrong to partake in licentious activity, practitioners of Koreshanity were told. “The wild, lustful and dissipating pleasures of sexuality have blinded the human mind to the sanctity of the potencies of procreation and the higher uses to which the hidden energies of being should be devoted.” (38h:3) In such behavior there is no chance for immortality. When you die the Devil and Satan will feed from the decay of your spirit and flesh. “These grim counterparts in bestial consort grin and point their bony fingers to the corruptible dissolution of your bodies in the grave ... while they feed upon your dissipation and fill their hungry maws by your discomfiture.” (38h:3) Not a joyful fate!

Instead, one must substitute the Lord’s flesh for the Devil’s flesh. To do this you must “place a check” upon your “sexual potencies” and “this can only be accomplished through a restraint imposed by substitution ... a desire for a higher life.” (38h:11) In other words, you had better substitute celibacy for sensualism in both body and mind. “Every downward tendency of



the thought (desire) must be eradicated by the substitution of an aspiration of the goal to be reached in the struggle for life.” (38a:2)

How do we know that this virginal life, so central to the belief system of Koreshanity, will bring the desired results? The answer is explained in the “Law of Prolification,” *prolification* being an old word for generating new life directly from prior life. There are two principle factors to this Law: one, the *production of substance* (regeneration); and, two, *surplus of seed* (excess of seed after propagation). This is exemplified in the wheat plant: While the wheat plant sprouts and grows, all its life energy goes into developing the plant towards maturity. The plant will eventually fruit and go to seed. When this occurs, the plant’s energy is poured into the regenerative processes of the plant: that of the developing seed. The plant eventually withers and dies, but its spirit has been passed on to the seeds. Some of the seeds will sprout to produce new plants ensuring the plant’s continued existence (*production of substance*). The seeds not sowed, the *surplus of seed*, will be ground into meal for food consumption. It will have been “passed over” into other forms of life, hence the true meaning of the Passover. But imagine what would occur if the wheat plant, or perhaps even a human couple in matrimony, purposely avoided the production of seed! Would there then be no loss of the life energy and no regenerative output to steal life from the already living? I will not answer forthrightly, preferring instead to leave you to your own pondering upon Teed’s Law of Immortality.

In the spiritual realm, Jesus was a new kind of seed. With Jesus came the single seed of immortality. Born parthenogenically, He was not generated from prior life, and, instead of death, His body was resurrected into an immortal and everlasting life. Thus the Seed was sown and it sprouted. Now, nearly 2,000 years after planting, the flower of immortality had finally blossomed. In the fall of 1839 it brought forth its first fruit, whose swollen seed was the seed of Koreshanity. Duplicate the virginal life of Jesus. Divert that energy that feeds the “sexual potencies” into the divine life of the spirit and soul: the dissolution of the body into the energy of the Godhead is then a certainty and immortality is assured. “The time has come ... those who prefer to continue in the line of animal life will continue to propagate through the animal propensities and organs, while those who desire to rise out of the propensities of animal life, into divine conjunction and unity, will overcome the passion.” (38h:14)

“Neither let the eunuch say, behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.” (Isaiah 56:3-5)

Upon reading this Biblical passage, Teed discovered that one of the ten laws of God, “*remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*,” is really a symbolic command for man to save his seed. The ultimatum embedded is “...if a man violates or desecrates the Sabbath he shall surely die. If a man keeps his seed he shall surely live.” (38a:3) The continued omnipresence of morbidity and death are the repugnant evidence that the Sabbath is not being interpreted properly and is thus not being kept in the way God intended. Christ was once asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” The answer: “Keep thy commandments.” Since among these commandments is the keeping of the Sabbath, and this being synonymous with celibacy through the keeping of one’s seed, immortality will be the inevitable result. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.



Teed believe that it was the responsibility of women to ensure a celibate lifestyle. "To the women of this nineteenth century, be it announced that you are divinely authorized to mount upon the wall, - the ramparts of the citadel of immortal life, and from these heights, and from thy lips, and from between thy teeth, pronounce the lifting of thy curse!" (38m:2) By the 1880's the women's rights movement was quite active and many of the demands being made at that time were supported and elaborated upon by Teed. His ideas, while appearing quite liberal, seem actually to have been utilized to draw women into his sphere of influence. Once there he was able to promulgate his more radical ideas which included his spiritual-minded views regarding celibacy. Thus his ultimate goal was to encourage women to liberate themselves from the "thralldom of male dominance," especially in marriage, so that "her functions of procreation shall not be violated through passional indulgence." (38h:8) Teed believed marriage to be "a superficial and man-made ceremony and a legal license to monogamic prostitution." (38h:8) If women are persuaded to the virginal life, their husbands will thus be forced into this life devoid of sex (or, as often was the case, the men left their wives). While the marriage does not become annulled, it becomes a marriage of a changed kind. If the couple still desire to have a child together, then it is the woman's right to choose the precise moment of impregnation in accordance to astro-biologic laws; that is, to obtain an ideal horoscope reading for the yet to be conceived child.

Teed used the woman's movement in an attempt establish his goal of creating an elite society of enlightened celibacy. Occupation of this inner sanctum was populated by those within the highest ranks of the Unity and all Koreshans were invited join them. The only prerequisite was the total abstinence of sex in body and mind, a total commitment to Koreshanity, and the approval of Teed and his spiritual bride, Victoria Gratia. The world at large would destroy itself by fecundation, while this core group of devote Koreshans would act as a counterbalance to guarantee that the First-Fruits of the Seed of Jesus thrive and not wither away.

There is really no convincing argument to the claim that celibacy breeds immortality. Teed himself is unconvincing unless you admit to his divine connection with the Godhead. In fact he says that the very first step in attaining immortality *is* "the recognition of the Messiah and the application of his truth." (38: untitled pamphlet) And Teed believed that he was the messiah of his age. Ceasing to "propagate life on the plane of mortality" was designated only as the second step.

Teed first dreamed of quickly establishing a new vibrant, yet celibate, humanity, and he freely expressed these views to his earliest Chicago congregation in the Assembly of the Covenant. Recall that in this church, Teed revealed too much too soon with the effect of scaring many of his potential new converts away. He was losing too many would-be followers because of the demand for sexual abstinence. So for the practical health of the Unity, he allowed for a loosening up of this stipulation. Matrimony and the yearning for a family became acceptable for *them*, the ones so desiring such a life, for they dwell merely in the "investigative stage." They may still become immortal, though, for "even in the marital state there are ideals to be attained; ideals almost universally ignored in the ordinary sex relations." (Prof. Morrow as quoted in 22:474) Ultimately, these ideals were the embracement of celibacy as the couples "advanced," both spiritually and chronologically.



Celibacy was kept “in check” socially very simply by always keeping the sexes separate. Like the Shakers before them, the establishment of male and female dormitories and cottages emerged. At meals men were seated at one table placed on one side of the room, the women at other tables on the opposite side of the room. The seating arrangement was the same at all meetings and entertainments. Even at dances, one would find the men dancing only with other men, women only with other women. They claimed no social restraint “except for the moral obligation.” As mentioned earlier, Teed’s messianic career was plagued by rumors of flamboyant affairs with one or several of his women converts and, indeed, he usually housed with Victoria Gratia while everyone else was being segregated.

To help women in their responsibilities as warriors in the battle for human celibacy, Teed began what came to be called the White Horse Army, into which women could “voluntarily place themselves under military discipline and authority for the propaganda of the Koreshan doctrine.” It was the “living and practical enforcement of the doctrines of Jesus Christ.”

Victoria Gratia led the ranks of this “Army.” She and Teed delivered a series of lectures that later were compiled into “Tracts and Pamphlets of the Woman’s Mission, K. U.” Among these short oratorical pieces was Victoria’s *Woman’s Restoration to Her Rightful Domain*, an “Address delivered before the Koreshan Convention, at Central Music Hall, October 8, 1888.” Other tracts consisted of Teed’s *Proclamation*, *Cardinal Points of Koreshanity*, *Celibacy*, *Judgment*, and *Where is the Lord?* Women’s meetings were held at Beth Ophra every Friday at 2 P.M. Classes were offered at the College of Life to educate women in regards to their newly given standard of integrity. A summarization of these proclamations, a compilation of excerpts from the above tracts, provide a flavor of what the Koreshan form of Women’s Rights was at this time of the Unity. What was being advocated appears to be a mixture of the very progressive views regarding women at the time, with furtive deposits of Teed’s personal agenda embedded within.

The question of woman’s rights is one which actively set in motion, will not cease its agitation until these rights are guaranteed to her. (32:1)

That woman by some power over which today she has not control, - and above which she seems not to be able to rise - has become subject to her self-authorized master, behind whom stands the money power (the god Mammon), before whose shrine she seems an abject and willing devotee, there is not a reasonable question. Woman, a natural born citizen of the kosmos, evolved through the same agencies which bring into being her brother, equally expert in all that pertains to juvenile sports and pastimes, as active in the discernment of specific means to any given end, as fertile in inventive genius, as dominant in will, more righteously and kindly disposed, more compassionate and humane than her masculine counterpart, finds herself at her majority the technical bond-woman of the most arbitrary and tyrannical prestige possible to conceive. By some predisposed power she finds herself subject to a bondage, in some cases a willing slave, but nevertheless, a slave to a barbaric egotism from which modern culture and civilization are gradually but certainly enabling her to arise. No matter how much or how little truth there may be in theological dogmas, the fact remains, that woman is a social and political *ostrakon*, useful to man so long as she is his subservient tool and bondmaid, and so long as such commitment is passively yielded. (32:1-2)

Is it not true that thousands of families are held together where there exists no mutual bond; no tie of reciprocal affection; no cause for that germinal blending which comprises the nucleus of a new existence ... and where pride alone, or mutual love of the offspring begotten ... constitutes the only tie? (38h:6)



Where true love does not obtain between the so called husband and wife, there exists the most flagrant and vile prostitution of the procreative law. (38h:9)

Women, hold to your religious integrity ... but never hesitate to leave the man calling himself husband, who brutally drives you from your home because to refuse to lend your body for prostitution! (38h: 9-10)

The devil's flesh is begotten through sensualism and through the prostitution of woman's office. All flesh is devils flesh that can go to corruptible dissolution, or in other words, can rot in the grave. (38h:11)

The world's only hope today is that woman can arise, throw off the yoke, loft the curse, declare her liberty, and, from a renewed religious zeal begotten from an impulse of the refining purification of virginal fire, expurgate the final vestige and relic of the curse: "The desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." When woman becomes educated to this standard of integrity, every other right belonging to her by virtue of heirship of divine propagation will fall naturally to her inheritance. (38h: 8-9)

Woman's emancipation will not come through her appeals to the right of men to grant privileges beyond their jurisdiction. Will she longer degrade her womanhood by cringingly imploring that which man, the usurper, has no right to bestow? Man cannot grant what does not belong to him to impart; and it is degrading to the womanhood of this age to be a beggar when she should be Empress. (38h:9)

## 2

### CHILDREN



Koreshan Children

There is a curious description of one of Koresh's female (fallen) angels written during the later years of the Unity, years after Teed's death:

Charlotte Montenegro treasures old letters of the four sons she gave up years ago, when they were little more than babies, for Koreshanity – and reads them with eyes so tear-blurred she can't see the words and you know she's repeating them by heart, so many times she has been over them. The sons are grown now – in their early twenties, and somewhere in South America with their father, who took them back to his home when Charlotte joined the Unity. She was an Alameda (California) girl who met Koresh in New York when she was very young. Charlotte is still very pretty. (34:345)



It is interesting to speculate on what would have been the fate of her children if they had accompanied her into the Koreshan community. How would have the doctrines of Koreshanity have affected their upbringing?

A stated requirement found within the *Koreshan Unity's General Information Concerning Membership & Its Obligations*, a document compiled by both Teed and Victoria Gratia, was that

...when a family comes into the Koreshan Unity it comes with the understanding that there is a separation; that the children no longer belong to the parents, but to the institution and that the Unity claims the right to direct the education, industry, and care of the children exclusively without any regard to what the parents suppose to be the right thing. The male children belong ... until they are 21, the female children until they are 18 ... and all children should be taught that they belong to the Unity, and not to their parents. (38j: 10-11)

The children of the community were expected to lead circumspect lives. A special "guide" was assigned to each child to be their role model and to supervise the child's education and play. "Children must do something to exhaust their surplus energies; and nothing will demoralize them so much as to be at liberty to follow the direction of the evil tendencies of the self-guided and untrained juvenile mind." (38e: 117) This quote is taken from a Utopian novel, written by Teed, entitled *The Great Red Dragon*, in which he describes an ideal world based on the worldwide acceptance of Koreshanity. He describes the role children play in such a Utopian world. Thus he tells us that, "The juvenile mind and body were trained on lines of moral, physiological and mental development. It had been contended that there could be no greater evil than that of maintaining children in idleness, and allowing the diversity of intellectual force to be wasted."

Although the Unity's *General Information* may create an eerie picture, perhaps we are expecting the worse. The Unity's claim of the right to rear the children "exclusively without any regard to what the parents may suppose to be the right thing," appears downright scary, yet, we can't really judge. There doesn't appear to be any written memoirs exposing any kind of child abuse. We are told that the children were brought up carefully. The prohibitions placed on the children were probably the same as those placed upon children in the schools, churches, and homes of the majority of the "normal" communities throughout turn-of-the-century America. We must remember that in his own way Teed was trying to discourage a sense of family identity to help along the evolution of celibacy. Many might wonder, what is the sense in having a child if it cannot be one's own and must instead be turned over to the Unity? Perhaps it was a neat way of discouraging pregnancies.

The Koreshan schools were said to have been excellent. Many trades such as carpentry, printing, and surveying were taught. There was a healthy emphasis on art and music as well. They believed it to be very important to teach a curriculum with a sturdy balance between the practical and theoretical.





Koreshan School  
Children and  
their Teachers

As stated in the *General Information*, the children “belonged” to the Unity only until they were legally adults. They were allowed to leave the community at this time and many did. There were only about twenty-five children as part of the Estero colony in 1902. Later many of them returned to the Estero colony, but only after Teed’s death. They came back to help rebuild the community after, with Teed’s death, it began to fall apart.

There was really little need to be concerned with the rearing of very small children and babies. When, and if, such a child was brought into the community, the natural parents would be asked to take responsibility for it until the child was old enough to become a part of the existing societal structures established to shape the older kids. Teed often stated that, if a couple insisted on getting married and having children, Koreshanity would allow it. In addition, he would expect it to be arranged legally under all existing state and federal laws. Yet, I wonder if such a married and pregnant woman would have been ostracized, or at least looked down upon, within their tiny society.

To further our consideration of Teed’s ideal child, here is a lengthy quote focusing on the child’s education, again from Teed’s *A Great Red Dragon* (38e). In the story there are still quite a lot of young people around, you see, for Koreshanity has only recently been ushered in and the establishment of total celibacy has only just begun.

The day after the banquet, the Oriental Prince with his retinue was permitted to visit the industrial yards of the Central city. They were conducted to a place where thousands of children were employed, ranging from seven to ten years of age. Every kind of machinery was in operation, and all kinds of useful articles were in process of manufacture.

The Prince observed a bright little fellow, about ten years of age, who was busy going from one part of the department to another. He inquired of the attendant what the boys’ office consisted of, and was told that he was one of the foremen, and that this was his special department. Turning to his guide, the Prince inquired:

“May I be permitted to question the lad?”

He was granted the privilege, and asked, “Young man, what are the hours required of you each day in this branch of your industry?”



“Most noble Sir,” replied the boy, who had heard of the presence of the Prince, “in this department of our education we may apply our industry two or three hours, at our option; but we are only required to perform this portion of our use one and a half each day. We are out of school on Saturday, but on Sunday we are at rest.”

“Do you enjoy these exercises, my lad?” he inquired.

“Every boy in these shops applies his energy with the utmost pleasure, for he feels that what is performed is of useful service to the world. You know we are world-builders here, and there is no greater joy than to realize that we are of service to our race.”

“This must be a sort of kindergarten, then.”

“Yes, sir, this is a garden of industrial service; but nothing goes to waste. We find our happiness in the fact that we can create useful things which can be devoted to the uses of society. And to think that we are helpers in the great scheme of making provision for the human race is a chief delight to us.”

The Prince, turning to his guide, said, “The boy talks like a man.”

“Yes,” was the reply, “they have hours wherein they enter into conversation with mature minds, where they are encouraged to use pure language, and to think that they are of importance to the society and to the world. The entire educational system is conducted on business principles; for everything is placed on a practical basis, and even in education there is no waste of time.”

“But is there no period of recreation for the pleasures of the child mind?”

“The performance of all material uses is so adjusted to the so called recreations, that every use is a delight; but there are devotions, such as music, art, educational plays, and the drama, all of which the younger minds enter into with zest; but they are all essential uses of life. It is the purpose to adjust to the various uses of life as to make them a constant joy. There are also plays and sports, apparently useless, but they are for the exercise of motions and functions which apply to the perfection of the character of the mind and body.”

“Every department of our school system has a practical application. If it be the study of mensuration, the measurement is applied to the thing of substance measure, so there is no theoretical measurement, but actual application of the science of measurement. If it be surveying or civil engineering, the student goes into the field and applied the science to its practical use.”

“Our children become practical at the outset of their scholastic work, and thus the time wasted in the ordinary school systems is economized and utilized for the good of society. The joy with which a child enters into the application of his mental development, becomes a thousand-fold more delightful because it awakens the deepest sentiments of the child mind. The children are too busy with their delights of uses to the neighbor, to find time for the cultivation of the lower instincts so common to children who have no industrial interests to occupy the juvenile mind.” (38e:151-153)

### 3

## CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM

This quote not only reveals Teed’s hoped for role of children in the Koreshan society, but it further reveals a belief in his vision for new economic and governmental edifice structured upon “Christ’s communism.”



Human society, its power structure, its governmental laws, its economic life – its totality – if true to the cosmic laws of the universe, mimics the alchemico-organic form. Previous to the Illumination of Koresh, society was ignorant of the true form and thus experimented with various ways of establishing societal systems. But now, with the *Law of Life* known and with the coming of the *New Dispensation*, the new *Society of the Arch-Triumphant*, will be ushered in to take command. The Koreshans will be models for the rest of the world, teaching all the correct way of living.

The order and regulation of the stars of every magnitude in the physical heavens are determined by the relation which the central star sustains to all the stars subject to its government. The government of the physical universe is imperial, in that the head of government resides in one center; but democratic, in that all of the stars bear that reciprocal relation which makes the center dependent upon the reciprocal activity of the subsidiary but contributory centers.

While there is a subordinate relation of the multiplicity of stars to the central one, there is also a subordination of the central star to all the stars whence the central one derives its powers of government. The regulation of society, therefore, is not left to another experiment because former experiments have failed to accomplish for the people that for which government is established, but must be regulated by the scientific knowledge and application of principles which may be determined before the correct form of government is instituted.

The science of Cellular Cosmogony, then, determines what the final form of social government shall be, which will enforce an equitable, though not an equal, relation of all the gradations of social activity. The center cannot heap up and enlarge, for if that were possible there would be engendered hypertrophy of the heart and center, by which all the other parts of the organic structure would be thrown out of proportion and balance, thereby engendering disease that would be destructive to the entire organism. The central star would be in a state of active receptivity, but would be distributing to all the stars the qualities and substance which it had prepared for redistribution.

What is true of the central star would also be true of every part of the entire economic system of the physical universe. Here, then, is found the scientific pattern of the forms and functions of the anthropotic world, which the physical world constantly gestates. As the center of the physical universe depends upon its circumference, so does the circumference depend upon the center. As this is true in the physical, so is it true as to the anthropotic universe. (38i:50-51)

If the cosmos is imperialistic, then so must the society of man. The central star of the *anthropotic universe* is the Godhead, and Jesus, the greatest of the messiahs of that Godhead is equal to it. Thus it is His quality and way of life that must permeate outwards to be absorbed by the rest of the *anthropotic universe*, that is, into the activities, spirits, and minds of mankind. With the coming dispensation, brought on by the emergence of the new messiah, the duality of Koresh and Victoria Gratia would rule imperialistically from the *cosmic vitellus* and would continue to exemplify the true and correct way of being for all societies of the world. In fact, all they had done up to now had helped to prepare the way for such a future.

