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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of

Robert Lynn Rainard

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the Master of Arts degree  
at the convocation of December, 1974.

Thesis Committee:

Professor John M. Belohlavek  
Thesis Supervisor

Professor George H. Mayer  
Member

Professor Cecil B. Currey  
Member

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY

THE KORESHAN UNITY

by

Robert Lynn Rainard

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of History  
in  
The University of South Florida

December, 1974

Thesis supervisor: Professor John M. Belohlavek

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## INTRODUCTION

Oscar Wilde, the nineteenth century Irish playwright and satirist, once remarked that no map of the world is worth a glance that does not have "Utopia" on it. Certainly, the world has been generously endowed with people who attempted to create perfect societies. The pervasiveness of the pattern invites the serious student of history to seek an explanation. The most obvious one is that man has dreamed of utopia since he discovered his ability to dream. At times man has written about utopia as a means of political criticism such as Sir Thomas More did in the sixteenth century. At other times writings have been "enthusiastic" and have centered upon chiliastic expectations. From the ancient Essenes to the modern day Children of God, man has dreamed and sought a basis of reality for these dreams. More than anyone else though, Americans have dreamed.<sup>1</sup>

With the discovery and colonization of the continents in the western hemisphere, a whole new horizon was opened for the settlement of utopian communities. Whether it was the Puritans seeking political freedom, or the people of the Ephrata Cloister seeking religious purification and social separation, North America provided a haven for utopians from the start. Colonial America offered subtle protection since it was surrounded by a moat. With the advent of the United States, communalists found democracy advantageous to their growth. With an

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<sup>1</sup>Vernon L. Parrington, Jr., American Dreams (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), p. VII.

unending supply of cheap lands and a limitless source of adherents, utopia had a prospective future in the American forest.

One of the most productive periods of enthusiastic fervor in United States history occurred during the early 1840's. The Oneida Perfectionists embarked on their communal experiment in Madison County, New York; the Millerites prepared for the judgment day; Ann Lee's Shakers were expanding their communal enterprise; and Joseph Smith's Mormons were experimenting with the idea of communal living. The center of activity for enthusiasm was located in western New York, where the land was "burnt-over" with religious fervor. Whitney R. Cross, a present day historian, suggests that the economic, social, and religious inheritance of the area lowered its resistance, and made it susceptible to enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup>

Koreshan Unity, one of the movements that emerged from the area, is in many ways an archetype utopian community: communistic and millennialistic, as well as originating in the "burned-over" district of New York. Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed, the group's founder, was a youth in western New York during the 1840's. As with many of his contemporaries, Teed was "infected" by the fervor which had spread so rapidly across western New York. Following the Civil War, this infection manifested itself in the form of Dr. Teed's "illumination." He displayed the characteristics of a charismatic leader, and his followers were typical of those caught up in religious enthusiasm. It is with Dr. Teed's utopian experiment that our interest lies.

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<sup>2</sup>Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (New York: Harper and Row, 1965). Cross deals extensively with the religious movements of western New York.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ILLUMINATION OF A DREAM

Cyrus Reed Teed, the Founder of Koreshanity, was the ultimate product of the chance convergence of two migrants in a migratory society. At the turn of the nineteenth century, settlement beyond New York's Appalachian Mountains began. From New England, pioneers traveled into western New York to settle on the rich lands where they could farm and raise families. Besides the standard family needs, settlers brought with them the Yankee inheritance of religious intensity. Whether Congregationalist, Baptist, or Methodist they felt a genuine concern for their relationship with God. Others though, were also concerned for the pioneers' souls, and so missionaries were sent from the various New England states to carry the "Word of God" to the settlers.<sup>1</sup>

With the cessation of hostilities of the War of 1812 came religious upheavals which "surpassed all previous experiences." The missionaries of the area were in constant demand. One such missionary was Oliver Tuttle who had traveled from Connecticut in 1809 to preach to the settlers. He had taken a wife a year later and settled in Utica. Later he moved to Meredith, Delaware County, New York where he raised a family.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District, ch. II.