The Society of the Arch-Triumphant was, of course, comprised of all those who professed to believe in Koreshanity. Koreshans, in turn, believed they had fully absorbed the quality of the Godhead, Jesus. Jesus was virginal, so claimed the Koreshans, and the doctrines of celibacy and practices duplicated his virginal ways. Economically, Jesus' views were communistic. The existing economic world, with its fundamental law of competitiveness, was exactly the kind of inequitable exchange system condemned by Jesus. "Commerce is piratical



when deviated from its only legitimate use; equitable exchange.” (38h:19) Koreshanity would have to become communistic, too, to further their complementation with the Godhead’s quality.

Cyrus Teed did not think that the world’s economic situation at the time was in a very healthy state. Doctoring it would not suffice in its cure. It needed instead to be killed, and out of its decay a revolutionary economic concept could be evolved. There was to be a new law – the Law of Polarization. The Koreshan Unity began plans to bring about the fundamental changes needed to bring about this new law, for Koreshanity was the only bond “having sufficient organic power to hold in association bodies of men on the social and communistic basis.” (38h:19)

The Koreshan dream was to educate the masses of their divine inheritance: the desire that all resources were to be given equally to all men and not only to a select few. Since the “people” comprise the government, the products of the earth, transformed by nature and man’s industries, should belong to the people. The people must also be involved in the governing of supply and demand, thus regulating the distribution of goods. It would be the Koreshans who would teach the economic process needed to be pursued in order to retain the goods necessary to life. This was easy to do; they needed only to convert the ways of competitiveness into the ways of the Lord. To do this they would form tiny organic groups that were acutely aware of the goal. One such group would be organized in every Congressional district and precinct throughout the counties and states of America. These groups would be organized upon the “Principle of Practical Political Work” quietly playing it by the rules until they have become the majority. Secretly lying in wait and secretly committed only to the Koreshan form of government, they would patiently and quietly reestablish the laws in accordance to the basis of justice and equality. They would opt for an industrial system that is regulative and balanced in its wealth and labor. They would work diligently, triumphantly divulging their true plan only after the majority of Americans have joined the Koreshans, as they destined to do. Quietly, indeed, for the Bureau of Equitable Exchange discussed earlier was the only concrete step the Unity was actually able to take in this direction.

**T**hese practical ideas were taught at the Koreshan School of Political and Social Economy. The School was a department of the Koreshan Collegiate System, actually one of the many elaborate names referring to the College of Life. They stated that their system of political infiltration “will not stop short of becoming a great producing monopoly, but it will differ from all other monopolies in that it will be by the mass for the mass, not for individual and corporate interests which deprive the masses of their rights.” (38L:3)

There was another, stronger, belief among the Koreshans. They believed that the New Order would be established when the destructive forces of capital and labor have destroyed each other. All the Koreshans would have to do is wait around for it to happen. Then, out of the decay, the New Order would be established. In fact, this was the way Teed himself envisioned the death of competitiveness in his Utopian novel, *The Great Red Dragon*, only to quicken its commencement, god-like Koreshans “lit the fuse,” so to speak.

Labor, as it exists today is a curse, whereas labor as a “performance of legitimate and economical uses” is a “re-creation.” (38i:41) The Koreshan belief was that the curse of common labor and its resultant life of drudgery was directly linked to man’s aberrant and inordinate love



of money. In reality, although both worker and boss want to become fabulously rich, it is only the employer, who by squeezing work from the employed, that actually does. The bosses are the brains of any operation, while the workers are encouraged not to think – only do. This “excessive mental activity in one direction makes the demand for overwrought muscular activity in the other – the overwrought mentality thus being ... balanced.” (38i:39) This same excess in mental and muscular performance creates at both extremes a demand for increased stimuli that can only be satisfied by food and drink, in ever increasing dosages. This in turn feeds the fires of lust. It makes celibacy and the resultant immortality more difficult and, in fact, impossible. It is not in accordance with the Law of Life. Thus, in attacking man’s lust for money, the source of all evil, there comes a new context within which the Koreshans must fight in order to spread the seeds of Immortality.

The Koreshan community was already practicing a communistic way of life. All money and possessions were communally owned. Before entering the Koreshan community all individual possessions were sold and the money was put into a central trust or common treasury. “There is no difference between one who has placed one penny in the common treasury, and the one who has contributed one hundred thousand. No person joining our community can claim anything upon the basis of having contributed a large amount.” (38j:5) All Koreshan property and goods were also held in this common treasury department and the department was in the hands of an appointed Bureau “ratified by the voice of the community.”

Koreshans did not buy or sell to one another, therefore, there were no monetary costs pertaining to their own transactions. This was especially true in the Estero community where the majority of their survival needs were taken care of within their own boundaries. In Estero they had annihilated the principles of labor, cost, and price claiming to have no use for such terms. Their economical system precluded the necessity of the use of money.



# **KING KORESH**

## **The Man From Inside the Earth**

### **Chapter Seven**

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### *Networking*

Contrary to the Koreshan's economic belief's discussed in the previous chapter, there was a lot of talk in the press about Teed's alleged schemes to get money and power away from other communal societies. His plan "to amalgamate all of the 17 celibate societies in the United States," with himself as the person in charge, was considered by some, "too visionary." Others, more cynically, stated bluntly that Teed was "strictly out for cash." Much of the discussion came about because of a meeting between Teed and Thomas Lake Harris while Teed was in San Francisco setting up a western branch of the Koreshan Unity.





Pictures of Cyrus Teed and Annie Ordway (Victoria Gratia) taken during their time in San Francisco

Teed had appeared before a small audience in San Francisco's "Metropolitan Hall" some time during late 1890. To an audience, of which women represented the bulk, he said that "he was the reincarnated Messiah who was promised to come for the final redemption of the race." (*Wave Magazine*, November 14, 1892, page 7, column 1) The result? Teed immediately gained a tiny following in that city culminating in the establishment of a small communal household. The house became known as "The Ecclesia" and was located at Market and Noe Streets. It was not exactly a palace, but it was more than comfortable. It rapidly became a topic of general conversation as their immediate neighbors never tired from talk about that "queer communistic society."

Religious services were held at the Ecclesia every Tuesday and Sunday evenings. Many people attended, most apparently just to see what exactly was going on there. Next door, in an adjoining building, a branch of the College of Life was begun. There a printing press was set up. The San Francisco Koreshans began printing their own journal entitled *The Pruning Hook* which was soon changed to *Plowshare and Pruning Hook: Indicator of Commercial Equation*. Issues were sporadic and few. The first was printed May 1, 1891, and the last issue appeared on January 26, 1895.

The majority of Teed's San Franciscan followers lived under the one roof located on Market Street. Teed had his own room there, but he often spent evenings at the homes of sympathetic "investigators" of his creed. The Market Street communal home was described by a local reporter who finally found the doctor at home:

Koresh sat in one of the coziest of apartments imaginable while talking to the reporter. Lilies and violets were arranged in vases near at hand and handsome pictures hung on the walls. The room was a sort of studio-chamber, but the folding bed was almost invisible, and an Italian screen rented a very secluded corner for conversation. The sound of musical instruments in another room prompted the „doctor“ to remark that they were organizing a most excellent orchestra among themselves, and he seemed particularly anxious to impress upon the visitor the absence of everything monastic from the establishment. "We are not



ascetic,” he said, “we are a family of nearly forty here and we try to enjoy ourselves. Our interests are common. There is but one purse, the strings of which are held by a board of trustees. My people would give me all their money if I would let them, but I only get my living with the rest.” The „doctor“ smiled as he spoke and appeared perfectly satisfied with himself.



Thomas Lake Harris

It was from this base that Teed set out to Fountain Grove colony where Thomas Lake Harris and his Brotherhood of the New Life had their own communal society near Santa Rosa, located north of San Francisco. Like Teed, Harris believed himself to be the new Messiah. He, too, had been visited by angels and had begun his career by establishing a communal colony in New York State. His first major colony was in Brocton, New York, along the shores of Lake Erie. He was constantly surrounded by women and had his ordained “Queen Lily.” Talk of sexual scandals was abundant and Harris was forced to leave New York. Consequently, Harris fled to California where a sister colony was prospering due to its vineyards and winery. Harris, claiming the beverage excellent for one’s health, insisted that the wine contained “Divine Intelligence.” Scurrilous talk of free love and sexual excesses erupted in California as well, and the strain in dealing with these allegations and the running of the winery took its toll on Harris. By the time Teed arrived to talk about a merger, Harris’ colony was no longer powerful in its cohesion, and Teed probably felt that it was ripe for a new command.

“I want to say at the outset,” said Teed to San Franciscan reporters, “that I believe that there are no purer people in America than the community over which Harris rules. What I mean by that is that there are no people who come nearer to living up to the standard of their teaching. I knew very little about Harris until quite recently. Only a short time ago I visited him at Santa Rosa and I formed my opinion as stated. There have been lots of lies told about him, as there have been about me, but I believe he will come out all right.” (*San Francisco Chronicle* March 12, 1892)

Teed went away with the feeling that the two creeds were too divergent to form a social union, but that a partnership in which the two colony’s combined their commercial and industrial systems would be possible. He claimed that Harris endorsed the idea. Harris denied it.

Upon leaving San Francisco on March 16, 1892 to pursue other business, rumor spread that he had returned to Chicago with a \$200,000 heiress whom he had made his bride after peculiar rites of the “Koreshtes.” When reporters asked him about it, smiling he said, “I have nothing to say on the subject.” The *Chicago Herald* reported in 1894 that Teed had acquired as much as \$60,000 from preaching in California alone.



The business for which Teed left San Francisco was to journey to Economy, Pennsylvania, where the Harmonist Society had their community. The Harmonist Society was a Christian based commune that, like the Koreshans, held all property in common, practiced celibacy, and submitted their spiritual and material beings to their dynamic leaders. It began in Iptingen, Germany as a reaction to Lutheranism by Johann Georg Rapp in 1785. It didn't take long before they were forced to flee the Continent for America where they were eventually able to establish three communities, of which



Johann Georg Rapp  
1757-1847

Economy, located in Western Pennsylvania, was the most successful. They were extremely successful businessmen and had a hand in almost everything from oil to fine silk garments. Actually, Cyrus Teed, accompanied by A. W. K. Andrews, first visited the Harmonists as early as 1878 and, prior to that date, they had been in correspondence with the Harmonists for several years. The letters probably consisted of an exchange of ideas and practical information educating Teed on how to proceed in establishing his own community. Yet, even then, there were numerous allegations that Teed's true motivations were to get hold of that society's money, of which there was a surprisingly large supply, approximately \$2,000,000. The newspapers of the time frequently quoted such inflated estimates as \$150 million dollars. And, indeed, Teed and Andrews came away from their 1878 visit with \$100 more than with which they had arrived. Perhaps Teed even thought that he could revitalize the Society into a branch of Koreshanity. Most importantly, though, they had acquired a new, and perhaps, ardent admirer of Teed and Koreshanity – the junior-trustee of the Harmonist Society, John Duss. Here was the beginning of a long friendship between Teed and Duss, but this friendship also became the cause of a lot of difficult times and character degradations made public in the daily press.



John Duss



The difficulties centered around the money and the belief that that was Teed's only interest in the Society. Some even claimed that it was Teed who came closest to getting the Harmonist's money. In the end it resulted in a lawsuit brought on by a Henry Fensht against John Duss. But this did not come about until many years later.

A great deal was made of Duss's connection with Teed. First, he was charged with preaching the doctrines of Koreshanity. Whenever visiting Harmony, Teed was a guest at Duss's home. Some even claimed that it was Duss who had built Teed's first communal house in Moravia and that he had done so by using the Society's funds. Duss asserted that this was not true, and we know that he was not lying. A further charge was that Duss had, as late as 1891, taken his cousin Frederika Kroll to Chicago and had her placed with Teed in his "angel house," the accusation referring to Beth Ophra as that "disreputable place."

In San Francisco, a disaffected one-time couple of the "Golden Gate Assemble" – a name given to the San Francisco branch of the Koreshan Unity – told a tale of Koreshan spies who had infiltrated into the community at Economy. Upon Teed's departure from San Francisco, they said he was on his way to Economy to get his hands on the money. This was in March of 1892. Of this, Duss told reporters he knew nothing of Teed's planned visit, and that he had known Teed "as a qualified scientist and scholar, and I know he had a vast fund of learning (which indeed was the truth), that I found Teed's beliefs and interpretations interesting, but that I and the Society were not in any way committed to him." (13:300)

Yet it was soon spread among the country's newspapers that Teed had indeed arrived and was negotiating with Duss and Father Henrici for a vast loan of \$150 million. Henrici was at that time the leader of the Harmonist Society.

The newspapers were not shy about reporting, perhaps erroneously, that Duss was one of Teed's most ardent disciples. They further elaborated on his affiliation with Teed, going so far as to say it was Duss who was the alleged Koreshan spy! They quoted him as saying that "as a Nebraska ranch owner, I [Duss] had been converted, wriggled my way into the Harmony Society and its trusteeship with the sole objective with seducing our good old folks into a Teed faction so that the doctor could completely get his hands on the society's wealth." (13:300)

Duss wrote out a full report of his relationship with Teed and sent it to the press. No newspaper would print it. Instead they continued with their malicious lies. The headlines were scandalous enough: "TEED WITH LEAD", "ALLEGED PLOT TO GET MILLIONS", "TEED'S TRIUMPH", "KORESHANS AND HARMONISTS WILL TRAVEL TOGETHER", and "TRUSTEE DUSS IS TEED'S TOOL" are a few examples. An unnamed local poet of the Pittsburg *Leader* found inspiration in all of this muck, of which the following is an excerpt:

Alas! Alas!  
It came to pass  
That o'er those simple folk

A monster low'rs  
Whose evil powers



Would sear the heart of oak

With ghoulish greed  
Messiah Teed  
Abhorrence now excites;

He'd fain assault  
The money vault  
Among the Harmonites.

O Brother Duss  
Give ear to us  
And shun this fakir brash;

Reject his claims  
And tricky games –  
He's strictly out for cash.

And none can say  
You're in the way  
Among the Harmonites. (13:302)

Of course Teed did show up, but as Duss was adamant to point out, he did not come for money, but came instead to enlist the Society's moral support in his Koreshan Unity and for his own benefit to study, again, the Society's communal organization.

"He seemed to be an altogether sincere and friendly man, with endless courage and spirit. We treated him with utmost cordiality. He was even given a meeting by the Board of Elders; it was a pleasant, affable, but noncommittal meeting." (13:301)

When in December of 1982 Harmony's ailing leader Father Henrici died, Duss was one of the people hoping to be promoted into his role as leader of the Society. This wish only helped to increase the uproar surrounding Duss. Long before the press campaign against Duss and Teed, a deep suspicion regarding their relationship had been festering inside the mind of Henry Fentch. Fentch had earlier received a letter from a friend, Theodore L. Pitt of Niagara Falls Center, Canada, postmarked November 14, 1892. In it, Pitt had "fully exposed" Teed to the Trustees. Consequently Fentch did not trust Duss and his motivations for leadership and became, as Duss described it, "the chief „fly in the ointment.“" Fentch retorted:

"Suppose any person in our midst was an accomplice of Teed's, don't you think it would be a good opportunity to bring that fellow into the Society? Teed remarked some time ago that he would have control of our organization and who knows but what he has been quietly working for some time past?" (3:224)

Duss attributed the attacks against him as due to jealousy. Years ago when Duss was elevated to Junior-Trustee, Fentch had thought that he, himself, was going to be placed in that role. Fentch was quite disappointed and had right away taken much of it out on Duss.



But now Fentch felt he was in a position to take legal action against Duss and he did. A Bill of Equity was filed against Duss. Charges were not placed on Duss alone; other Trustees were attacked as well, and not all of the charges centered on Teed. The allegations and the resulting legal actions taken were numerous and the problems seemed to continue long after Teed was out of the picture. Duss was never truly convicted of anything but the numerous allegations continued to fly about as each was tried. The consequence was to quicken the decline and finish of the Harmonist Society.

\* \* \*

The Harmonists were not the only other communal society with whom Teed had affiliations. Around the time that Teed was losing his advantageous standing with the Harmonists, he was working diligently to attain confirmation and acceptance in another. On June 26, 1892 a letter was sent to Frederick W. Evans of the Shaker's. It read:

**Certificate of Confirmation of the Election of Victoria Gratia (Mrs. Annie G. Ordway) to the Presiding Office of the Gynecato of the Koreshan Unity**

“We hereby declare the acceptance of Victoria into our body as a member of the North family of Shakers at Mt. Lebanon, N. Y. and our approval of her election to the office, Shepherdess of the Gynecato of the Koreshan Unity, and we so hereby commission her to publish the Gospel of Sexual Holiness as ordained in the body of Christian Believers, called Shakers, and as in the same manner taught by the Koreshan Unity.”

In approval of her appointment, election and ratification to her appointment, we ordain by the affixing of our signatures:

In Witness: Frederick W. Evans, Daniel Offord, Anna White, Martha J. Anderson (14:3)



Frederick W. Evans

It is not know if the Shaker members ever signed this “letter”, apparently a request not only for confirmation of Koreshanity, but a hope that Victoria would be accepted into the Shakers and in a high standing role. The Shakers were quick to send a reply, though, in a letter dated July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Much of the letter contained paragraphs that preached to Teed the subtleties of the Shaker faith believed to have been ignored or misunderstood by the Koreshans. One example is, “The Koreshans...if faithful will add thereunto vegetarianism.” (14:6) What follows are those parts of the letter that responded to the Koreshan’s aspirations to have Victoria accepted as a



spiritual leader and hopefully an exalted member of the Shakers. The parts left out are those where the Shakers drifted into preaching:

Dearly Beloved Brother Cyrus,

We have received the document you sent by the sisters requesting our endorsement and the ordination of Annie G. Ordway as an eldress in the community which you are forming.

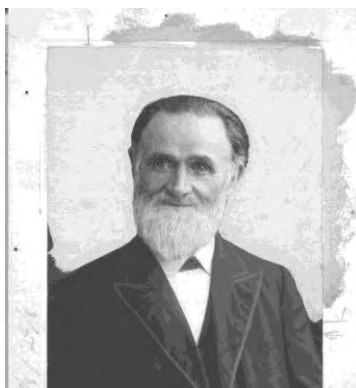
This will make Cyrus and Annie the leaders and elders of the new order. A nursing father and a nursing mother to those who will confess and forsake all their sins that come to their remembrance...

The wonderful document you have sent for us to sign, clears up the little doubts and plainly shows you as a Christian and that it is not your intention to "set up a post by God's post" and build up YOURSELF...

We want Koresh to adopt and to be in the power of the first cycle and in the increase of the second cycle. Want his people to be as much better than that which exists in the societies old of Shakers as they can attain unto... And we shall pray that you dear people may clean escape all of the evils, corruptions and abominations of the world inherent in your own natures, the products of fleshy lusts that war against the soul. (14:4-8)

And then it ends, with polite encouragement for Koreshanity, but without an answer, yes or no, as to Victoria's membership.

Many more letters appear to have been passed between the two societies, but only one more is preserved. The Shakers had read in a copy of Teed's magazine an article entitled "*Be Fruitful and Multiply*," in which Teed discussed the biblical passage containing this phrase while explaining its true "interior meaning." The article, upon being read by the Shakers, kindled two concerns, and thus, a letter was penned by Daniel Offord to gain a better understanding of Teed's beliefs. After all, they had, in a sense, endorsed Koreshanity and they wanted to be sure that it hadn't been a mistake to do so. They wanted to know first: Does Koresh plan to have his celibate followers come together to propagate the sons and daughters of God after a certain established period. Secondly: Does Koresh claim himself the Messiah, equal or superior to Jesus Christ, and does he hold Ann Lee, the founder of Shakerism, only a simple reformer?



Daniel Offord

Offord declared that the only difference between Koreshanity and Shakerism for which he was certain was that the Koreshans believed in a *biune* god, in which the male and female components were unified into one being, while the Shakers believed in a dual God where the



male and female components were distinct. He ended his correspondence with a list of four things he believed strongly linked Koreshanity to Shakerism:

1. Virginal life
2. The relinquishing of worldly possessions
3. Full recognition of the teachings of Jesus Christ
4. The honest confession of all the sins of which the Holy Spirit convicts.

Teed's response was a carefully composed exposition of his beliefs in which he made sure that his ideas be compatible to those of the Shakers. His answer as to whether or not he was planning an established period of fecundation was, "No, never!" At length he went on to explain all of those misconceptions. And "no," he was not equal or greater to Jesus Christ; instead he considered *all* people messianic whenever they followed the way of the Lord. While he was in San Francisco, he had responded to a similar inquiry: "I am continually being misunderstood in regard to my position. I simply claim that every man who is a teacher of the truth is messianic. In that sense I am a messiah, and since, if I am in the Father and He is in me, I am as much god Almighty as any other regenerated man." (San Francisco Chronicle: March 12, 1892)

The final page of Teed's answer surprisingly reveals the possible extent of his involvement in the Shaker Society:

I will quote from the paper given to me by the Shaker body at Mount Lebanon:

"Know all men by these presents: that Cyrus R. Teed, of Chicago, Cook Co., Ill., is a recognized brother in full membership, and fellow of the United Society of Believers (called Shakers), and that, by the authorizations of the appointing power or our body, and endorsed by our Ministry, he is hereby anointed in confirmation of his authority to preach the everlasting gospel of purity and the presence of the Lord in the revelation of the Motherhood of God."

"We hold that (Ann Lee) was the chosen Christ of Gods as far above the ordinary reformer as virtue is above profanation... We behold her as the center of the New Jerusalem, the astral center, whose brilliancy outshines every other glory now manifest in the celestial heavens."

The last paragraph of our brother's letter we all, as Koreshans, heartily endorse, they being as much the doctrines of Koreshanity as of the Shakers." (31:10)

Yet the ideals of Koreshanity and those of the Shakers did differ greatly in many areas. The Shakers did not believe in Teed's cosmogony in respect to both the physical universe and humanity. They further did not believe in Teed's theories of immortality. And these two areas comprised the bulk of Teed's religion.

Even so, the interest that the two groups had for one another continued. There was established, in Florida, not far from Estero, a Shaker colony. It was located in Osceola County. There was much visiting back and forth between the two communities to exchange ideas and to give each other encouragement. When Koreshanity began to fall apart in Florida, many Koreshans contemplated joining the Shakers. The Shakers, though friendly and sympathetic, were cautious. Shaker leader Ezra Stewart regarded Koreshanity as a "racket" but believed that there were "indications...that we may gather some of them." (1:37) One Koreshan, Edgar S. Peissert, after obtaining a copy of the Shaker noviate covenant, was presented with an invitation



to visit. Peissert had revealed himself through letters to be in total accord with the Shaker beliefs. But when he finally showed up, he was found to be totally unacceptable.

“As a result of an interview with the elders here...[it was thought best] that Edgar should depart [for Estero] next morning by train...as his views were found to be quite different from ours... He evidently hoped to set up a little kingdom here with himself as leader. [He] wears finger rings and has much distaste for work, although fairly strong and in good health.” (Ezra Stewart as quoted in (1:37))

The only Koreshan to be accepted into the Shaker Osceola County community was Mary E. Daniels. She was co-author, with Frank D. Jackson, of the work, quoted earlier, *Koreshan Unity: Communistic and Co-operative Gathering of the People*.

Perhaps here is a good place to tell the story of Frank Jackson. He had earlier left the Unity to run off with, the then infamous, Madame Ann Odelia Dis DeBar. She was a crank who had “fleeced suckers from Wall Street to the county towns of the Midwest and had served time in both New York and Illinois penitentiaries.” She had even wormed her way into the confidence of several of the Chicago Koreshans and “managed to dematerialize several hundred dollars worth of jewelry.” (13:303) Jackson, just previous to his marriage to Madame Odelia, had some contacts of his own with John Duss and the Harmonists. Jackson, “well spoken, modest, rather handsome and well dressed,” had sought out Duss to ask if he could help the Harmonists with their annual cherry picking. He also wished to speak to Duss about a system of reform which was to be “the salvation of mankind and the ushering in of the millennium” and was based on the biblical tenet: “the life thereof is in the seed thereof.” (all quotes 13:304) Duss soon noticed that Jackson was eating an awful lot of cherries and not much else. He also soon found out why.

“The vegetarians are quite correct as far as they go,” he explained, “but they do not go far enough. Thus whensoever your diet includes the destruction of any life whatever – as in the eating of beans, peas, tomatoes, etc, - in the light of the sixth commandment you become a murderer. You see, cherry-picking is just the thing for me; I eat the flesh and do not injure the seed.”

Having convinced Jackson that men toiling at fiery furnaces or at heavy labor could not subsist on a diet of cherries, and that to live according to his standard would require the abolition of present day industrialism and the return to first principles, he at once proceeded to put into practice this total reform. He went about in scantiest attire of muslin shirt and trousers, and made a swelling of hogshead which he placed amongst the willows on the river bank below Economy. This existence, a la Diogenes, lasted until frost time when Jackson, like the birds, migrated southward. (13:304)



Madame Odelia



It was soon after this that he met Madame Odelia, and although his senior by many years, they were married and fled, eventually finding themselves in England. There, after “defrauding a number of trusting people of funds and inveighing young women into nefarious ways,” they were both arrested, tried and found guilty in a London court. (13:304) Interestingly, during that trial Madame Odelia, then using the alias Swami Laura Horos, claimed to have been the founder of Koreshanity. (7:67)

\* \* \*

Another cult that may or may not have had an influence on Teed’s development of Koreshanity was a group that also called itself the “Unity”. The founders of the Unity were a husband and wife team, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore. They were among the first to use the U. S. Post Office as their pulpit. By 1889, they had firmly established a thriving theological enterprise. It would have been easy for Teed and those close to him to have come in contact with their teachings.

The couple believed in concepts of reincarnation strikingly similar to the Koreshans. Charles claimed that heaven is located here on earth and that heaven is something to be achieved through a series of earthly incarnations. When one finally reaches “Christ perfection,” he will never die but will live on in the final body.

Men and women are „senseless things“...sex robs the body of Essential Fluids and brings death. Only when man overcomes his weakness for sensation and conserves his life substance can he hope to achieve his final body. (8)

Another tiny cult that most likely either influenced Teed, or was influenced by him, was called “The Church Triumphant.” Remember that this was one of the names given by Teed to one of his “churches.” This cult’s leader was George Jacob Schweinfurth and he had been declared by Mrs. Beekman (to be discussed momentarily) to be the “Messiah of the New Dispensation.” His religion contained no rites, ceremonies, nor any forms of worship. His followers had only to accept him as “the Christ” on a return trip. He told them that he was *not* Jesus, but that he was of the same spirit. Like messiah Teed, he accepted the word of the Bible to be the word of God. Schweinfurth established a communal colony of 300 to 400 people outside of Rockford, Illinois, not too far from Chicago. Schweinfurth and his chosen ones housed themselves in a large framed building which, just as the Koreshans often referred to Beth Ophra, they called “Heaven.” The Fillmore’s and Schweinfurth’s cults may well have been among the seventeen celibate experimental communities that Teed envisioned to unite under one order.

Mrs. Beekman was what is called a “Sun Women.” These are women who believe themselves to be the spiritual mother of Christ in the second coming as designated in the Book of Revelations, Chapter 12, #1 and 5:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne.



Cyrus Teed and John Duss were one day exchanging stories and Teed told one about his experience with a sun Woman:

One cultured, handsomely dressed, eloquent, domineering woman, with unusual emphasis put forth her claim as “the woman clothed with the sun”. At the close of her argument she demanded, “Do you accept me?”

“I do,” came Teed’s reply, on the instant and with vigor, “and I ought to know because I am the man child that you brought forth.” Which answer proved altogether too much for the woman with the assumed astronomical adornment. Totally “eclipsed” she made a hasty exit. (13:303)



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### PART TWO

#### INTRODUCTION

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## *The New Jerusalem*

Extending one of the Biblical quotes that helped to convince Teed of his messianic role on earth (see end of Chapter Five), we discover another major endeavor he felt impelled to take his messianic mission. Isaiah 44:28 foretells the building of a city with “Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” The full quote implied that Cyrus was the one to bring to fruition its construction, and thus was born Teed’s grand dream of the erection of a great metropolis, referred to as the *New Jerusalem of the Golden Age*, and to be “located at the point where the vitellus of the alchemico-organic cosmos (that great cosmogonic egg) specifically determines. The position of the sign marks the head of the coming dispensation and will define the location of this greatest of all cities.” (Teed as quoted in 44:356)

Teed’s promising success in Chicago bore further motivation to see this Biblical prophecy through. It would be a holy star-shaped city where all Koreshans could unite. It would exist as a universal center out of which Teed’s teachings would emanate outwards to reach all people. It would become a holy pocket set apart from all worldly pursuits. Its inhabitants could live there joyfully, in accord with the Koreshan creed, as a heavenly example for the rest of humanity. Teed’s city would include all that was worthy of imitation of the world’s previously built cities, while excluding all of their evils. It would be a haven of peace with magnificent palaces of education and recreation, gloriously large temples, and beautiful plazas. There would be wondrous boulevards strewn along a sea of crystalline beauty. Quite a place!

Like a thousand world’s fair cities, New Jerusalem will manifest one great panorama of architectural beauty, one great system of orderly activity, where every obstruction to the free motion of every human orb in its circle of progress will be removed. Here is to exist the climax, the crowning glory of civilization’s greatest cosmopolitan center and capital. We may stand upon the site of ancient Babylon – in the present wilderness of Assyria – and wonder at the existence of one of the world’s greatest cities of the past. We may stand upon the site of the Greater New Jerusalem-to-be, and think, not of the past with its ruins and its dead, but of the near future when, through the influence of scientific truth in its application to life and human progress, which shall loudly call to all the world for the millions of progressive minds and hearts to leave the turmoil of the greatest time of trouble, and make their homes in the Guiding Star City. (Teed as quoted by 22:472-3)

The dream city was sketched. The drawing had elements of L’Enfant’s plan for Washington, D.C. and A. K. Owen’s Pacific City site at Topolobampo Bay in Mexico. In the center of it all would be constructed a great hexagonal temple to be surrounded by a circle 1,600 feet in diameter, to be called the *Arcadium Crystal Sea*. From this divine center enormous



boulevards, 400 feet wide, would radiate outwards. The entirety of the Guiding Star City would be contained within a square encompassing 30 square miles.

The construction of the city will be of such character as to provide for a combination of street elevation, placing various kinds of traffic upon different surfaces; as for instance, heavy team traffic upon the ground surface, light driving upon an elevation of its own, pedestrianism upon a plane distinct from either, and all railroad travel upon distinct planes, dividing even the freight and passenger traffic by separated elevations. There will be no dumping of sewage into the streams, bay or Gulf. A movable and continuous earth closet will carry the debris and offal of the city to a place thirty or more miles distant, where it will be transformed to fertilization... There will be no smudge or smoke. Power by which machinery will be moved will be by the utilization of the electro-magnetic currents of the earth and air, independently of steam application to so called „dyamos.“ Motors will take the place of motion derived from steam pressure. The city will be constructed on the most magnificent scale. (*The Flaming Sword*: November 25, 1893, Chicago)

Other grandiose ideas were given in the *Pittsburg Leader*, October 25, 1891. Teed told reporters that as soon as his government prevailed (within ten years of the telling) it would build a six-track transcontinental pneumatic passenger railroad that, running without wheels, would deliver travelers from New York City to San Francisco in as little as twelve hours. He estimated that it would employ one million men and take approximately one year to build. He further envisioned an automated device to simultaneously set type for every newspaper across the country. He told reporters that such a device already existed and that application for its patenting was “now” on file in Washington, D. C.

In his utopian novel, *The Great Red Dragon*, Teed envisioned automobiles and tanks. He expanded upon the concept of blimps and dirigibles, turning them into weapons of destruction. The book describes a scene in which, in the midst of the great conflagration caused by the world’s great battling armies, General Hunter implores General Clinton (both good guys) to “cast your eye upon the disk, and give me your commands quickly. The battle is going against us; we are outnumbered two to one. Without your advice I cannot save this army.”

Clinton touched a spring, and there instantly sprang open one side of the case, exposing a disk the size of the instrument, over which was placed, in its mechanism, a telo-microscope which brought to view, in lines of battle, with all the developments, an army of a million men, with an opposing force of twice or three times that number. He took in the situation at a glance. The headquarters of General Hunter were at Sacramento, where he was in possession of the railroad...

The little receivers and transmitters used by Clinton and his officers were operated by wireless, through the application of the dynamic force generated in a portable battery, wherein the electro-magnetic currents were conducted through the terrestrial ethers vibrated in octaves to suit the various keys of the many instruments in use. (38e:90-1)

Needless to say, it was due to these miraculous devices that the battle was won.

It was not uncommon for the Koreshans to refer to the “ignorance” of contemporary scientists and their erroneous hypotheses and theories. It was also not uncommon for the Koreshans to claim these same theories as their own when it was found to be to their own advantage. Thus, ironically they were proud to make such claims as:

Years before Prof. Roentgen discovered the x-rays they found a place in the Cellular Cosmogony. We advocated radio-activity long before the Curies discovered radium. Koresh taught the limitation of the cosmos long prior to the recent declarations of Lord Kelvin and Professor Newcomb; and set forth the



principles of transmutation over a third of a century before Professors Ramsey and Lodge turned from modern chemistry to the advocacy of the destructibility of the atom. (From a Koreshan advertisement leaflet.)

It is interesting to note that in a *Flaming Sword* issued in 1946, such claims were still being made; they stated that Teed's alchemical view foreshadowed the atomic bomb!

Returning to Teed's dream of a New Jerusalem, we end here with a final quote:  
"The kingdom of righteousness will begin as a small center of organic power and unity; it will gather impulse, and in the near future, from a small beginning, it will enlarge to the dimensions of a universal kingdom." (38j:8)

As stated, such a city needs a beginning, even a holy city like the New Jerusalem. It is this city's lonely beginning that is now at hand.



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Eight

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### *Estero Bay*

The tale of the New Jerusalem humble begins in a veritable paradise, yet a paradise, until then, almost totally uninhabitable by man. Florida's Everglades had not yet been invaded by civilization in the early 1880's. There were no settlers living along the shore of Estero Bay or upon the banks of the Estero River. This land, about sixteen miles south of the, then isolated, village of Fort Myers, was wild, untamed, and magical. The Bay was dotted with numerous palm grove islands. There were seagulls, eagles, a variety of small birds, There were alligators everywhere. Novel noises and unusual sights were all around.

Gustav G. Damkohler was a man with a deep, spiritual nature. He had come to Florida to seek out a refuge for his family, a place where they could leave the ways of the world and live close to God's creation. He had cruised the lower east and west coast of Florida in search of such a desirable home site. Then, one day, he arrived in Punta Rassa. A sign on the south end of the dock read: *"THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD - JUMP RIGHT OFF!"*



Gustav G. Damkohler

Damkohler soon visited nearby Fort Myers and from there set out in his small rowboat to explore Estero Bay. It was a sunny morning as he weaved his way in amongst the tiny islands that punctuated the bay. Many of these small islands had previously been used for the hideouts of pirates.

Now perhaps he was guided there, or maybe it was just plain luck, but, in either case, he came upon a tiny river that was hidden behind a thicket of darkly matted mangroves. Another explorer would have passed right by this outlet, hidden as it was. Yet it was as though something was tracing a fated path for Gustav Damkohler. The tiny coffee-colored river was not easily navigated, yet Damkohler slowly maneuvered his oars, pulling his way silently along. Hundreds of tropical fish could be seen swimming the current along with him. He observed alligators sleeping upon the river's banks, banks which were now growing higher and higher. The tall slender cabbage palms and savannas of palmettos were now giving way to a firm fertile land filled with scrub oak thickets and sturdy pines. The music of singing, screeching, buzzing, humming, and shouting birds, insects and other wildlife whirled around him, bouncing off the



backdrop of the river's splash as his oars melodically dipped through the rippling surface. And then there was quiet. And from his noiseless surroundings he heard an angel speak: "Take and dress until the Lord comes."



Estero Bay

Gustav Damkohler was a native of Germany. In his early years he had worked in the mining camps of Australia. He there had had the misfortune to lose one of his eyes. "It was an evil eye, my sir!" he used to explain, "an evil eye." Soon after this accident he had married and he now had four children. He had longed for a place to settle and now, with help from a divine guidance, he had found his home. On April 8, 1882, he and a surveyor named Singletary located the land and chose a tent site. 320 acres were bought from the state of Florida. Within two days his wife and children had arrived from Punta Gorda where they had been waiting. A large tent was erected in front of which was a waterproof tarpaulin. Beneath was stored their food, dishes, and cooking utensils. Just outside a stove was built alongside a long crude table made of pitch wood. Around the table were placed pine board chairs. One of his sons years later recalled the "birds sitting on their nests...nor did they leave their nests as I approached. I remember I picked up a bird and ran to show it to my mother. She reprimanded me, ordering me to return it to the nest immediately. This I did, retracing my footprints in the sand." (9:5) Quickly land was prepared for a vegetable garden and beehives were begun for honey.

Damkohler never forgot the strange message spoken to him that fine day he first rowed his boat along the shores that were now his home. The long days of waiting for the meaning of those words were not always easy. The cattlemen surrounding the area, eager for unlimited range land, would often set woods fires to discourage homesteaders. One such fire burned Damkohler's newly planted pineapple crop for which he had counted on to bring his family about \$500.

Fires were not the only means used by cattlemen to keep out the homesteaders. Murder was a means also. Criminals used the area for hideouts. I became acquainted with one such, a generous, fine looking man, freely treating on first sight. But he had his own way of driving away those he disliked. He kept a pile of sun-bleached human skeletons in his backyard. One glance and the stranger who intended to intrude on this little kingdom got the meaning and wandered on to set up his own plume-hunting, bootlegging or alligator hide operation. (9:7)

Other means of making a living were attempted, but nothing seemed to catch on. Even the Italian honey bees were not doing as well as hoped for in the South Florida climate. Because of Estero's great abundance of turtles, the hunting of turtles was tried. This began well, but soon the turtles learned to stay away.



Several months later great tragedy struck. Early one evening Mrs. Damkohler swiftly became ill during the two weeks after the birth of a baby girl. Nothing could be done. All the children were awakened from their slumbers and instructed to give their mother a farewell kiss. About 4 A.M., on February 16, 1884, she died.

Care for the children was difficult for Damkohler. He found it necessary to make the long trip to Fort Myers for baby food and other necessities. The trip took more than five days and he often had to make the trip twice monthly. Hesitant to leave the children alone for such long periods of time, the problem was happily solved by the arrival of a new settler to Estero. This man bought 20 acres of Damkohler's land for \$200. He was also happy to stay with the children while Damkohler was away. "The stranger was friendly... We enjoyed the different meals the stranger made for us. He did things to amuse us, too." (9:19)

Sadly it became clear that "Mr. X" had ulterior motives. He had a woman friend that he wanted Damkohler to marry. Damkohler hesitated saying he needed time to deliberate.

Not long afterward, our baby brothers showed signs of illness. Then the other children became sick. Father could not determine the cause. He called in an English doctor. Neither could diagnose the ailment. Two months later our baby brother died. Then my youngest sister and a little while later, my oldest sister died. I was a walking skeleton. Father and the other doctor were prepared for my death which they felt would surely come. But I did not die. I overcame the poison which the diabolical "Mr. X" had introduced into our food. His scheme was revealed two years later. He had poisoned us children with white lead. His plan was to have father marry his friend before suffering a like fate. "Mr. X" and his friend would then have 300 acres along Estero Creek worth about \$25,000 at that time. When it became evident that I would live, "Mr. X" disappeared." (9:19-20)

Miraculously, even through all this tragedy, Damkohler remained in Estero, still strong in his belief that he would soon find an answer, a meaning, to the mysterious and angelic call he had received from the burgeoning banks of the Estero. Long ago his tent had been transformed through his own labor into a study shack. The wild land immediately surrounding this shelter had been painstakingly cleared and was now surrounded by huge fruit bearing mango, orange, and lime trees that hid the dwelling from sight. His income was still meager, mostly obtained from the selling of honey, bay oysters, and fish to the residents of Fort Myers. He now lived with his only surviving child, Elwin, "a barefoot boy of about 15 years." (2:6)

Then one bright day Damkohler sailed to Punta Gorda for mail and some necessities. It was there that he discovered a small printed pamphlet that answered his long-held question. He now knew the meaning of the voice that had come to him from Florida's pristine wilderness. He understood his long tragic wait. What he was to do next was no longer an uncertainty. The pamphlet was authored by Cyrus R. Teed and arising from those comforting printed pages materialized the truth of Koreshanity. Damkohler quickly penned the prophet a letter.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1894 Cyrus Teed arrived in Punta Gorda. There, anxiously awaiting his arrival stood the man Gustav G. Damkohler. As Teed stepped from the train Damkohler knelt before him and exclaimed, "*Master! Ich habe dich lang erwartet.*" (Master, I have been waiting for you a long time!)