<sup>2</sup>Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District, p. 11; George Frederick Tuttle, The Descendants of William and Elizabeth Tuttle Who came from Old to New England in 1635, and Settled in New Haven in 1639 (Ruthland, Vt.: Tuttle and Company, 1883), pp. 255-257.

At Meredith the Tuttle's raised four daughters and one son. The children grew up in the midst of the New York revivals and thus they were surely influenced by the enthusiasm. In April of 1836 the Tuttle's youngest daughter, Sarah Ann, married Jesse Teed, an "inventor" from Moravia, New York with a Yankee heritage similar to the Tuttle's.<sup>3</sup>

Jesse and Sarah Tuttle Teed settled down to farm and raise a family in New York. Their home in Delaware County was on the periphery of the burned-over district of the western portion of the state. It has been reported that Jesse Teed was a successful country doctor, but considering his wide variety of vocational enterprises, most of which concentrated on industries, this seems doubtful. Cyrus Reed was the second of eight children. He displayed oratorical powers as a young man, so it was often suggested he enter the ministry, preferably of the family's denomination - Baptist.<sup>4</sup>

At an early age Cyrus dropped out of school to work as a driver on the Erie Canal. The probable cause for his leaving school was to help his ever growing family meet expenses.<sup>5</sup> But whether his family needed the money or not, Delaware County held a poor record in both adult literacy and common school attendance.<sup>6</sup> There was no social pressure nor mandatory regulations to keep a child in school. Cyrus, then,

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<sup>3</sup>George Frederick Tuttle, The Descendants of Tuttle, pp. 255-257.

<sup>4</sup>"Sure he is the Prophet Cyrus," The New York Times (hereafter cited NYT), August 10, 1884, p. 1; Laurence W. Bubbett, Biographical Sketch of Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed (Koresh) (Estereo, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, N.D.), p. 1; John S. Duss, The Harmonists (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, Inc., 1972), p. 297; George Frederick Tuttle, The Descendants of Tuttle, pp. 255-257.

<sup>5</sup>Bubbett, Sketch, p. 1; Duss, Harmonists, p. 297.

<sup>6</sup>Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District, pp. 91 and 100.

fit into a common group of children who left school in order to earn their own keep.

After working on the canal for a number of years, Teed began to look for a career. From Utica Teed's uncle, Dr. Samuel F. Teed, invited him to travel to that city and study medicine. Teed, having been interested for some time in the medical profession, immediately accepted the offer and moved there with his young bride, Delia M. Rowe Teed. Miss Rowe, who was Teed's second cousin, was married to him on April 13, 1859. In 1862, two years after the birth of their only child, Arthur Douglas Teed, the Teeds moved to New York City.<sup>7</sup> There he attended the Eclectic Medical College of New York, to complete his education.

Interrupting his education, Teed enlisted in the Union Army. Teed's purpose for joining the army can only be conjectured. The two strongest possibilities were patriotism and fear of conscription. Considering Teed's short service of fifteen months, as well as his hesitation to enlist until 1863, it might be supposed that he volunteered for the service so that he might enter the medical corps and thus avoid being drafted into the infantry. Whatever his purpose for entering the army, he was able to secure a position with a field hospital where he served "honorably as an army physician and surgeon."<sup>8</sup> At the end of the war, Teed returned to civilian life and resumed his studies at the Eclectic Medical College which emphasized the medicinal properties of herbs and roots. Upon graduation, Teed, his wife and their son traveled

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<sup>7</sup>W. Stanley Hanson, "A Resume of the Life of Dr. Cyrus Teed and Followers," Fort Myers Press (hereafter cited FMP), December 31, 1908, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 297; Hanson, "A Resume of Teed," p. 4.



to Utica to begin his practice as a medical doctor. In his spare time he began to experiment in what he termed elector-alchemy, seeking a scientific means to immortality.<sup>9</sup>