I must confess here that a bit of the preceding story is most assuredly Koreshan mythology. There was most likely no voice and no pamphlet. Teed and Damkohler actually



became acquainted in a much more mundane manner. What the Koreshans tell us is that Damkohler, for only the promise of lifetime care, unhesitatingly turned his land over to Teed. The land would become the building site of the New Jerusalem. Damkohler became a faithful follower of his Master the remainder of his life. Yet elsewhere, we are told a different story.

In 1893 Chicago was the center of another World's Fair. There Teed made the acquaintance of a Fort Myers' real estate dealer who magically described the area surrounding Florida's Charlotte Harbor, this being the coastal area just north of Fort Myers. Teed was fascinated by the description that he heard and in October of 1893 he made a railroad trip down to the western coast of Florida. The line ended at Punta Gorda, so from there he took a sloop to Fort Myers. He was then taken to inspect an abandoned hotel built upon Pine Island in Lee County. But not being able to reach an agreement with the owners, he returned to Chicago. Not long afterward Teed received a different offer through the mail. It was for some undeveloped land along the Estero River. With court cases pending and public harassment seemingly never ending in Chicago, Teed's desire to create a Koreshan colony elsewhere, far away from the meddling of other men, was great. Teed was further excited by the idea of a "simon-pure pioneer life" out of which would spring his New Jerusalem. He jumped at the offer.

Cyrus Teed and three of his women disciples left Chicago's Englewood Station to begin their long train ride to Florida. His companions were Mrs. Annie G. Ordway (Victoria Gratia), Mrs. L. M. Boomer, and Mary Mills. They did not push up against the rail head in Punta Gorda until the first day of January 1894. Three days later Gustav Damkohler and his son were passing through Punta Gorda and there, for the first time, they made the acquaintance of Dr. Teed and the three women. "Father and Dr. Teed engaged in conversation about lands for a „New Jerusalem“ that Dr. Teed had come from Chicago to Florida to found." (9:22) It was agreed that Teed and his women friends would soon visit Damkohler at his Estero home.



Damkohler's one-roomed cottage

Meanwhile, Teed visited Fort Myers where he had business to attend to. The *Fort Myers Press* (January 11 & 18, 1894) revealed how Teed and the editor of the paper had exchanged compliments. Teed then, with the help of Fort Myers' William T. Dodd, acquired the land for which Teed had made the trip. The real estate transaction was recorded at the Lee County Courthouse. In addition, Teed was invited to preach twice that Sunday at the local Baptist Church. The *Press* tells us that, "Those who attended were well pleased with the doctor's



remarks, and no one, as far as we have heard, takes any exception to his religious teachings or beliefs.”

Eventually Teed and the women arrived at Damkohler’s tiny one-roomed cottage. They ate fresh fish and palmetto honey from their host’s many hives while sitting upon impromptu chairs that were actually dry goods boxes. Damkohler’s home was not prepared for so many visitors and to obtain enough food to feed them all a boat trip to the St. James food store on Pine Island was planned.

Damkohler’s son’s poor opinion of Teed became rooted on this trip. While passing an oyster bar where many birds were feeding, Teed irresponsibly drew his pistol and began firing upon the birds, two of which were wounded and crippled.

This act decided my future feeling for this man. Through he continued to try to win me over, he then and there lost any hypnotical, religious influence over me... Here, the would-be „second Christ” was shooting and crippling birds for \fun. (9:22)

They arrived back at Estero the following day. Damkohler and his son graciously gave Dr. Teed and his womenfolk the house. They themselves slept in their little boat that had been arranged with sleeping quarters. While Teed was their guest, he showed them his plans for the New Jerusalem. He spread out a large, beautiful map showing all of the broad avenues which now, miraculously, emanated from a grand center that just happened to be Damkohler’s cottage! Damkohler was being hoodwinked. Teed explained that he was the second Christ and anyone who did as was directed and gave him all of their worldly possessions would in return receive eternal life; a well practiced soliloquy. He further promised Damkohler lifetime care as well as schooling and care for his son until age twenty-one. But it was the three women who had the greater influence. They pampered their hosts, and Damkohler was apparently flattered. His son, whose hatred for Teed increased the more their guests influenced his father, tells the story:

Dr. Teed’s handwriting was illegible. My father’s was almost perfect. So, Dr. Teed made father do all the writing of the deed papers. Yet he was not satisfied. He told father that he could not get the full blessing of the Lord and the Koreshan religion unless he gave all his possessions to the Lord. Teed’s hypnotic influence won. I, my father’s only living child, was disinherited. The remaining twenty acres were deeded to Dr. Cyrus R. Teed. A few nights later, we were sleeping in our little boat. Suddenly, father came out of his hypnotic spell. He cried like a baby, realizing what he had done to me. (9:23-4)

The land was deeded in Annie Ordway and Mrs. Boomer’s names for the Koreshan Unity. Damkohler, now without home or possessions, was forced to go to work for the Koreshans. He was soon put in charge of agriculture and it was his job to furnish honey for all.



Apiary



\* \* \*

With the land finally acquired for the New Jerusalem, there developed a need for a group of volunteers to come to Florida to build it. Sixteen venturesome Chicago Koreshans agreed to do just that. Among them was Dr. Andrew's son, Allen H. Andrews, who had just turned 21. The party left cold and snowy Chicago on January 31, 1894 to begin the long, slow train ride to Florida's sweltering temperatures.

Weeks later they arrived in Bartow, a tiny town along north Florida's west coast, where they were invited to stay overnight in a little, old, rundown hotel. There were orange trees and guava bush growing out back where the chickens were kept and whose cackling and crowing awakened the Koreshans at daybreak. Early ablutions were cared for at the porcelain wash basin placed in each room, but for more immediate needs, there were tin buckets set underneath a bench found out back with the chickens.

That morning word reached them that the sloop Ada was awaiting their arrival in Punta Gorda. After their long journey thus far, the travelers were of course extremely anxious to reach Punta Gorda as soon as possible. Unfortunately, no passenger train was scheduled until early afternoon and that train would not reach Punta Gorda until well after nightfall. It was the local railroad officials who pacified the Koreshan party's disappointment. They offered to couple an empty boxcar to the morning freight train and equip it with benches. It was a good idea and the fidgety Koreshans readily accepted.



The Sloop Ada

The freight train made several stops at which packinghouse workers busily loaded the boxcars with crates jam-packed with fresh Floridian fruits. The Koreshans were given permission to devour as much as they could. Many of the fruits were new and exotic to these Northerners and they thoroughly enjoyed their introduction to them. Otherwise the travel was monotonous. As the hours passed their longing to arrive at their destination increased.

Finally, in late afternoon, the freight train reached the railroad's southern terminus. Their boxcar was slowly backed onto a long dock from which the cars could be emptied of their cargo and loaded directly onto boats. Thus the corps of sixteen, builders of the "New Age," disembarked into the little fishing village on the shores of Charlotte Harbor. Facing the harbor



was a big, rambling hotel built for the accommodation of the frequently visiting sport fishermen. The town also contained several smaller hotels and boarding houses for those not so wealthy. It was into one of these that the Koreshans stepped to find rooms for the night. Too late to make the 100-mile boat trip to Estero that afternoon, they would set out first thing in the morning.

The sloop Ada took the inside passage to travel to Estero. The numerous outer islands sheltered the small ship from the rough rolling gulf waters outside the islands; besides, the inside route was more scenic with the tropical tussock matted along the shore. Koreshan songs were played and sung to the accompaniment of a guitar and a harmonica. (A book of *Koreshan Songs* was put together by E. M. Castle and later published by the Guiding Star Press.) This enlivened the trip with a certain joy. They were on their way “home!”

As they arrived close to Estero, gliding the boat carefully through Carlos Pass and up to the dock on Mound Key, nightfall was just beginning to fall. With the tide out, the water would be too shallow to navigate the final distance. Even with full tide they would not chance the sloop to the inevitable mud flats and wild overgrowth that would surely cross their path. So that night they made camp on Mound Key. Fires were lit and many huddled around the cheerful blaze. Others gathered oysters, of which there were plenty, and roasted them in the fire. The hot flames generated steam within the oyster shells and soon the shells began popping. The loud explosions were reminiscent of firecrackers back home. It became an impromptu celebration!

The next morning several small boats came to help the newly arrived travelers finish the final steps of their journey. Both Damkohlers and Teed were at the helms. The movement was slow, and they often had to step out of their rowboats to push them off the mudflats. Damkohler helped to teach them how to recognize the mouth of the Estero River. Its mouth was really a delta with several outlets hidden between numerous mangrove keys. Being so concealed, the average stranger would have undoubtedly passed by without noticing it. Once through this hidden door, though, the river was quite navigable and as much as 75 to 80 feet wide during the winter months. It was salty, too, being subject to the tidal ebb and flow and only turned fresh when the summer rains became copious. The Koreshans were surprised about the number of fish that entered the river with the inflowing tide. There were more fish than one could count. Most of them were mullets, which is a funny looking fish, small and shaped like a doughnut. But the Koreshans soon learned that it was quite edible with a surprising flavor much like that of chicken.

Slowly rowing, they found themselves surrounded by

a seemingly interminable jungle of tall shrub oak and saw palmetto, overtopped by an occasional pine tree and bisected by a crooked tide water stream teeming with fish and alligators.” (2:427)

For some distance the banks were swampy, being lined with a dense cover of red mangrove trees. This tree is peculiar in that it usually grows on a mass of stilted roots that spread in all directions, forming a tangle so dense that it is difficult to penetrate. Because of this fact it is highly resistant to hurricane winds and storm tides, being known as the soil builder of the tropics. Fleshy seedpods, some 8 or 10 inches in length, drop to the water and drift with wind and tide. Being heavier at the base, they float uprightly, eventually landing on some mud flat or sand bar where they lodge, take root and another island is in process of formation. (2:5)

Progressing upstream, the swampland gave way to a high pine woods with only a smattering of saw palmettos here and there. This was followed by still higher terrain, dense with scrub oak and palmetto growth. Suddenly they arrived at a sharp bend in the river. Rounding it,



they were faced with a little cottage perched high up on the bank and almost hidden behind the lime, orange, and mango trees surrounding it. It was the home of Damkohler. Teed's women were there to greet the travel-weary voyagers.

The newcomers pitched camp along the river bank some distance below the cottage. There they lived in tents for several months before a substantial shelter could be erected. Here the men were quick to learn that life was not going to be easy in this tropical paradise. In fact, as they quickly discovered, there was to be very rough fare and few comforts for quite a number of years to come.

The first enemy to overcome sprang from the lavish plant life growing all around them as the tropical light began to wane. While the noisy silence of the tropics buzzed all around them, so did the mosquitoes. This soon had everyone sleeping under screens, but the insistent insects, somehow, always managed to find a way in.

The men were also quickly introduced to Estero's innumerable fleas. The ground was full of them. In the group's primitive setting, they had nowhere to sleep but on that same ground. The pests were a constant source of irritation causing one fidgety and scratching Koreshan to exclaim, "My, but his is terrible country; it is, by golly!" (2:6) Scratching the idea of tolerating such unpleasantness, they instead soon learned that by sleeping on top of their blankets the fleas would get caught in the weave. Hence, the captured little vampires were in a position to be destroyed and bites became rarer. Young Andrews tells how he captured 42 of these little pests in his blanket in one morning. Mosquitoes and fleas were not the only insects found to be bothersome. There were midges, redbugs, and sand flies, too. Fortunately, the insects gradually disappeared with the clearing of the land and that was to be the settlers' first important job.

If the insects were the Koreshan's first Floridian enemy, the second would have to be the clearing of the land. The men worked hard and took full advantage of the long sunlit hours. Their only breaks were for a short lunch and a midday siesta, beneath mosquito bars, when the sun became too intolerable to work under. The work was hindered by unexpected problems, a major source being the abundance of saw palmettos "sprawling along the surface of the ground like a gigantic 1,000-legged worm, and to which it is firmly attached by scores of little fibrous rootlets scarcely the thickness of a lead pencil...often growing in tangled and twisting masses, adhering tightly to the soil to the last fiber." (2:7) Furthermore, the palmetto's leaf-stem was edged with saw-like teeth which could cut the skin like a razor.

The men grubbed and piled brush by day. It was all burned at night. These fires happily freed the workers from the intruding mosquitoes and this allowed the group to gather comfortable together. It soon became a nightly occasion for uninterrupted social converse.

In the course of land clearing it was not infrequent to encounter one of Florida's numerous and large diamond-back rattlesnakes. The colonists quickly learned to keep long forked poles, cut from oak bush, near them as they worked. With these they could pin the head of the rattlesnake down while maintaining their distance from it. The snake thus secured, they would then slip a noose, made from a handy cord, over the snake's head and pull on it until it tightened. Finally was an easy matter to slide the poisonous reptile into a slatted box, the snake



now ready to be shipped to the taxidermist. With the clearing of the land, the snakes, too, became rare.

Meals were prepared over an open fire on the porch of Damkohler's cottage. The food was eaten beneath an easily constructed, long, thatched shed. Mouthfuls were constantly interrupted in order to scratch flea bites and to slap mosquitoes. Drinking water was brought in by cask on a wheelbarrow over a heavy sand trail that led to a surface well a distance into the woods. It was always warm and thus unsatisfying until they learned to add a squirt of lime juice into each glassful. The limes were plentiful and easily picked from nearby trees. It was later believed that this surface well must have been the source of an early fever epidemic among the first colonists. Many became ill, yet no one died. With the drilling of a deep well by Mr. Bill Towles and Hugh Seneff, the fevers ended.

Now that the end of the summer season was fast approaching, it was time to become concerned with the need for better shelter. No prepared lumber was available, nor were there any sawmills nearby, so it was decided that a large two-story log house be constructed. Wings would be set to the north, east and west sides. The central portion would be an empty breezeway providing ample ventilation to the whole. The construction was not unique; in fact, it was common among many of Florida's pioneers.

The logs were cut and the bark was peeled away to avoid decay. The men hoisted them into position, notching the ends of the logs so that they would overlap at the corners. The roof consisted of rafters made from Cyprus poles and 1x3-inch sheeting. It was then thatched with cabbage palm leaves which lasted for several years and proved to be completely waterproof. Because of their previous difficulties, they insisted that floors would be "indispensible" and thus ordered the proper lumber for them. This lumber was shipped by schooner and was unloaded at one of the small islands set in Estero Bay. They were then rafted and poled up the river with the incoming tide.

The shelter was soon built and proved adequate except for one major flaw. Large crevices had been left in the walls for ventilation purposes. Through these holes came hordes of mosquitoes intent on their highly nutritional snackings. Also through these holes came the rain. Many of the equinoctial storms rained surprisingly horizontal due to the high winds associated with them. Water came gushing through. To avoid the damp effects of these torrents, the Koreshans were forced to move their beds and belongings into the center of their tiny, 16-square-foot rooms.

Any furniture that the Koreshans wanted to add to their dwelling had to be brought down from Chicago and then shipped from Punta Gorda. Soon there arrived loads of Victorian sideboards, beds, tables, chinaware, and a quantity of books.

Construction was soon begun on a second structure – a two-story building with a dining room and kitchen on the main floor, and living quarters for the women upstairs. Its entire frame was constructed from peeled Cyprus logs shaped into poles. The sides and roof were shingled with "shakes," each of which needed to be hand-split in the swamp from 30 inch Cyprus blocks and then dressed and smoothed with a draw knife. The completed structure was 20 by 40 feet.



If one wished to join the community in Estero, it was not for an easy life but one of hard work and endurance. Teed described life there as

a “simon-pure” life, one of strenosity and sacrifice. We have people, educated and refined, who have left the attractions of the worldly existence and are happy in the life chosen here. We have those who have been through the severest features of this pioneer work....., and are still happy in their efforts to plant for future generations the habitation of liberty. (38j:3)

Yet the colonists were not without their entertainments. Their new dining hall had ample floor space and frequently the younger members of the colony would arrange dances. The guitar and harmonica was often accompanied by signing. Lucius M. Boomer was frequently requested to perform on his violin.

Among the early colonists was Professor O. F. L’Amoreaux. Because of his experience in backyard gardening while living in Chicago, he developed the notion that he could tend to Estero’s agricultural needs better than Damkohler who had been keeping the small group in constant supply of vegetables. The two began disagreeing constantly about which were the best crops to plant and which methods should be used to grow them. According to Damkohler’s son, Damkohler turned the growing of vegetables completely over to L’Amoreaux after which there were no vegetables for anyone to eat. Andrews confides that Teed and Victoria had assigned L’Amoreaux and him to the task. With no mention of any lack of foods, he does record their early failures.

The two first ordered a variety of fruit seeds from California, among them figs, pears, and grapes. They all successfully sprouted but then died. Luckily the men were then offered the opportunity of obtaining orange saplings whose trunks ranged from two to four inches in diameter. The saplings could be obtained from a nearby grove in Bonita Springs for only a few pennies each, provided the colonists removed them through their own labor. Taking full advantage of this opportunity, they set up a campsite amongst the orange trees and began the arduous labor of digging them all up. The task took several days to complete. The rootstocks were transported back to Estero where they were set out in nursery rows. They took.

The orange trees were growing well when the “Big Freeze” struck southern Florida on December 28, 1894. The Koreshans built bonfires around which they stood to keep warm. Fortunately the freeze came at a time when most of the vegetation was still dormant. Little damage was done this time but another freeze was soon to come. This one arrived on February 5, 1895 and it caught the vegetation in its full flush of new growth. Many of the newly planted orange trees were lost. All that night small gatherings of Koreshan colonists could be found huddled around small wood stoves or campfires, shivering and praying that the freeze would shortly end. The next day many of the younger colonists went fishing finding easy catches in this cold weather. Numbed with cold, the fish were easily speared and when the tide went out, many fish were left stuck in water holes with no chance of escape.

Not everybody was happy with their new life in Estero. Some complained. Occasionally brawls broke out amongst the colonists. Unhappy members were quick to withdraw from Teed’s mesmerizing hold. Recusants told the *Fort Myers Press* that nothing at the place was conducted with any degree of sanity. They complained that for months at a time many would be confined to a diet of cornmeal mush and cornbread, “and not enough of it!” They were especially bitter that an exception was always made for Koresh and a handful of his favorites – all women, of course.



There were even rumors that many of the discontents upon leaving the colony descended into a pit of despair, for by giving all of their belongings to the Unity, they had nothing with which to begin anew. Many tried suing for the return of this property, but few were successful because the precedents in similar cases were too strong. Rumors claimed that many found a solution to their woes through suicide.

Teed described a similar situation but he comes at it from a different point of view:

Let no one attempt to come to our body in the expectation that we have attained the paradisiacal state. Let no one come with the idea that there is no friction. We take people from the world, and in many instances they come with an idea that they can get away from themselves; that is an impossibility, except upon the basis of a revolution in the heart. People bring themselves into the Unity, and in bringing themselves they sometimes bring a bone of contention. We have many people who are patient with conditions, hoping and helping toward the perfect state, always joyous, always industrious, always buoyant with expectation, - contented and happy. It is because they are constituted thus; they are satisfied with the food; they are satisfied with the conditions, not as final, but as the best under the circumstances. We have some growlers and grumblers among us; people who have come from bad conditions, with the expectation of finding a veritable paradise suitable to the imperfections of their own characters.

People come and go. They sometimes come to see whether they like it or not. "If we like it we will remain; if we do not like it we will provide our substance so as to be sure of a free passage out." They are like Ananias and Sapphira; they will put in half the price, with the possibility that it may not be the fulfillment of the hope of a heaven in the earth. These people are always sure to go, on the principle that they do not like the conditions. On the outside they have had all they desire in the line of food and clothing, and have lived in good social surroundings; in our community, if they do not find the utopia of their expectations, they often (in order to exonerate and excuse themselves to their neighbors, to whom they return) enlarge so much upon their disappointments as to constitute their stores prodigious fabrications. We have people that have been with us for years, who came from luxury in the outside world, and yet are content and happy in our institution, because they have come with the purpose of abiding in the creation of the utopia of their expectations.

No one is satisfied with the conditions of our present growth as a climax of our desires; but there are some who are willing to endure, in the expectation of the better things, because they have come to help make things better. If the Founder of the Koreshan System can endure the conditions, then others ought to be willing to participate in these conditions and the future attainment of perfections. (38j:7-8)

The complaints about food shortages are rather surprising. With Florida's then abundant and year-round plant growth, the enumerable fishes, clams, oysters, and other aquatic life, and its various wild game, makes it hard to imagine that food would be scarce. An example of this abundance is given by Elwin Damkohler:

By this time, a second arrival of people came from Beth Ophra near South Chicago. A sailboat, sent to get groceries, was delayed by weather conditions.

Dr. Teed came to me and said, "Elwin, get some fish for these people to eat." There were about 50 hungry ones there. I replied, "All right, but what have you to catch them with? There are no hooks, no nets. I can't catch them with my bare hands." He said, "Get the fish."

So, with two lanterns, one helper and two skiffs, we went to the mouth of Estero Creek. We waited in the darkness of night for the incoming tide. When the tide was almost high, I knew the fish would be spawning in full action.

I had coached my helper to do just as I did. At the exact moment, we pushed the boats into the stream, jerked and swung out lanterns high while knocking on our boats. The fish became frightened. Jumping in



all directions, they filled our boats. To this day I have a lump where one big mullet struck me in the hollow of my left arm.

We were home with the fish in a short time. Everyone who could was cleaning mullet. And then, with some helpers, I went to gather swamp cabbage needed to supply us all. Several days later, the supply boat arrived. (9:26-7)

The boat “captained” above by Elwin Damkohler was the newly built “Victoria,” constructed through the labors of Captain Danielson, a local Norwegian boat builder. It was a small, flat bottomed craft, twenty-five feet long. This prompted Teed to write, “We have already made a substantial start in the shop building industry.” (38j:9)

Andrews happened to be Elwin’s helper that night and, in telling the same story, he elaborated on some of the details. He explained that such “fire fishing” could occur only in the early fall months when the mullet massed. That night a wire basket of burning pine knots was affixed to the bow to the Victoria. Their catch totaled 166 mullet, each weighing between three and four pounds.

Mullet was not the only fish to be found in Estero Bay. In fact the water was teeming with a great variety of fish. There were pompano, Spanish mackerel, red-snapper, grouper, trout, red-fish, sheep-head, flounder, jack-fish, snook, tarpon, bass, and more. Ezra J. Steward, leader of the Florida Shakers, wrote that during his visit to Estero “two lads went fishing with a small boat and a 50-yard seine – a gill net – and brought home before supper 500 fish, and it is not uncommon to catch 800 fish at one time.” (22:478) Thus it is not surprising that the Koreshans seriously considered establishing a commercial fishery based nearby on the Hickory Islands.

Two men were assigned to keep the colony supplied with fish. They had no difficulties in meeting the community’s needs once they learned a trick to keep the fish from spoiling in the torrid sunlight before getting the fish home. The trick was to cover them with mangrove branches.

There is another story told that describes the great abundance of food existing in and about Estero just waiting for the taking. This story does not end so happily, though.

The incident occurred not too long after Teed had conceded to purchase the five ton sloop, the “Ada,” that he had been making use of with the permission of its owner, an old boat builder, Mr. Smith of St. James. Robert Gilbert had been made captain and upon quitting Teed he turned the job over to an old sea captain, Gus Faber. Elwin Damkohler was made pilot.

“Queen Ordway” ordered Captain Faber and a crew of four men to go after clams at Clam Pass, near Naples. Many clams were gathered. In fact the take was so great that in the choppy sea, close to Big Hickory Pass, only four or five miles from Estero, the weight of so many clams caused the boat to sink. The Ada was lost along with all of their clams. The crew all made it to shore safely, but Captain Faber decided that day to give up sailing and became a farmer. He took up a homestead on the solid ground of Black Rock Island.



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Nine

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### *Golden Years*

As time went on, more and more admirers of Teed were making a commitment to his New Jerusalem. They gave up their old ways of living, packed up their belongings and made the trip to Estero. Many were to come from the Unity's Chicago branch. But in addition, Teed was constantly traveling throughout the country, picking up speaking engagements here and there, hoping to spread the word and gain new converts. Occasionally, someone from his audience would be convinced, give up their possessions to the Unity, and join the settlers in Estero.

In Chicago things were not going as nicely as they once had. Almost all of the money was now being poured into the Estero community. Those choosing to remain in Chicago were kept busy promulgating the Koreshan cause, but in 1902 they were forced to give up Beth Ophra and move elsewhere. Several of the followers had become sick, and the combination of doctor bills and coal bills left them without enough money for rent. Consequently the group moved into smaller quarters, but this did little to improve things. As a result the majority of Chicago's Koreshans left their present home to join their fellow believers in Estero. They brought with them their carefully disassembled printing press. A year later the Chicago group disposed of most of its assets. The freed money was used to load fifteen carloads of freight bound for Florida. Chicago was then left behind forever. The train left Chicago's Englewood station November 17, 1903, bringing an estimated one hundred new colonists to Estero.

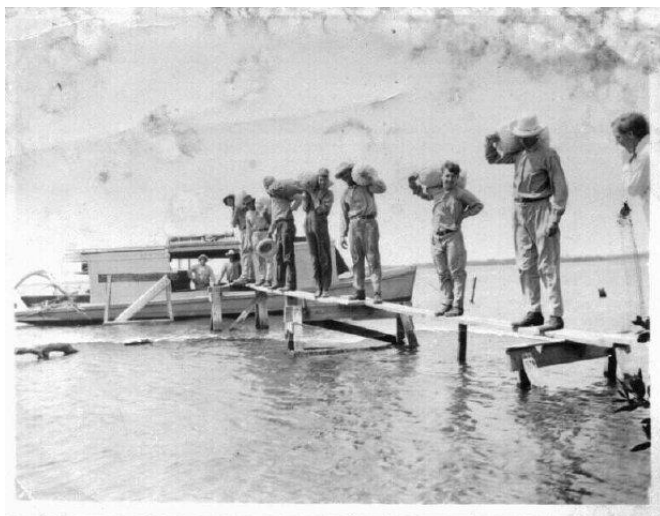
The first sight of their new home could be seen at a bend in the Estero River called Bamboo Landing. Here the banks formed a natural amphitheater within which the Koreshans had built a floating stage. Upon this stage they often performed plays by Lord Dunsany and other moderns. A sign could be seen at the gates of the New Jerusalem which read, "WE LIVE ON THE INSIDE."





As can be expected, so many new arrivals taxed the living quarters considerable. But this lasted for only a short while. Things had improved a great deal since the early days of the colony. There were now numerous buildings. Food was more than ample and delicious as well. Beautifully planned paths were well developed and everywhere easily traversed. Many of the discomfitures that the first pioneers had to tolerate were no longer a part of the life built up in Estero. The community had matured, and with the influx of all these new people, each anxious for an assigned role within the New Jerusalem, it was certain to grow even more.

A more immediate concern was how to get the fifteen carloads of Koreshan freight from the railroad terminal at Punta Gorda to Estero. This problem was solved with the chartering of an immense barge. Even so, it took two capacity loads, which then had to be unloaded and stored in a large-thatched storage shed built on Estero Island specifically for that purpose, for the barge was much too large to travel the Estero River. Instead, numerous trips were necessary to transfer their belongings from the island's shed to their final destinations on the mainland.



Loading and Unloading

Feeding the newcomers posed little problem. Difficulties in food production for the colony had long been solved. The first vegetables found to grow well in Estero's acidic soil were sweet potatoes and cow peas. Soon many more vegetables were added to this list. By 1901 they had an estimated thirty acres of fruit groves, all of whose trees were by then bearing fruit. The community was kept in constant supply with not only oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruits, but they had also been able to coax such exotic fruits as pineapples, guavas, cumquats, pomegranates, bananas, paw-paws, loquats, pears, and many kinds of berries to thrive as well.

The growing of sugar cane and producing the sweet syrup processed from it became a major occupation. In 1901 more than 1,000 gallons of sugar cane syrup was produced and consumed by the sweet-toothed Koreshans. The following year the amount was almost doubled reaching 1,800 gallons! Add to that the honey still being made in the apiary.

It is not surprising to read, then, of the many positive reports written by visitors. They often mentioned the Koreshans' self-sufficiency and their abundance of fruits, vegetables, fish, and other sea foods. These reports often mentioned the vegetarian beliefs held by many of the Koreshans. Yet although their diet rarely consisted of red meat, this was due more to their



circumstances rather than their creed. Animal game in Florida's Everglades was not as easily accessible as other foods. There was, though, an attempt made in 1901 to raise Belgian hares for meat. They began with a fine imported stock but, unfortunately, the rabbits did not thrive in the tropical environment.

The excellent cuisine was totally obtained through their own labors. The cooking was superb. Meals were served in the community's "Planetary Court," which, when built, was then the largest building in Lee County. It was 70x50 feet and three stories high. On the first floor was a dining room 70x40 feet attached to which was a kitchen. The second and third floors housed the sisters' dormitories. As always, the men and women were housed separately to ensure celibacy. Mealtimes mimicked this arrangement; the men and women were seated separately as they ate. The group came together three times daily for mealtimes. Occasionally an informal Sunday service was held here.

It is often a pleasure to look upon this aggregation of brothers and sisters of the new belief as they enjoy in common some of the product of their common labor, constituting as they do a large family in association and fellowship in the passing years, hopeful in the attainment of high ideals in thought and life. (Morrow, as quoted in 22:475)



Planetary Court

The Planetary Court at first remained unpainted and unfurnished on the inside. Contrasted with this was the building's stairways and accompanying paneling. One of the Koreshans had previously been a builder who had specialized in the creation of fine stairways. Thus it was not uncommon for any of the colony buildings, though of no particular architectural style itself, to have these elaborate and impressive stairways.

A bakery was soon built and was quite a success. It was even well appreciated by the surrounding settlers who would come frequently to Estero for some of that "risin" bread." These settlers had grown tired of their own breads, necessarily made without yeast and baked in a frying pan like flapjacks.



The Bakery



An easily accessible artesian well was dug to a depth of 200 feet. The community now had an abundance of pure flowing water, though slightly charged with sulfur.

A small dairy was established and it operated until October 7, 1907, when it was lost to a fire. It was contained within two barns, both 40x60 feet and two stories in height. Both were of pitch pine construction and, on that Monday night when the flames broke out, they burned like tinder. Horses and mules were housed in one barn; in the other was kept the colony's one cow. These animals were all saved the night of the tragedy, but when a flock of chickens was liberated from their coop, they stupidly flew straight into the flames and were lost. The second floor of one of the barns was used as a storage place for a big supply of household goods and some farming equipment, most of which was also destroyed.

It seems that the colony may have harbored a zoo! Andrews tells a story about how a wild bobcat had been captured while it was snacking on some of their chickens. The cat was ironically captured on Independence Day in 1907 and Andrews briefly mentioned that it was promptly added to Estero's zoo.

Other progress was also being made in the development of the New Jerusalem. The business and residential sections were surveyed and plotted. The streets and avenues were planned. Teed believed that the building of walkways 400 feet wide was modest enough considering what the city was to become, for there would be, in the not too distance future, as many as 8,000,000 believers to populate Estero. Evidence of this early planning could still be seen in the woods surrounding Estero as late as 1940.

Those streets that were built were cut through Estero's pine woods close along the Estero River. This coincided with the development of the river's bank. Teed's dream was to create beautiful parks on both sides of the river for a distance of five miles. Only a small portion of this dream was ever accomplished. For example, elegant steps were built that led down to a boat landing. They were of a sturdy construction, made from concrete, colored with red clay. The dock at the foot of the stairs was made from bamboo. Every bit of equipment that had entered Estero had been across this dock. A boat house was located off to the side. The stairway and dock were centered in relation to the extensive tropical park that had been planned and, at the time, already developed for about a mile along the bank behind them.



Bamboo Landing



To develop this park, a gang of about twenty Afro-Americans had been hired for several weeks to work under the direction of several colonists. The colonist's attitude towards the Afro-Americans, at the turn of the last century, is worth describing. There were no dark-skinned colonists even though the Koreshans frequently bragged that their mini-society was derived from all nationalities, many of whom were doctors, lawyers, farmers, and laborers. Although the Koreshan community was comprised predominantly of Americans of English or German origin, there were noted two Jewish settlers (a young man and his sister), a woman from Denmark, a man from Norway, as well others who had originally come to the United States from Australia, Ireland and Canada. The Koreshans told the Afro-Americans that, because of their employment in the development of the New Jerusalem, they would be provided for. They would be given houses, tools, and animals and be allowed to colonize one of the nearby islands, chosen especially for them. Thus, when race antagonisms erupted in the South, as someday they surely would, the Koreshans would be able to offer ample relief to the Afro-Americans. On their own island the Afro-Americans would not have to embrace a life of celibacy, which would be difficult for *them*, instead they would be allowed monogamous marriage. Being in such close proximity to Koreshanity, though, they would inadvertently, yet happily, be subjected to its "elevating influences" (22:475)



Afro-American Workers hired for \$1.50/day

These hired Afro-Americans workers were kept busy leveling, laying out, and shelling paths and driveways. They were also instructed as to the best ways to plant the numerous trees and shrubberies that beautified the park.

Everywhere there were sunken gardens filled with a variety of flowers. Banana and paw-paw trees were loaded with fruit. Bamboo cuttings, planted throughout the colony, were received as a gift from Thomas Edison, who owned a summer house and laboratory in nearby Fort Myers. In some early experiments he had tried carbonizing the bamboo filaments in his search for the proper material to "ignite" his incandescent light bulb. Seen throughout the park were mounds of dirt, cast up and crowned with large urns or vases out of which spilled flowering plants of all kinds.





It was here, in the park areas long the Estero River, that the Koreshans, under the direction of L'Amoreaux and Andrews and with the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture, began the introduction of exotic trees and shrubs from all over the tropical world. Thus was introduced the cajuput, which has since gone native and has changed the appearance of the Floridian countryside. It is one of the few useful trees that thrive well in swampy wasteland. The thick, parchment-like bark is always wet and therefore cannot be burned while growing. But when dry, the wood is hard and finishes beautifully into fine and durable furniture. The Koreshans used it often for just that.



Cajuput flower



Cajuput tree

It is within these gardens that first grew eucalyptus trees imported from California as early as 1894. By 1905 there were included several varieties including a rare broad-leaved eucalyptus, *E. platyphylla*, from Australia. Grown also were some fine varieties of mangoes and many different species of non-native palms. There were other plants too, some of which were found nowhere else in the United States, and almost every possible kind of tropical fruit grown in Florida could be found in these gardens.

Deep ravines were cut into the earth to catch and carry excess water down to the river. This inhibited the flooding that threatened the area whenever summer rains fell. The sides of these tiny canals were beautified with Para and Guinea grasses, both natives of Cuba. Several stylish and beautifully built foot bridges were constructed to cross these ravines. They were made from bamboo and other woods, which were then grown over with flowering vines. Many of the small cottages built along the river's edge were also covered with these flowering vines to provide the dwellings with a exotic and paradisiacal facade.

Throughout theses golden years, Cyrus Teed had been conscientiously buying as much of the land surrounding Estero as he could. Further, to protect his accumulating holdings, he incorporated the entire colony under New Jersey state laws as "The Koreshan Unity." At the colony's height there lived approximately three hundred people in amongst a total of 6,000 acres.



At this time the Koreshans were claiming as many as 4,000 followers throughout the United States and they told reporters that 10,000 Koreshans existed throughout the world. This is unlikely. Small branch societies were known to exist in Baltimore, Maryland, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., and New York City. In addition there were what the Koreshans called “unauthorized groups of the Society of the Arch-Triumphant,” in San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburg, Denver, Los Angeles, Tacoma and Ogden, Utah, yet there is little verification of any of this. Estimating fifteen members to each group, this being the highest estimation reportedly given to any group not directly associated with Teed, we tend to come up with figures significantly lower than the Koreshans claimed.

Municipal incorporation had become necessary for the protection and stability of the colony. Many of Estero’s neighbors were becoming alarmed at the great influx of strangers to their area. They were also a bit frightened by some of the “rumors” as to what the future of Estero was to become. They were not sure they wanted those exotic railroads and elevated boulevards they had been hearing about passing through their fields. There were other stories besides, and some of those people’s beliefs were, well, rather unusual.

So, as a precaution to interference, a meeting of registered voters and affected property owners was held on September 1, 1904. Not long afterwards, incorporation was approved. Interestingly, the corporate boundaries meandered here and there. This was because the boundaries were drawn so that those who objected to the idea were left out of, what was now, city limits. Otherwise the corporate limits conformed to the plans of the future New Jerusalem. One hundred-ten square miles were contained within Estero’s boundaries. At the time, this was the largest incorporated village in America. Officers of the corporation were now voted in and each one happened to be a Koreshan. The group wore badges that announced, “WE LIVE ON THE INSIDE.”

Teed had obtained most of this land when he had earlier been given the option to buy several thousand acres of swampland for \$12,000. The land was thought to be worthless due to the area’s flooding during the rainy season. The Koreshans though otherwise and spent an addition \$3,000 dredging the river and digging deep ravines to carry the water from the swamp to the river. This improvement greatly increased the value of the land. Much of this land was covered with hammock, oleanders, and pinewood from which they constructed many of their brown board buildings. There was even a sulfur spring not far from these buildings.

During one of his lecture tours, Teed stopped to visit the town of his birth to reacquaint himself with some of his well-moneyed relatives still living in the area. While there, in an attempt to help with his Florida land purchases, he inquired into the possibility of borrowing money from them. He was refused. Apparently Cyrus Teed and Koreshanity was not taken very seriously by many of his more distinguished and well-placed relatives. They were said at the time to be a bit critical of Cyrus’ religious preoccupations.

Most of the acquired Floridian plots bordered one another and were located on the mainland. There was quite a bit of beach frontage as well. Elsewhere Teed had purchased large portions of Big Hickory, Little hickory and Estero Islands, and most of Mound Key, which was located one-half mile west of the Estero River’s outlet. Mound Key Island was the first island reached as one maneuvered away from Estero and into the Gulf and consisted of 140 acres,



throughout which large mounds of shells could be found that had been heaped upon the island many years earlier by the Seminole Indians when they earlier inhabited the area.

Another purchase was the San Carlos Hotel at St. James City on Pine Island, located several miles up the coast from Estero. With it came a rather large hotel, outside of which a full-sized dock that extended out into the channel for a considerable distance. The hotel, a three-story wood building, had been constructed some years previously. Built by the England Company to house sportsmen visiting the area, it had not done well and for several seasons had been sitting idle. Repairs and some reconstruction were needed, but on the whole it was in fairly good shape. The Koreshans had dreams of establishing a “Chautauqua University” there – a new name for the “College of Life.”

A crew of carpenters was sent from Estero to Pine Island to renovate the building. A hindrance and bother to the workers were the swarms of mosquitoes that constantly attacked them. Smudge pots were lit to combat them. Then, one day at quitting time, a worker carelessly left one of the smudge pots inside the hotel still lit. That night the building went up in flames. It took little time to burn to the ground. Later, the dock and an annex to the San Carlos Hotel were able to be sold.

Around this time the Koreshans sought to purchase a second ship. They decided upon the “Otis A. Mygatt,” a fifty-foot long sharpie. A sharpie is much like a schooner in that it has two masts, but it has no jib or bowsprit. It had originally been built as a yacht for a wealthy New Yorker, but failing to live up to the specifications of its original contractor, it had been left idle in Punta Gorda for several years. It was bought at a good price.

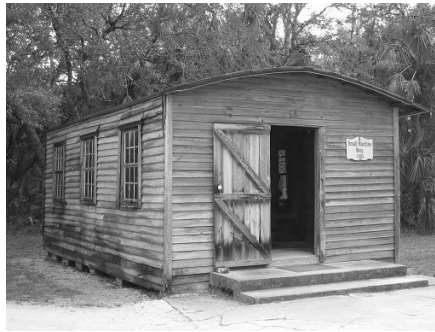
The construction of new buildings and the establishment of the Unity’s many small enterprises reached its height during these golden years. Even though at the colony’s peak no more than a total of thirty-five buildings were ever built, these could not have come into existence without the early purchase of a sawmill. Wood sources were plentiful and whatever lumber the Koreshans could not use could be sold outside their community.

The original saw mill was purchased in 1895. It was installed on “the Point,” the name given to the bay shore acquired along the lower southern end of Estero Island. This site was chosen because its location made for easy transport of the lumber to markets outside of Estero. Boat ways were erected so that small ships could be easily loaded. The lumber cut for their own use was rafted into and along the Estero River with the incoming tide. The logs to be cut and shaped arrived to the Point in a similar manner. The first structure to be built using the colonies own cut and shaped lumber was nearby housing for the mill workers.