In the autumn of 1869, Teed intensified his studies. He was convinced that there was a way to direct and regulate "human life forces," and it was up to men in the medical profession to find the key to this concept. He based his theory on the alchemical principle of transmutation. Within this principle he found the key to the conquest of human suffering and disease. Then one night, he discovered the way to transform one metal into another, by "transforming matter of one kind to its equivalent 'energy', and in reducing this 'energy' through polaric influences, to matter of another kind."<sup>10</sup> In this discovery he claimed to be able to transform a plentiful base metal into precipitation of golden dust. He had found the "Philosophers Stone." After a search by mankind for thousands of years for a means to transform stone to gold, Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed believed he had found success. Of course, the gold was visible only through the most powerful microscope; but still, he had found the key to man's great search. With this great power he realized that he could cause to appear his "highest idea of creative beauty,"<sup>11</sup> and his "true conception of her who must constitute the environing form of the masculinity and Fatherhood of Being. . ."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Bubbett, Sketch, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Illumination of Koresh: Marvelous Experience of the Great Alchemist at Utica, New York (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, N.D.), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Koresh, Illumination, p. 5. Certainly Teed's optimism about being able to call forth his "creative beauty" must be seen from the standpoint that he is looking back at his "Illumination."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-5.

Following his discovery of the "Fatherhood of Being," Teed began to concentrate, trying to materialize his concept:<sup>13</sup>

Suddenly, I experienced a relaxation at the occiput or back part of the brain, and a peculiar buzzing tension at the forehead or sincuput. Succeeding this was a soft tension about the organs of the brain called the lyra, cruva, pinealis, and conarium. There gradually spread from the center of my brain to the extremities of my body, and, apparently to me, into the auraic sphere of my being, miles outside of my body, a vibration so gentle, soft, and dulciferous that I was impressed to lay myself upon the bosom of this gently oscillating ocean of magnetic and spiritual ecstasy. I realized myself gently yielding to the impulse of reclining upon vibratory sea of this, my newly found delight. My every thought but one had departed from the contemplation of earthly and material things. I had but a lingering, vague remembrance of natural consciousness and desire.

In the impulse of that last remnant of material thought I put forth, as I supposed, my material arm and hand to experience some familiar touch - but there was no response. . . I started in alarm, for I felt that I had departed from all material things, perhaps forever.<sup>14</sup>

There began to merge various shades of gold and purple. As they began to focalize, there appeared the ultimate beauty in the feminine gender with "golden tresses of profusely luxuriant growth over her shoulders." Dressed in a gown of purple and gold, she was standing upon a silvery crescent, and in her hand was Mercury's Caduceus.<sup>15</sup>

The "Goddess" described herself as the "environment" of which Teed had become a part. Teed had lost his physical identity, and had become one with the goddess. From the union or "quickenning" of Teed and his "Mother and Bride," the "Sons of God" were to come into existence. In the course of the vision, the divine being disclosed that She

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



had watched Teed pass through history, and had then clothed him "in another body, and watched him therein."<sup>16</sup> "I have nurtured thee through countless embodiments," and "I have seen thee as thou has wandered through the labyrinthine coilings of times spiritual trans-migrations."<sup>17</sup> The principle of reincarnation was unfolded before Teed, and became a major theme in Teed's philosophy.<sup>18</sup>

At this time it may serve us to examine several passages within Teed's descriptions, both to see Teed's view of himself, and his view of history. Whether Teed manufactured this vision to legitimize his claims to divinity, or believed that it was an authentic manifestation of higher reality, he acted like a man who possessed truth and converted it into a personal philosophy.