Close by a machine shop was set up. This proved extremely helpful to the tiny, isolated Estero community. It meant that all repairs could be made quickly and right at home. No longer did damaged equipment need be sent out. Previously, damaged tools had to be taken to Fort Myers for repairs. There were just two ways to reach Fort Myers. One could travel the long and heavy sand trail through the tropical, flat woods, or, one could navigate one’s way by boat through the bay, dodging its shoals and twisting channels, before maneuvering into the Caloosahatchee River. Both routes were time consuming, nearly a full days trip, and besides, the repairs made in Fort Myers cost money. The Koreshans’ machine shop was a one-story building and it was extremely well equipped. Among the complicated machinery capable of being built



there were engines. Several well-trained mechanics were employed. They shared the nearby housing originally build for the sawmill workers.



Small Machine Shop

Two years later, in late March of 1897, both enterprises were lost to fire. The sawmill, machine shop and several of the boat ways were destroyed. Losing the sawmill was a serious financial blow. It had been the colony's first firmly established industry. In its year-and-a-half existence it had grown into a thriving sales trade. Sloops and schooners were often seen arriving at its docks and departing heavily laden with their purchases. Now the industry was wiped out. Workers of both enterprises were transferred to the mainland where their help could be of use.

During the sawmill's brief operation, enough lumber had been prepared for many mainland buildings to be erected. A Post Office was built and Allen H. Andrews became Estero's first Postmaster. He held this position for more than a year. All Estero's mail was brought in from Punta Gorda on the Ada, along with feed, hay and other needed supplies. All was deposited on Estero Island where Andrew's was also helping to work the sawmill. He then was required to row sixteen miles to the mainland with the mail and supplies, a difficult task to perform each day. Several months later the trip was made easier by the addition of a motor to his tiny boat.



Estero Post Office and General Store

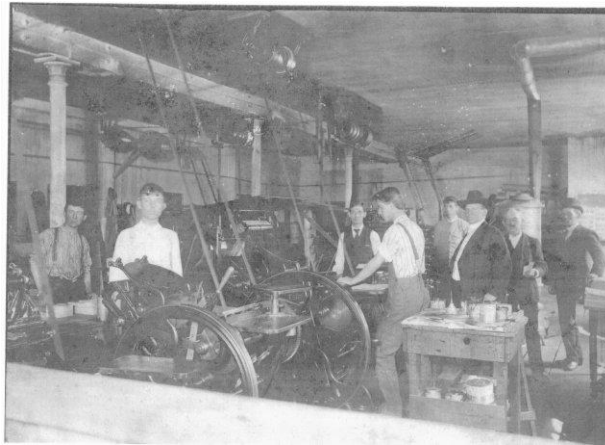
A sawmill was a necessity and arrangements were rapidly made to provide for a new one. This one was erected at the headwaters of the Estero River. With this came a chance to build more comfortable lodgings for the colonists. A house, the Founder's Home, was built exclusively for Cyrus Teed and his Queen, Vitoria Gratia. Several comfortable cottages were built along the river. A few dwellings could be seen hiding amongst the pine woods for the "brothers and



sisters” who preferred to live apart from the men and women dormitories. The lodgings, though all comfortable, were in obvious need of furnishings. A house was built on Estero Island and was kept for colonists who felt a need for a respite and a chance for varied recreation. A greenhouse was built in 1902. Now there would be a constant supply of plants needed for their extensive gardens. Any excess found a market in Fort Myers. A trinket shop was begun which some claimed made money only by overcharging the hundreds of tourists that passed through South Florida every year. There was also a general store. Here the Koreshans were able to “purchase” food and necessities by first convincing the colony’s secretary of their need for whatever they wanted then, if Okayed, a signed requisition slip would be presented to the store. Only then could the “transaction” be completed.

Upon some of the surrounding land bought up by Teed were previously built dwellings. In general these dwellings consisted of a house and a barn with some broken land nearby, once a small garden. These, too, became useful for housing.

When the Koreshan headquarters was transferred from Chicago to Estero, so was the Unity’s printing plant. Land was cleared along one of Estero’s roadways stretching along the river and construction began on a large, 38x70-foot, two-story framed building. It was painted yellow. Finally completed, there was still the problem as to how to transfer all of the heavy type and massive machinery off Estero Island, where it was being stored inside a large thatched shed, and into the new home of the Guiding Star Press. It became necessary to construct a small barge, equipped with a wood burning boiler and a steam engine to furnish its power. Several trips were required to transport it all, but once hauled and set up, the Koreshans were able to resume their publishing of *The Flaming Sword*. The pamphlets and tracts being published at this time were diligent in announcing their new location. The Guiding Star Press again became a quality printing business, and it was another of the few Koreshan enterprises to make money due to their small list of subscribers throughout the country.



Printing Press Interior

The colony was prospering. Teed began to write about the secrets of happy and creative living. The printers, machinists, carpenters and planters were always busy, noisy and joyful; they were all cheerful and buoyant with expectation. “I have never beheld a people who seemed so united in spirit and so confident of the fulfillment of all their hopes.” (Ezra J. Stewart, Shaker Leader, as quoted in Hinds; 11:481)



On the whole, life was peaceful in Estero. There were many capable, intelligent young men and women between the ages of 19 and 40, many highly skilled in their labors. They considered Teed to be a genial leader and there was an apparent love and devotion between him and his disciples. Yet life in the community was definitely under Teed's complete domination and everyone was expected to accept his regal authority. When Estero became incorporated under New Jersey laws, a board of directors and officers were elected for the community, but it was Teed who ruled. He was referred to as the "Prime Counselor." Under him was an elaborate hierarchy, complete with an involved, complicated ruling structure labeled by a series of metaphysical titles, as described below.

Ceremonies were kept to a minimum because of their impracticality. It was necessary that the colonists invest their time in the more pressing duties of survival. Thus the Koreshan religious ceremonies were mostly limited to informal Sunday services at which Koreshan hymns were sung, and prayers and sermons were given – all under Teed's watchful presence. There was also a yearly festival to celebrate the birth of Cyrus Teed. This was held within the spacious park grounds and was often co-attended by large numbers coming from Fort Myers and the county at large. It was at Bamboo Landing where, along the river, a water pageant would be performed with Japanese lanterns, music, and laughter.

Even though ceremonies were rare, there had been erected a building designed for just that. Within were several platforms, each elevated above the others. These were used to seat the several orders of the Koreshan Unity. Cyrus Teed and Victoria Gratia, as the central duality, occupied the highest platform. Seated below were seats for the six woman members of the "Planetary Chamber." These women lodged together on the third floor of the "Planetary court," the name given to the colony's dining hall. On yet another platform sat four men comprising the "Stellar Chamber." Last was the "Signet Chamber" which consisted of three men and three women. This hierarchy was designed to rule the Unity and posed as a kind of divinely ordained government. It mimicked Teed's belief in how the stars and planets were arranged within the hollow earth. In accordance with this stellar and planetary arrangement, the Koreshans structured periodic celebrations of their theories through so called Lunar and Solar Festivals.





The social order based upon the Koreshan cosmology extended beyond such royalty to involve all members. The lowest order, named the “Investigative Court,” was the most secular. To belong, a person needed only to have some interest in Koreshanity and have some financial involvement for which a subscription to the *Flaming Sword* was sufficient. Next was the “Marital Order” designed for husbands and wives who retained a belief in marriage (for procreation only!) and wished to hold on to some of their property. Within this order they could support the Koreshan ideal yet still live what might be called an ordinary family life. The final and highest of these general orders, the “Ecclesia,” was the celibate class to which the majority of the colonists belonged. Members of this central order were conservators of the vital sexual energies thus establishing Estero as “the major husbanding center of celibate potency.” (Judgement:18) In this order the Koreshans were “attaining its greatest mobilization in the battle of Armageddon.” (38h:18) They would triumph over death and hell. The specific title of this central group was “The Guiding Star Assembly of the Koreshan Unity.” All sub-assemblies were required to apply to them for a name of their own and Teed’s approval. Ecclesias were hoped to be established throughout the world.

Any member of the “investigative order” who wanted to become a full-fledged member of Koreshanity was required to write to the Society of the Arch-Triumphant to request a card of application. Virginia H. Andrews was the secretary in charge. The application inquired as to the applicant’s age, occupation and nationality; marital status and views of the spouse concerning Koreshanity; the number of children, their ages and sex and if the parent is willing to give them up to the Unity. The application was to be returned with a \$2 initiation fee. If this price was too steep, it could “be paid in four installments, of fifty cents every three months. The first fifty cents should accompany the application.” (38j:11) If the reported character traits passed inspection and the money was paid on time, the new member was placed on a six-month probation period. During this time he or she was required to study the Koreshan texts and agree to accept all of the Koreshan teachings. Also, during this period, ordinary vices had to be overcome. “We mean profanity, the use of intoxicants and tobacco, and other vices not mentioned but generally understood.” (38j:10) If upon completion of the probationary period the new member still desires to join the colony, he or she is required to sacrifice all previous devotions and contribute all of their worldly goods to the Unity’s general treasury. In return, the new member is provided for, both physically and spiritually, supported by the combined resources of the colony. A new member could gain quicker, almost immediate admittance, if Teed gave the OK. More often than not, this was the case as it was a means to keep the “combined resources of the colony” from dwindling into nonexistence.

Esteemed, even more than religious worship and ceremonies, was education. Education was felt to be the most vital and important aspect of the Unity. First and foremost, an accurate understanding of Koreshanity, as the verifiable doctrine by which to explain the cosmos and as the true meaning of both physical and spiritual life, was essential to the establishment of the New Jerusalem and to the expansion of Teed’s covenant. But well regarded, too, by these very cultured followers, were both the practical and liberal arts. So it is not surprising that the College of Life never expired. Instead it was forever improved upon and expanded. It was not limited to Koreshans only, but as the “Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology,” it was opened to anyone who showed in interest in attending. All visitors were welcome to listen to enthusiastically presented lectures on such topics as populism, socialism and the single tax theory, as well as discussions regarding religion, mental science, and ideas in astronomy. One teacher taught algebra, bookkeeping and “higher mathematics from the Koreshan standpoint.”



Others taught music, art, science and languages. Lessons were given by the hour and these too were made available to any person who wished to attend. Thus one often saw mixed classes of adults, youths and children. A surveyor would take students out to the woods and give practical demonstrations of the theory taught in class. The students were also shown practical carpentry, painting, boat building, mechanics, and pattern making. The instructor's purpose always was to give practical as well as theoretical instruction in all branches of learning.

Many books could be found throughout the colony and were well worn due to many readings. The Koreshans were attracted to such authors as Shakespeare, Robert Burns, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Herbert Spencer, Edward Gibbon, Goethe, Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens, James Fenimore Cooper, Samuel Smiles, Max Muller, and Emanuel Swedenborg. Also to be found were a variety of concordances, encyclopedias, and medical works. Hidden off in one corner was uncovered a rare, torn copy of *Koreshan Fables* by Bruce Pennington. The Koreshans had contemplated the building of a library to house their collection under one roof, but it never came to be.



Art Hall

Much of the teaching occurred in the “Art Hall” built up river from the majority of dwellings. There, the brass band could practice without distracting the daily work of the other colonists. This was the same brass band that had won first prize at Florida’s State Fair held in Orlando in 1903. Their prize consisted of a pair of fine blooded stallions which became a great asset to the colony. The Art Hall had a high ceiling and a large audience room and hall. Not only did the colony’s brass band and 15-piece string and woodwind orchestra practice and perform there, it was also a place to hold religious meetings, dances, and other entertainments. Its inside walls were entirely covered with framed oil paintings of various sizes, mostly the work of Douglas Teed, Cyrus’ son. Teed claimed it to be the finest art collection in all of Florida, figuring its assets to be worth upwards toward \$50,000. Other critics thought this estimation a bit steep. There was an additional work of art on display of a most curious sort. It was a gold-covered model of a hollow earth. An opening revealed a world map on the concave surface. A sun and several other celestial critters were placed within. Off to the side could be seen a platform upon which a section of the Rectilinear was on display.





Gold Covered Model of the Hollow Earth

The Art Hall “opened” in May of 1905. All of Estero’s neighbors were invited and many people from Fort Myers and the surrounding areas showed up. The art gallery’s numerous paintings could be viewed and the Koreshan’s band and orchestra performed. Afterwards musical concerts were given weekly in the Art Hall. On special occasions the concerts were performed from the floating stage at Bamboo Landing, after the sun had faded.



Koreshan Brass Band in the Art Hall

The 15-piece orchestra and brass band were primarily made up of the younger colonists. Under capable leadership they made wonderful progress. Each day, after, dinner, the musicians gathered at the Art Hall for one hour of practice. They played only the finest music – overtures, grand and comic operas, standard marches, waltzes, and descriptive pieces. In addition to the numerous performances given at home in the Estero, concerts were occasionally given in Fort Myers and surrounding areas.

A wide variety of dramatic and fanciful plays were acted out upon the Art Hall’s large stage to enthusiastic audiences. The creative Koreshans would construct their own scenery, consumes and illusions. The orchestra could often be enticed to accompany the drama playing ad libitum.





Koreshan Actors

A common elementary school was conducted daily for the very small children. Along with the standard three R's, it was not unusual for these very young children to be learning to sing scales and play the piano, violin and coronet. The school children were encouraged to create and perform plays of their own to the delight of their elders.

This was truly a time of great productivity, excitement, and rapid growth of a new and vital community. Unfortunately, as is often the case, the momentum of the communal experiment was greatly empowered and energized by the vision and charisma of its leader. Without the guidance and confidence imbued by Cyrus Teed's upon his ambitious goal, the stamina of the community was hard pressed to continue. Unfortunate, things eventually did change for both Teed, and therefore for the community as a whole. By the beginning of 1909, the golden years of the Koreshan Unity entered a rapid decline.



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Ten

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### *Trouble with Neighbors*

An outside visitor to any of the numerous events held in Estero would have to carefully watch their behavior, for all phases of immortality and vice were prohibited by Estero's municipal government. "No saloon is ever permitted within the corporate limits of the town, no gambling houses, no houses of ill fame, no grafting, no political corruption. All these things are forever barred from the town through the essential constitution of the city and system." (as quoted in Hinds, 22:474) All the evils commonly found in other towns were to be absent from Estero, and they were.

Things were a little bit different in nearby Fort Myers and in Lee County at large, especially in the realm of politics. Basically, the political bosses in power during that first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed the control they held over the area. Furthermore, they learned that inherent in their power was the potential means to perpetrate their control. The sudden migration of three hundred new residents into the area constituted a substantial quantity of power itself and, depending on how these new inhabitants chose to vote, they possessed a new force in determining new directions in the political world of Lee County. Lee County essentially consisted of Democrats, and on the whole, so were all of the Koreshans. But the Koreshans did not vote blindly; they occasionally considered other candidates and these deviations helped to initiate the friction that was to develop between the established political power structure of Fort Myers and the Koreshan colony.

In general, until the year 1906, Cyrus Teed and his disciples were fairly well accepted to the area. Teed often visited Fort Myers where he flirted with what little high society the town had; "the tourists and the town top set made a show out of him." (quoted by a minister of Fort Myers in 8:149) He would drive his costly equipage across the heavy sand trail through the Floridian woods to Fort Myers, a journey of six to seven hours. Always by his side would be two or three of the younger and more beautiful woman members. Rumors spread through the town that the youngest of these women was Teed's "Queen".

With the extension of the railroad south from Punta Gorda to Fort Myers, the town had become Estero's principle link with the outside world. The Koreshan members regularly ran their sailboats between the two communities. The colonists were frequently seen in the streets and stores of Fort Myers.

The *Fort Myers Press* began to publish a weekly Estero Community events column that was written by a colony member. This and other editorial favors were done in return for political support for the paper's editor Philip Isaacs. Isaacs was then town councilman and he had aspirations to become Lee County's Judge in the 1904 election. Teed agreed to have his Koreshans all vote for him as a favor returned.



As earlier recorded, Teed's presence in the common press was none too amicable. Although Teed was usually able to turn his scandalous press image to his advantage by using it as proof of his martyrdom, he preferred a good public image. Isaacs was in a position to give him this more positive publicity. Teed did not realize that, although Isaacs did have considerable strength in Lee County's power structure, his strength was essentially controlled by Fort Myers' wealthy Hendry family, as were the Democratic Party and the newspaper.

Teed was described around this time as a clean shaven, clerically dressed man of about 60 years of age. He always wore a Prince Albert coat and black trousers. A white flowing silk cravat sprang from his neck and a wide brimmed black felt hat topped his short stature. Wide between eyes, he allowed for ample physical nourishment and had free and full coursing blood flowing through his veins. I was much amused to read a description of Cyrus Teed in *Newsweek Magazine* many years after his death. There he was described as "tall, portly and handsome," and Teed was none of these things!

Later, after trouble and dispute arose between the two towns, the harmless rumors surrounding Teed became transformed. "Now," they would say, Teed had "disposed of his regal wife" and was "living in sin with all three women." There was even some mention that the "religious fanatics" were stealing the town's babies!

As mentioned, the influx of so many Koreshan residents to Lee County gave Estero considerable influence in the county's political machine. The Koreshans were known to "block vote." That is, Cyrus Teed would tell his disciples how to vote and the entire colony would vote that way. In all of the Unity's previous years they had block voted for all of the Democratic candidates and this made for good relations with the political bosses. In 1904 though, the Koreshans failed to support the Democrat Alton Parker, then running for President against Theodore Roosevelt. Angered, the political bosses sought means to disenfranchise the Koreshan voters. The battle was delayed by a treaty enacted between Cyrus Teed and Philip Isaacs, but two years later "Teed brought disaster on himself, and on Isaacs, by neglecting to form some new arrangement." (28:6) Thus the battle was on.

There were other, more subtle causes for the friction occurring between the two groups. Least of all was a generalized resentment over Teed's fanatical statements that Estero was destined to become the Capitol of the World. The local politicians took this as a threat to steal power from them. A deeper and more immediate concern had to do with Estero's legal claim to a high percentage of the county's road tax money. Estero became entitled to a large portion of it when its municipal incorporation was enacted. The county officers "were loath to divert dollars from their own projects," particularly those in Fort Myers.

Things began to get hot when Koreshans registered to vote in the primary of May 1906. Officials then required them to sign a statement to the effect that they would support only Democratic candidates and, in addition, that they had done the same in the 1904 elections. The requirement was "based upon laws passed to deny blacks the franchise. This pledge was so worded as to exclude those who had voted for Roosevelt and those who had not been in Lee County in 1904 and had therefore not voted;" (28:7) thus excluded from their right to vote were *all* Koreshans. The Koreshans stubbornly refused to be intimidated. They all appeared at Estero's precinct polling station on the first day of the Democratic Primary. Protesting against the pledge,



they signed it only after crossing out the discriminating qualifications. They then block voted for the candidate of their choice.

The entire vote of the Estero Precinct was thrown out by the Democratic executive committee of which Philip Isaacs happened to be chairman. This included the discarding of eight votes of non-Koreshan electors. Further, instructions were given to election inspectors to ban any Koreshans attempting to vote in the second Primary.

Cyrus Teed and the entire Estero community were forced into retaliation. They chose to oppose the Democratic Party by running their own candidates on their own platform.

They first turned to the county's socialist party. A union between the Koreshans and the Socialist Party at first seemed to offer much in their vendetta. The Lee County Socialists already possessed a following and in those days it was an honorable party. But the party lacked an effective means of public communication and any real political organization. Teed chose instead to pour the Unity's energy into the development of a new party, rather than strengthening a weak one. The new party could unite all of the lesser groups. Thus the Socialist, Republican, dissatisfied Democrats, and other dissident groups could band together in opposition to those in control. In addition, the Unity already owned a highly sophisticated printing press and had a staff of talented writers.

The result was the formation of "The Progressive Liberty Party." Its official organ, *The American Eagle*, was presented as a new weekly newspaper, written and printed by an exclusive staff of Koreshans. Allen H. Andrews was designated editor because of his experience as a printer. Rollin W. Gray became assistant editor. Neither man had any previous experience in editing. The first issue came out June 7, 1906, on a Thursday. Thursday just happened to be the day the *Fort Myers Press* came out each week. Only four pages long, it was printed on 60 to 70 pound, book-quality paper and was hand set by the Koreshan experts. *The American Eagle*, from the beginning, displayed typographical innovations and was far superior in every way to any of the other Florida weekly newspapers of the period. Most of the early articles were written by Allen Andrews, Rollin Gray, John S. Sargeant, Ulysses Morrow, and Cyrus Teed. The only reference to anything nonpolitical was its motto: "Riches and Poverty Cease Where the Commonwealth Begins." It ran just below the paper's nameplate and masthead: "*THE AMERICAN EAGLE*: Exponent of Purity in Politics."

The tone of their entire campaign erupted in the editorial of the first issue: "As heat is one of the necessary factors in incubation, so from out of the heat of the recent political strife has been hatched the *American Eagle*, full-fledged and strong of beak. His flight is lofty – no place, though high, escapes his keen, far-seeing eye. From time immemorial the eagle has been the symbol of liberty from the thralldom of the oppressor's yoke, therefore *The American Eagle* – friend of the downtrodden and oppressed – is an adversary to be reckoned with by those who are thirsty for power and dominion over others." (28:9)

There were many features in this first issue that were to continue as an established part of *The American Eagle*. Political cartoons were used. There was a wrap-up of the state, national, and international news in a column entitled "The Week's News Boiled Down." On the back page appeared twenty-four business card advertisements, of which each one was set in a different type



and only two were placed by Koreshans. Eleven were surprisingly placed by financial and community leaders of Fort Myers. It appeared that although the Koreshans were in dispute with the county's politicians, they continued to enjoy the respect of other elements of the population.

The *Eagle* was an immediate success. By July 12<sup>th</sup> it had already gained a circulation of 532 readers. A month later this was up to 668. It should be understood that Lee County had only one thousand voters.

With each successive issue, the newspaper's subject matter broadened somewhat, always remaining, though, in line with Teed's views. The fourth issue contained a favorable review of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. This set off a series of muck raking articles on situations both locally and nationally. There were editorials on the proposed drainage of the Everglades, tax equalization, and alleged corruption and political favoritism in reports on Lee County affairs. This same issue introduced color to its format. The first page was printed over the drab, green silhouette of an eagle with its wings outstretched. A community events column for all of the surrounding small towns was also begun. By August 23, the newspaper had increased its size to six pages.

The Progressive Liberty Party's proposed party platform appeared in the *Eagle*'s first issue. It called for the public ownership of utilities, free schooling, taxation on an equitable basis, equalization of wealth, extension of good roads, protection of the environment, and conservation of Florida's natural resources. Most immediate was the Koreshan's call for "government in the sunshine."

Although many of these concerns were to the dislike of Lee County's conservatives, many have since become Florida and even federal law. None of the demands were really significantly different from the concerns of the other socialist oriented parties of the time.

Its first official meeting was held on June 15, 1906. It was then decided that, in order to arouse interest among the various independent voters, the Party would organize a convention to be held a week later in Fort Myers. At that June 24<sup>th</sup> convention, the proposed party platform was amended and adopted. A slate of candidates was elected. The elections to be contested included those of state representative, county commissioners, school board members, tax assessor, tax collector, and treasurer. Only one nominee was a Koreshan. He was W. Ross Wallace and he was up for county commissioner for the Estero district.

With the new Progressive Liberty Party and the *American Eagle* well off the ground, and in such little time, they were ready to begin campaigning. They toured the county behind the colony's prize horses with the brass band blaring. Over all of this, speakers would shout out their platform and their ideals. A series of rallies were held in nearly each of the county's small towns and villages. The Democratic candidates were invited to debate. These invitations were ignored. The end result was that a genuine interest was generated amongst the citizens of the smaller settlements. The less wealthy could see many benefits for themselves. In fact it looked as though the Progressive Liberty Party was making enough votes to put the outcome of the elections in doubt.



The political bosses of Fort Myers (note: a rough-tough cowtown in 1906) were enraged with the Koreshan success. It was not long before *The American Eagle* reported that the Koreshans had received several anonymous threats of armed visits to Estero. The Koreshans replied that their own guns were ready and that they would not shrink from their duty to expose corruption, incompetence, and nepotism – the last being a charge to which the Hendry family was particularly vulnerable.

Battles were continuously waged, back and forth, in the two opposing force's newspapers. The *Eagle* aimed much of their invectiveness at "Fill-up Isaacs" as they were now calling him. His apparent conflict of interest in his roles as county judge, journalist, and political committeeman was made a symbolic weapon directed at Lee County affairs. Isaacs responded by describing the Koreshans as "sneaky," "underhanded," and "schemers" and were described as "voracious – and worse." (28)

One of Isaacs strongest objections was to the Koreshans propensity for block voting, the same tactic that helped assure him of becoming judge. He ended an early editorial based on this objection with the contradictory statement, "Democrats and all other citizens have a duty to block vote against the Progressive Liberty Party."

It may be that the Fort Myers regulars were looking for an excuse for violence; certainly there were those who wished to cause Dr. Teed and the Progressive Liberty Party more acute embarrassment than was possible through the medium of intemperate editorials. The excuse came by telephone. (28:12)

The story of the impending violence upon Cyrus Teed began with the arrival of W.W. Pilling, who among numerous trades was also a song writer. He departed the train at Fort Myers on September 24, 1906 and went searching for a Unity boat at the municipal dock that might take him on to Estero. Finding none, he went back to the Fort Myers Post Office and sent a note off to Estero telling of his arrival. Tired from his trip, he then retired for the night at "Florida House," a hotel operated by Mr. and Mrs. J.I. Sellers.

Somebody in Estero called the hotel the next morning at 7 a.m. and asked for Pilling. Mrs. Sellers replied, "He is not here." "Whether she was unaware that Pilling was registered or whether she meant that he had not yet come downstairs is unclear." (28:12)

In any case, a few hours later the caller called back and this time Mrs. Sellers sent word for Pilling to answer it. Before Pilling arrived to answer the phone, the caller said, "I thought you told me no one by that name was stopping there." Perhaps a few more words were exchanged but as Pilling was later to recall, Mrs. Sellers had not been upset by anything that might have been said.

No importance was attached to the event at all until three weeks later. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Sellers met W. Ross Wallace, the Koreshan running for county commissioner, on the streets of Fort Myers. Sellers angrily accused Wallace of calling his wife a liar and then physically attacked Wallace! Wallace attempted to defend himself while at the same time trying to secure protection from the mayor who was standing nearby laughing. Wallace fled. Wallace actually had no idea of what Sellers was talking about. He was totally unaware of the seemingly insignificant telephone conversation. In fact, on the day of the alleged verbal insult, he was campaigning in Caxambas, a town near Marco Island, fifty miles south of Estero.



Cyrus Teed also happened to be in town that day. He was there to meet a group of Koreshan supporters due to arrive from Baltimore on the afternoon train. While walking past Gilliam's grocery store on his way to the station, he caught sight of Wallace, Sellers and the town marshall, J.W. Sanchez. At Wallace's request they were all discussing, albeit loudly, the telephone incident and Sellers' subsequent attack. Wallace told Sellers he was not in Estero during the day of the call. He further insisted on an explanation of Sellers' actions.

Teed arrived on the scene just as Sellers apologized, explaining that he had heard that Wallace had been the caller. If Teed had kept quiet the argument would have ended right there. "But Teed could not resist the temptation to preach; perhaps he felt himself already the master and peace-maker of Lee County." (28:12) In finality, he stated that indeed no one had insulted Mrs. Sellers. Almost before the words were out of his mouth the burly Sellers, dressed in his rough clothes and broad rimmed Stetson hat, yelled, "Don't you call me a liar!," and struck the diminutive Teed three times on the side of the head. Town Marshall Sanchez, silver star dangling from his chest, stood quietly by as Teed quickly stepped forward and raised his fists. Later it was disputed whether he followed through and actually struck back or if it was as Teed claimed, an attempt to protect his face and spectacles. Either way, it did not take long for a crowd to gather around the four men.

Meanwhile the train had finally arrived with the visitors Teed had intended to meet. The group from Baltimore had departed the train and was being escorted to a hotel located in the center of town. Estero's mayor and several of the younger Koreshans, among them the somewhat older Richard Jentsch, had greeted them upon their arrival. They could not help but notice the loud and excited crowd that had gathered. It took little time to realize that Cyrus Teed, their messiah, was in the middle of it and in apparent need of some assistance. Immediately Jentsch sprang forward to defend his master. The three Koreshan boys in his charge spontaneously followed his lead. Soon Claude Rahn, Roland Sander, and George Danner were involved in their first street brawl.

Jentsch struck Sellers and was then struck down by blows in the crowd. Claude Rahn, trying to separate Sellers and Dr. Teed, was hit in the mouth by a stranger. George Danner, seeing this, ran forward, kicked Rahn's attacker, and then retreated. The man yelled, "Grab the kid." Someone did, and Danner was knocked into the crowd.

Roland Sander was pushed about by the milling people. His valise was pulled from his hand and thrown to the ground. When a stranger asked him if he was Koreshan and he answered, "Yes," he received a blow in the face that sent him sprawling into the gutter. From there he saw Sellers draw a knife on Dr. Teed, but another man seized Sellers' arm and forced him to put the weapon away. (28:13)

Marshall Sanchez stood calmly by. He was less than four feet from Teed and Sellers when the knife was pulled. Yet he waited until things calmed down a bit. Then he grabbed Teed by the collar of his coat and exclaimed, "You struck him and called him a liar!"

"I did not strike him," replied the Doctor, "nor call him a liar."

"Don't you tell me you did not strike him," responded the Marshall as he slapped Teed across the face, a slap that dislodged Teed's glasses.



Sanchez then told Teed and Rahn that they were under arrest. Furious at such obvious injustice, Jentsch broke free from the crowd, ran up to Sanchez and clipped him in the face. The marshall responded with his bully club and beating him to the ground with one or two swings definitively told him, "You hit me again and I will kill you!" And there the free-for-all ended.

Marshall Sanchez arrested Cyrus Teed, Richard Jentsch, and Ross Wallace. Each was forced to post \$10 bond against an appearance at Fort Myers municipal court the following Monday. The three men wisely paid the \$30 rather than risk jail.

The *Eagle* made much of the fight and all of the wrong doings involved with it. So did the *Fort Myers Press*, with its headline "Teed Starts Street Fight!" In it, Sanchez and Fort Myers" Mayor Hendry continued to claim that Teed was the aggressor. The *Press* also began reviving years-old expose articles about Teed's legal problems in Chicago and elsewhere. These articles appeared under such headlines as "Came Near Lynching Teed" and "For the Price of a Wife."

Another result of the fight was that the Koreshans wisely postponed and then cancelled a Progressive Liberty Party rally scheduled in Fort Myers that weekend. They did continue with other rallies, though, that had been scheduled for many of the smaller towns. Concerts and speeches were given in Sanibel, Marco, Caxambas, Buckingham, Alva, and in many of the even smaller settlements where there were voters to listen to the Party's plans during the weeks following the fight.

When Election Day finally came, and even though in several of the races the results were extremely close, the Progressive Liberty Party won no elections. The campaign had been one of considerable achievement and in their six months existence they were able to gain at least one-third of the votes in each contest. The school board candidate had actually run ahead of his Democratic opponent in the unofficial returns, but when the results were certified in the ring-dominated election board, a number of votes were thrown out and the Progressive Liberty Party candidate lost. In any case, the *Eagle* later congratulated itself and the Party and predicted eventual success in the 1908 elections.

Even though Isaacs and the Democratic ring were still in control, the Koreshans formed an uneasy truce with them. They then returned to their more normal routine of work and learning.

\* \* \* \* \*

The beating Teed had received in Fort Myers had taken its toll on the doctor and he was forced to take time out to convalesce. During this time he undertook the writing of a novel in which two opposing forces battle for the total control of the world's power. Thus the competitive Capitalists and the righteous Socialists form huge armies. After millions of men on both sides are slaughtered, the Socialists emerge triumphant. But things do not end there. The Orient has been infected with the Capitalist's cupidity and are crossing Europe and heading towards America with the desire for usurping all they encounter. The Socialists are rather weak from previous battles waged and the outcome appears tenuous. But, glory be to Koresh!, there is a secret holy city along the southern coast of Florida. There the inhabitants have been hard at work developing and mass producing powerful weapons. At the crucial moment these weapons, high flying dirigibles equipped with "hailstones of fire," are released and successfully destroy the enemy.



The members of the secret city now prepare for the reconstruction of the world. Human society is reestablished, along with the Truth of Koreshanity by which the city has found its strength. The world becomes a veritable paradise where a Koreshan government, both physical and celestial, prevails. Hail Koreshanity! The book, entitled, *The Red Dragon: Flaming Devil of the Orient*, years later the *Great Red Dragon*, tends to be rather tedious reading by this writers standard. It proved Cyrus Teed to be a most untalented writer of fiction and perhaps he himself realized this for he attached to the work the Pseudonym "Lord Chester."

The book contains an idealistic description of Estero. As it is a good summary of the Koreshan way of life and how Teed was viewing its progress at the time, it is included in the present work:

Down in the southern portion of the Peninsulas of Florida there had grown a wonderful city. Its central life was communistic. Its social system embraced two general orders of fellowship; the first and highest being communistic and celibate; the other, marital cooperative. The purpose of the communistic order was primarily the separation of the sexes, as it was claimed that the sex potencies could be conserved and utilized for the attainment of immortal life, which was to be reached in the body. The particular science of immortal life had been disseminated through the literature of the publishing house of the organic socialistic order. The system appeared to be a product of Christianity, for it advocated the Messianic law, a fundamental law of life, and maintained that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God. Being heir to the eternal throne, the Son becomes the King, enthroned as Sovereign of the Universal Empire. This body of people also believed they possessed the present directing Messianic leader, and that they were specially chosen of the Lord, the reincarnation of the ancient past, made ready for a baptism in which the immortal state would be consummated. They regarded the highest phase of religious worship to be the performance of uses to the neighbor, and that this was the demonstration of the inherent proof of love to God. "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works," was a favorite text of this unique social fellowship.

They allowed no use of tobacco, nor intoxicants for beverages, no profanity, nor vulgarity. The highest forms of education were instituted, and the fine arts, music, drama, architecture, mechanics, and agriculture were promoted and stimulated. During their early career they had been persecuted and maligned, privately and publicly, and their motives were misunderstood and impugned. Every conceivable falsehood was circulated against them, and all of the malignity which characterized the opposition to the early Christians was manifest toward the Founder of the Order. As persecution multiplied, the order gained in courage, power, and prosperity.

In the marital order of the fellowship there was respect to the highest virtues. The principle of monogamy was enforced, and the doctrine was entertained that the laws of propagation should be in such relation to the solar, lunar, and stellar aspects, as to determine the character of birth, thus providing for such specific qualities in the development of the human race, as would insure perfection and distinction of character. The entire system was under a discipline as perfect in its enforcement as the most approved military order, and yet with such liberty of choice as to render the institution one of the highest character. There was no money, for there was no use for its application to the industrial system in operation in the Commonwealth. There was no labor, because the performance of use was recreative, and so perfectly ordered that the curse of labor was eliminated. Industry was no longer relegated to the obscurity of oblivion. (38e:93-5)

An edition published in "A.K. 69" (that is, "After Koresh" – 69 years after his birth) is forwarded with the following note written by one of Teed's disciples:

This Story, which was written in the winter of 1906 and '07, was submitted to several prominent publishers of this country, and refused, but not however, before they had retained it long enough to note the main points. These points have since been incorporated in other stories that have been published in leading papers and magazines.



The writer fails to supply us with any examples, though.

As recently as January 1971, Koreshan G. Bartosch wrote of Cyrus Teed's *Great Red Dragon*: "[It] presents a vivid portrayal of the future, and events as they are presently occurring indicate that the time is at hand when these amazing predictions will be realized." (45:iii)

In any case, the book has never been a very big seller and today only a few scattered copies exist and are not easily come by.

During these same months Teed often conducted Sunday services held in Estero's Art Hall. Picnics continued to be held in Estero's beautiful gardens. The orchestra and brass bands could often be heard during these occasions. The Unity band was engaged to play at a private garden party held in Fort Myers as well as one of that town's public dances. The winter was quiet and the two communities seemed to be working well within their tenuous truce.

The truce was momentarily broken by an editorial written by Philip Isaacs, Isaacs' favor was diminishing under Mayor Hendry's glowering gaze and he felt a solid blow against Koreshanity might restore his favor. He accused the Koreshans of child stealing – an accusation the *Eagle* carefully, and at some length, explained to the "little Judge-editor." The truce was resumed.

Isaacs attacked a second time in March 1907 by supplying Florida's State capitol's *Tallahassee Sun* with a great deal of sensational and scandalous informational distortions to produce an article entitled "Here's Koresh, King of Fakirs." The *Eagle* exploded editorially, beginning a fresh campaign against the "Judge" and his capitol cohorts. Isaacs soon proposed a truce. He told Teed he would "forget that you are living" if Teed would agree to stay out of Lee County affairs.

Isaacs and the Democratic regulars were not willing to stay out of Estero's affairs, though. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1907 the county commissioners petitioned their state senator and representative to introduce a bill into the legislature that would abolish the town of Estero, or at least reduce it to a smaller size. Why? "Because," they told the senator and congressman, "the present charter covers so much actual unnecessary territory, it seems its only purpose is to give them a claim for half the road tax assessed in the said boundaries." Estero's charter is nothing but "a farce and a sham" that is stealing money from other, more necessary projects. The petition was a means for the politicians to retain all of the tax revenues for their own projects. In it was probably also a bit of retaliation for the Koreshan's political activity.

As one might expect, the Florida legislature abolished Estero's charter with a unanimous vote. Governor Napoleon Broward, even amidst the protests of the Koreshan Unity, allowed the bill to become law without his signature. Eventually, though, the bill was found to be constitutionally flawed, and Estero remained.

Thus, on the whole, Isaacs' campaign against Cyrus Teed and the Koreshan Unity was none too successful. His zeal became his disaster. Mayor Hendry, rather than reestablish his favor with Isaacs, now was of the opinion that Isaacs was untrustworthy and incompetent. Isaacs was given sufficient time to sell his interest in the *Fort Myers Press*. He was then quietly forced to move out of town. Days later he departed unobtrusively for the North, defeated.







# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

### Chapter Eleven

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### *Final Days*

Nobody really was expecting it, least of all Cyrus Teed himself. The blows inflicted upon Cyrus that tragic October morning had caused a nervous condition to develop. Yet hadn't it all been predicted more than a decade before? "Dr. Teed will die; the termination of his natural career will be tragic. He will reach his death at the instigation of a people who profess the religion of Jesus, the Christ of God." (*Flaming Sword*: March 26, 1892) But his unforeseen demise held little cause for woe. Teed had assured his people that he was immortal. He convinced them that if he were to pass away his body would not decay; instead "incorruptible dissolution" would transform his body into pure spirit. Then would come the apocalypse promised and predicted in *The Great Red Dragon*. His death would initiate the new order of Koreshanity.

Soon after the Fort Myers" street fight, Teed began to suffer violent pain and headaches. They grew worse as time went on, eventually leading to an acute neuritis. The faithful Gustav Faber, the old, eccentric, German sailor who had given up the sea for farming, had been a nurse in the Spanish-American War. To help Teed, he invented a strange electro-therapeutic machine hoping to induce a cure. The inspired treatments failed to do any good. After months of suffering, Cyrus Romulus Teed, King Koresh I, at the age of 69, lay dead on the shores of the Estero River. The date was December 22, 1908. The Koreshan Unity was shaken. The colony stopped working. No one dared speak above a whisper.

The body was laid upon a cypress plank and kept beside the river. A constant prayer vigil was kept by the most faithful, as they sat day and night around their dead Messiah. The body was not embalmed and there was no thought of burying it. They were awaiting the resurrection unhindered by the noisome odors filling the air around them. Florida was experiencing a mid-winter hot spell and Teed's body was rapidly decaying in the humid tropical heat. Watchers of the body became convinced that they saw evidence of a new body emerging from the remnants of the old. The decay was reversing itself!

Christmas came and went. On December 26<sup>th</sup>, Dr. William Hanson, the acting health officer of Lee County, came with a legal order that the Koreshans bury the body.

A bathtub was brought. The remains of Teed were accumulated and placed within. The bathtub and its contents were rowed to Estero Island where, at a place they called "The Point," a tomb of concrete blocks was hastily prepared. The tub and the body were inserted and the tomb was sealed. Centered on one of the tomb's narrow walls was inscribed:





Even though Cyrus Teed's body had obviously entered into "corruptible dissolution," there were those who clung to the belief in his immortality. Prayer vigils continued, now held around the tomb. Before departing the tomb, true believers would carefully rake the sand surrounding it. In this manner, if Teed were ever to rise at a time when there were no witnesses to observe the impending miracle, his footprints would testify to the event. Others believed that his dematerialized body would leave no footprints. Convinced that the resurrection had already occurred, they demanded to be allowed to prove it by reopening the tomb. Permission was refused by the sandrakers.

Once there occurred a midnight raid by two men upon the cement sarcophagus. It was an ill-planned attempt to reopen the tomb by those who wanted to prove that their Lord had indeed already risen. Unfortunately, a strong magic emanated from the tomb. Koreshan Henry D. Silverfriend told the associated press that as the two men approached the tomb, their minds became affected. An intense insanity killed them both before they could be sent off to an asylum. Ironically, later in life, Silverfriend would find himself committed to an asylum.

To prevent further attempts upon the tomb, the Estero Board of Directors had a strong kerosene lamp placed high and directly on top of the tomb. Mirror reflectors were attached to the lamp. Stationed to guard the tomb was an old, white-haired German, Carl Luetlich. He was designated lamp-lighter and night watchman. Night after dark night, he sat among the wild mangrove, cocoanut and mango trees, the stars twinkling in the blackness that surrounded the tomb's tiny circle of light. Everything was always quiet and Luetlich fell into the habit of sleeping when the Board of Directors thought him awake.

Once, just before dawn, Luetlich sat there sleeping as a small group of fanatics opened the side of the tomb. He awoke suddenly with the sun's first light. The defilers fled. From then on, Carl had to be more careful.

Eventually there was an advisory that arrived on Estero's shore and no one could prevent her from carrying off the body, the tub, and the entire tomb. She was one of Florida's numerous tropical hurricanes. On October 25, 1921, she pounded Estero Island with giant waves. When the storm was over, the tomb and the body were gone!





Cyrus Teed Tomb

Some claimed to have found the body washed up on the beach. They said they reburied it in a secret place in the woods. Others declared that only the cypress plank was found, unmoved from the spot it had served as a bier when the body was secured inside the tomb. Still others told how they had later found the inscribed concrete slab. They said it was a message from their Master now residing in a place “beyond.” Each tale served as an inspiration to restore their faith in Cyrus Teed and his Koreshanity. As recently as 1971, we can read, “At a time unexpected He will appear, His face shining with a new glory, signifying a *physical* reappearing.” (45:8)

After Cyrus Teed’s death, the colonists, without direction, did not know what to do. It was obvious that a new leader was necessary in order to organize the work needed for day to day living and survival of the cult. Unfortunately, a single leader could not be agreed upon. Several stepped forward to take on the role as Teed’s messianic successor, but all essentially failed.

It seemed almost obvious that Victoria Gratia should continue as the Queen of Koreshanity and become firmly established as Prime Ruler of the cult. Even though she had not fulfilled the prophecy to murder Teed on her own accord, she was the one Teed always publicly predicted as his successor. She was to become Minerva, Goddess of All the World!, indeed a vow he had whispered to many women, but only with Victoria Gratia was such a promise sustained. Yet when she felt forced to leave Estero to reestablish the “true” way of Koreshanity in Florida’s Hillsborough County, only a few disciples followed. Weak, her group quickly dissolved.

Gustav Faber also claimed leadership. He had been with Teed, nursing him, when Teed drew his last breath. With it, Faber claimed, Teed had handed over to him the right to rule the Koreshans. He asserted that these were Teed’s final words. He appears, though, to have been unable to gain a following.

A large portion of the colony incorporated into the “Order of Theocracy” and established their headquarters in Fort Myers. This group lasted a surprisingly long while, 1910 to 1931. Their organization, structure, and religious principles were quite similar to the Koreshan Unity they had left behind, yet, throughout their existence, they remained bitter about the Estero group. It seems that this group was initially upset over the discovery of an ill-gotten business deal that



Teed had conducted several years previous to his death. He had financially aided a friend who was planning to take over a large woodworking plant in one of the southern states. The plant was going to be operated as a cooperative enterprise. The plan failed completely and the property was sold at a foreclosure sale. The whole mess surfaced very soon after Teed's death and the devastated colonists suddenly found themselves with a mortgage indebtedness of many thousands of dollars. They had their grief, and now there was this hanging over them a debt from property they never even owned or operated. It was cause for great alarm and probably a more accurate reason for the colony's wholesale exodus from Estero in the months following Teed's death.

Six months after Teed's death, there remained in Estero approximately 130 Koreshans. They persevered and within a few years the horrendous debt was cleared.



One of the aims of Koreshanity was to become the covenant in which all of humanity throughout the world would share in common. A means toward this end was the abundance of written material emanating from the Guiding Star's presses. Unfortunately each of these works were published in English and not everybody in the world was able to read English. Dr. J. Augustus Weimer, a close friend and colleague of Teed's, offered to help correct this situation. He would translate the word of Koreshanity into his native tongue, German. Thus there appeared the two books on Koreshanity entitled, *Kapital, Lohnsklaverei und Industrielle Freiheit* and *Ein Kurzer Inbegriff der Koreshanitischen Universologie*. The majority of these printed translations was exported to Europe, and thus was spread the Word. It was from these writings that the basis of Hohlweltlehre (Hollow Earth Doctrine) was provided. Its truth was first proclaimed by Peter Bender.

Bender had been a German aviator in World War I. In 1914, his flying career ended suddenly when he was shot down, the resulting crash badly wounding him. Incapable of escape, he was taken prisoner in France. There he discovered some old copies of *The Flaming Sword* along with some of the German pamphlets. He was immediately attracted to the creed. To give further emphasis to his discovery, he too received a visitation and had enlightenment bestowed upon him. He quickly developed and formulated his conception of the document in precise terms. He returned to Germany as soon as he was able and there he founded the Hohlweltlehre.

Bender's depiction of the universe was somewhat different than Teed's. Both knew that the world was hollow and that all that exists, exists within. But they did not agree on what was on the outside. Teed had expounded that beyond the golden rind there existed *Nothing*. Bender claimed instead that the rock beneath our feet extended to infinity. He further believed that our atmosphere extends for 45 miles and then slowly rarefied to a complete vacuum at our universe's center. In this center are located three bodies; the sun, moon, and a Phantom Universe. The Phantom Universe is a globe of bluish gas, pierced by bright, shining points of light. These are the source of the reflections we commonly know of as the stars. Night comes as the blue mass passes over the sun.



Peter Bender never wrote any books promulgating his view. He did correspond at length with members of the Estero community during the 1920's. The Hohlweltlehre's chief proponent was "a most unimpressive looking typical burgher" (11:309) named Karl Neupert. He wrote approximately a dozen books "with much pseudoscientific argument and only a small amount of scriptural quotations." (11:310) His best known written work was *GeoKosmos*.

The theory became very popular in the 1930's pre-Nazi Germany when almost any theory could get a fair hearing, provided it had a pair percentage of irrationality mixed in with it. It remained popular until its inevitable demise.

World War II had begun and the German military officials were willing to attempt anything to gain advantage over the allied forces. So in April 1942 the Hohlweltlehre was given a chance to prove itself to the world. An expedition of ten men was organized with the approval of Goering, Himmler, and Hitler, and it was surrounded by the greatest of secrecy. Among the members of the expedition were some of the greatest experts on the then rapidly developing science of radar. In fact, the entire expedition was under the direction of Dr. Heinz Fisher, who was well known for his early work on infra-red rays.

The scientists disembarked on the island of Rugen located in the Baltic Sea. There they carefully unloaded the most up-to-date radar apparatus capable of being made, a rare cargo in those days. The observations to be carried out with this equipment were considered by the Admiralty General Staff to be of capital importance for the offensive which Hitler was preparing to launch on every front.

The radar apparatus was set up and then aimed at the sky at a constant angle of 45°. It held this position for several days. The mission was so important that its purpose was even withheld from the majority of the expedition's scientists, with the exception of their scientific director, Heinz Fisher. The secret was Hitler's private suspicions and secret hope that the world may indeed be concave! The object of the expedition was an attempt to prove this truth scientifically with the aid of the best technology of the day. If Teed, Bender, and Neupert were correct, why, then the German's could easily obtain a reflection of the British Fleet at Scapa Flow! So it was in that suspected direction that the radar was being pointed to see if in fact the earth's surface does curve upward.

After the war, Fisher immigrated to the United States where he was successful in advancing today's more orthodox sciences. Of his Rugen sojourn, he later remarked, "The Nazis forced me to do a lot of crazy things which hindered me considerable in my researches." (4:272)

After the Rugen expedition, Bender and Neupert's prestige, in the eyes of the Nazi leaders, declined "in spite of protection from Goering who had a great affection for this formerly distinguished airman [Bender]." (4:272) Bender and his wife were thrown into a concentration camp where not long afterwards they both died. Neupert's unfortunate fate is less known, yet he was also dead by the end of the war. The Hohlweltlehre's writings were mocked and burned. Once, Hitler was asked to choose between Horbiger's equally outrageous "Cosmic Ice Theory" and Bender's "Hollow Earth." He answered, "Our conception of the world need not be coherent. They may both be right." (As quoted in 4:272-3)





By 1928 the population in Estero had dwindled to approximately sixty members. By the early 1940's, there were only thirty-six members left living in the community. A decade later it was down to twelve. Many of the younger members had long since moved away to begin new lives elsewhere. Most of the original believers had died off. Without the convictions of Cyrus Teed and the zeal and eagerness of his earliest converts, conviction in a hollow earth and the impending immortality of man seemed harder to swallow. Yet what was still left of the tiny community was looked upon by outsiders with admiration, even if their beliefs were still considered odd.

Estero looked no different than any of the other tiny communities along the newly constructed Tamiami Trail. Only its print shop, gas station and an excellent general store, which was developed along modern lines, were visible to passersby. A find trailer camp had begun. This and the rest of the Koreshan village were hidden behind shrubbery grown tall and beautiful.



Entrance to the Estero Community

The members at this time were described as

A pleasant faced, peaceful people who live in a world of their own, doing a great deal of reading and thinking. If little money passes through their hands it doesn't matter, because they have little need for money. They do not allow tobacco or alcoholic drinks on their property. They make no attempt to keep abreast of fashion, but they have all the necessities. (10:342)

All of the Unity's income continued to be put into a common fund. From this, each member was taken care of according to his or her needs. All of the work was apportioned according to ability and desire. The women took turns at cooking and other household work. The food was still grown in their own gardens. In fact it was said in 1939 that the Unity produced some of the finest citrus fruits and truck vegetables in the state.

These surviving Koreshans were quietly waiting for the coming of a second deity, a Goddess called "Minerva." They all devoutly believed in the Christian Bible, but, during their



Sunday services, Sister Etta and Brother Henry Silverfriend would soothingly read only from the written work of Koresh. These two had grown old in the work of the colony, as had many of their listeners. They had come to Estero from Chicago many years before when they were young and enthusiastic in their new belief in Koreshanity.

And they still believed. The congregation would listen pensively and ecstatically, as they would be told of the birth spasms the world was then undergoing. Soon there would be a complete reorganization of the world spiritually and physically. Even the contours of our concave earth would transform. Change would occur unexpectedly and in an instant. It would come like the sudden flash of lightning and as pure as the blink of a firefly. And with it will appear Minerva; and she will be a Goddess; and she will rule the Universe while standing on a throne in a new and glorious Jerusalem!

Of Teed's death, they said he had never died. He was instead resurrected in a new mission. He is with the Goddess, helping to prepare for her arrival, helping to create her role as leader of the perfect world.

Because of the cult's beliefs concerning death and immortality, there had never been a funeral held in Estero and never was a body embalmed. Instead, the body was placed on the back of one of the Unity's trucks. It was then driven ten miles into the woods where, hidden among the shrubs, there was a small and sandy graveyard. Mounds of this white sand could be seen topped by wooden markers identifying the body below. Nearby lived a scrub man and woman. They lived primitively, their only shelter being an erected tent. They claimed to be a divine couple upon whom the spirit of Koresh had descended. No one knew who they were or where they had come from.

Alfred Christiansen, a Dane who had once been an electrician in Chicago, was in charge of the Koreshan's electric plant. He also baked the bread for the small group and, ironically, he used an old fashion kind of oven, heating the bread with wood or coal. The electric plant was promptly shut down at 9 PM every night. It had been installed not too many years after Teed's death.



The Bamboo Tea Garden



The group loved to tell and retell a story about this electric plant that occurred with the surprise visit of Thomas Edison and his wife to the Koreshan “Bamboo Tea Gardens.” Edison and Henry Ford both owned winter homes in nearby Fort Myers and the Koreshans were happy to recall how the two men often visited Estero’s verdant gardens. Edison especially admired their *bull acacia* whose thorns interlock like the horns of fighting bulls. He often brought acquaintances of his along on these sojourns. This tale began on the evening of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1929 when

the distinguished party were returning about 8 PM from some point of interest they had visited down Tamiami Trail and when nearing Estero were over taken by a storm of violent intensity. Drenched to the skin, they sought refuge in the rustic palm-thatched building of the local tea garden and there found cordial hospitality, dry shelter, warm food and drink. While eating supper the electric lights went out. Candles were brought in and there in simple and rustic surroundings amid the booming of thunder and vivid flashing of lightning the electrical wizard and his companions finished their evening meal in contentment and awaited the abatement of the storm. (2:241)

That evening happened to be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incandescent light!

The town still operated its small, but complete, printing plant. The *Flaming Sword* still came out, yet only every month now, and the *American Eagle* had since become quite popular throughout Florida. Allen H. Andrews was still editor-in-chief. Teed’s niece, Florence Graham, was linotype operator. Now entitled *The American Eagle and Horticulture Review*, it was a weekly newspaper, mostly interested in the natural history of Florida. Andrews had made it into the leading horticulture paper in southern Florida, and he was considered one of the ablest editorial writers in Florida weekly journalism. His excellent paper had become “a forum and force for liberal and sensible ideas” in its opinions on the development of Florida’s natural resources. Then in February of 1948 the *American Eagle* was destroyed. The following two quotes tell the tale providing us with two different perspectives on the usurpation of power.

By the mid-1940’s only a dozen followers, all well past middle age, met for services in a musty religious hall. However, the value of their communal land holdings had risen. Succumbing to capitalistic vice of the convex world, they began to quarrel over the property. A group of „usurpers” led by Hegvig (sic) Michel, a German refugee in her 50’s who joined the cult five years ago [1943], and another recent convert, Laurence Bubbett, Lee County chess champion – ousted the old guard.

Allen H. Andrews was deposed as editor of the cult’s paper for writing “seditious” editorials against the new “government.” H. D. Silverfriend, 90, a charter member and now an inmate of the state insane asylum at Chattahoochee, protested the change through his guardian. So did Mrs. Emma Norton, 89-year-old sister of the late Dr. Teed. Demanding a reorganization and a receivership, the “old guard” went to court. It charged that the new group had taken control fraudulently.

Last week, with the suit already a year old, Circuit Judge Lynn Gerald postponed action until sometime in 1949. Under the mortality tables, the struggle of the elderly cosmogonists for the Koreshan Estates might eventually cease for lack of litigants. (39:26)

Andrews gave his own opinion of the matter at the conclusion of his autobiography:

Public appreciation of *The American Eagle*, as evidenced by award of the Barbour Medal, led to frictions and jealousies at home. Directors of the owning corporation, of which the writer was then president, complained of my frequent traveling, claiming that I was squandering money and insisting that I should stay more at home and change the paper to a monthly magazine, to which I demurred. It takes some years to build up a subscription list of those who are specially interested in tropical plant lore, which had been done despite inadequate help, and although the *Eagle* had never been a financial success, it was nevertheless paying its way and growing in circulation and income, belying all statements to the contrary.



Continued opposition led to a public exposé of the high-handed methods of the opposing directors toward the writer and other members of the corporation who were equal owners, with the result that I was demoted as president, and also by court order in February, 1948, retired as editor of *The American Eagle*, being succeeded on the paper by the new president [Hedwig Michel].

There is nothing like giving carping critics a chance to show what they would do under similar circumstances. My successor as editor knew next to nothing about tropical horticulture. Subscribers dropped away by the hundreds and within ten months the paper folded up after 42 years of successful publication. The large printing plant burned to the ground two months later. Thus was Florida's only horticultural paper needlessly wrecked by carping critics who thought they knew better how to run it. (2:514-5)



American Eagle Publicity Stand

The burning of the printing plant was also the end of *The Flaming Sword*, never to burn again. But in 1965, *The American Eagle* was revived. It resumed its publication under the editorship of Hedwig Michel, the same woman who failed so drastically in this role almost twenty years earlier. It was again a horticultural conservation periodical. Issued monthly, it contained the byline "For the Wise Use of Natural Resource." It has done well and, in fact, it is still being published even today [1982]. It has retained a subscription of upwards toward 1000.



The Koreshan group, in 1967, had only two members. Hedwig Michel was President. Vesta Newcomb, the other member, was then 88 years old. In 1963 the group deeded the Koreshan property, 80 acres of unmortgaged property, to the state of Florida "as a gift to the people." In return they only asked that all living members would be allowed to remain in their dwellings for the rest of their lives and be allowed free access to all Koreshan buildings. Neither of the women would reveal how many other members there were, if any, in Estero and other parts of the world.

The Koreshan State Park officially opened in April of 1967. It initially provided a camper's park with thirty overnight campsites. Water, picnic tables, and electrical hookups were available. There were restrooms with showers and a children's playground. Nearby, 25 acres of subtropical gardens grew, gardens that had been planned and developed with great care by the early Koreshans. Tours of these gardens were scheduled three times daily.



Visitors could occasionally catch a glimpse of Miss Michel strolling about the grounds. She resided in the “Planetary Court.” Her living quarters were on the second floor. The first floor served as guest rooms for visitors to the settlement. It was furnished as it was when the structure was originally constructed.



Hedwig Michel was born in Frankfort, Germany. She grew up in a big house of German-Jewish parents. They were the owners and administrators of a prosperous children’s school. She was too active a child to prepare herself for the University as her parents had wished. Instead her inclination led her to apply for a position at the Frankfort Municipal Theater, where, after employment as a secretary, she quickly rose to the high rank of dramaturgist and manager. As such she helped to initiate and establish the Open-Air Theater. At the time she was also writing for the *Franfurter Zeitung*. A short Christmas drama was also written by her for which Paul Hindemith wrote the incidental music.

Botany was another of her passions and she examined the plant life of many foreign countries while on extended trips. While visiting Mexico in 1923 she grew fond of the many cacti indigenous to the area and hence began to specialize in such plants.

When the Nazis came into power she was forced out of the theater. She was allowed to begin an orchestra for professional musicians who, like herself, had lost their positions. The orchestra was conducted by William Steinberg and was eventually to become the Boris Huberman Orchestra of Palestine.

Some time after her founding of the orchestra she assumed, at the order of the Nazi government, the position of head mistress of a widely known Jewish children’s school – Dr. Heinmann’s Institute. The school occupied a 17-room home. In addition, she instructed 45 pupils for several years, the student’s ages ranging from 4 to 61. She instructed them in the language and customs of the countries to which the students were to immigrate.

Shortly before World War II erupted, she traveled to America to find a person to teach English and mathematics at the school. While conferring with prominent Pennsylvanian Quakers she received a letter of application from a German back home. His qualifications were high. He had been a World War I hero, wounded in action. Now incapable of hard physical labor, he had devoted his life to the study of mathematics. Miss Michel returned to Frankfort and hired this



slim, dark-eyed, handsome man. He arrived at the school with his young and pretty wife. His name was Peter Bender.

Soon Bender was relating to Hedwig how through his mathematical studies he had been led to the belief in the earth's concavity. He encouraged her to read Cyrus Teed's *Cellular Cosmogony*, a copy of which was housed in the Worms and Rhein Library. Bender had been communicating with the Koreshans in Estero and his long and persuasive talks with Hedwig intrigued her. Soon she believed. (And it was not too long before Bender was espousing the belief that he was Koresh, reincarnated, as he assumed an august, authoritative identity!)

As a Jew, Hedwig was forced to flee Germany. Bender was able to obtain for her an American immigration visa. He wrote to the Unity in Estero to see if they could use a woman of her remarkable abilities. They responded with a resounding, "Yes!"

Luckily Hedwig obtained passage on an American ship. It was, in fact, the last American ship to bring Jewish refugees through the regular process of entry.

Fleeing Germany, she arrived in Estero in 1940. There were then just 36 members. The colony emerged from World War II firmly established financially. The Koreshans supported themselves by farming and fishing. Yet, by 1948, only twelve members were left. In February 1948, out of the Unity's upheaval already described, Hedwig Michel became the Unity's new president.

Hedwig Michel had up to this time lived a full and active life. What did she think of the slower paced Estero?

"It is a good life. I like taking care of the old people and I love this country. At first many people were suspicious of me. They could not understand why I whose great activity had been the theater would be living here in this quiet spot. But I am happy here." (6:285-6)

THE END



# KING KORESH

## The Man From Inside the Earth

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