In any case, Teed claimed that in the latest of his divine incarnations he had been elevated by the Goddess to the "pinnacle of thy celestial aspiration."<sup>19</sup> He was the incarnate embodiment of Jesus Christ, therefore he had attained a greater state of perfection than the Nazarene. Having told him of this state of perfection, the Goddess added, "the broken continuity of perpetual dying, is gone from thee forever."<sup>20</sup> Thus Teed concluded that he had reached the pinnacle of perfection, and was standing on the threshold of the new millennium. History, to Teed, took the cyclical form, repetition always advancing

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 9

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 8, 9, and 11.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

towards a greater state of perfection. In the Hegelian sense, Teed was standing at the end of history, looking back at man's past endeavors. The aggregation of human endeavors had advanced man to the point where, through Teed's "quickenings" of his "Mother and Bride", the "Sons of God" would be created and the new millennium would arrive.<sup>21</sup>

As with most charismatic religious leaders, Teed was able to summon his deity, and question her about her essence. He asked if she was the "only and highest Majesty. . . the Father and Son but one in three."<sup>22</sup> She replied that he had spoken the truth, for she was the Father, Son, and Mother in one - this concept shall be discussed in depth at a later point - and she concluded with the promise that in the future she would walk by Teed's side in mortal society. This experience led Teed to the realization that he had uncovered the "mystic law" which caused the theocracies on Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus. Metempsychosis or transmigration of the soul, and its correlate thought of absorption into Nirvana, had stimulated Teed's desires to "become identical with the Truth who made all things with his creative and mysterious 'energy'."<sup>23</sup>

That autumn in 1869, Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed, of Utica, New York, had discovered the key to cosmological understanding, the "Philosophers Stone." He had been instructed that he was to establish the rebinding of God to man. Under the guise of his new name and commission,

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 7, 8 and 9.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 12 and 13.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 14 and 15.

"Koresh,<sup>24</sup> the Lord's shepherd, messenger of the Covenant,"<sup>25</sup> Dr. Teed set out to accomplish this rebinding. His first goal, which took several years, was to gain converts. Owing to his persistence at doing so, and his constant preaching of his theories to his medical patients, he found it necessary to move frequently, for he found his patients unmoved by his revelations, and all too often they failed to return to visit the "crazy doctor." Then, sometime after his move to Binghamton, New York, the city where Mrs. Teed's sister, Mrs. Wickham lived, he became acquainted with another physician, Dr. A.W.K. Andrews, and his wife, Virginia. In Dr. Andrews, Teed was to find his first convert, a loyal disciple, and a source of funds when needed.<sup>26</sup>

In the early 1870's, Drs. Teed and Andrews began a correspondence with the Harmony Society at Economy, Pennsylvania. They were invited to Economy in 1873, where they were entertained by Father Henrici and the Board of Trustees, the community's leading officials. The community served as a model to Teed in that he followed Economy's lead in adopting celibacy and communism, and his visit was to have a lasting affect on the Harmonites. A few years later Teed's name was involved in a clash

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<sup>24</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 298; James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 197 [the Hebrew equivalent of Cyrus is Koresh. . . meaning 'shepherd'.]; William Linton, "Taped Conversation with Lynn Rainard," September 6, 1973. Mr. Linton is a devout Koreshan who lived at the Koreshan Unity in 1918. His father was a disciple of Teed's.

<sup>25</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 298; Isaiah 44:28-45:1 (K.J.V.). Teed interpreted the Koresh of the Scriptures as being a future figure rather than Koresh (Cyrus in the Revised Standard Version) King of Persia.

<sup>26</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; Claude J. Rahn, "A Brief Outline of the Life of Dr. Cyrus R. Teed and the Koreshan Unity," American Eagle (hereafter cited AE), August, 1973, p. 1; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

between John Duss, president of Economy, and Fredrick Feucht, a leading figure of the group, in their battle for control of the group. It was reported that Duss admired Teed to the extent that he sent his niece to live in Teed's community house in Chicago.<sup>27</sup>

About 1873, while Dr. Teed was visiting the Harmonists, Mrs. Teed's health began to fail, and so she and their son, Arthur, went to live with her sister, Mrs. Wickham, in Binghamton. Here she and her son remained till 1885 when she died. Unfortunately there are no records to reveal Dr. Teed's reaction to his wife's death, for he had traveled to New York City to spread his "truths." Arthur Teed was sent to the home of a Mrs. Streeter to live after his mother's death. Mrs. Streeter became both the financial and spiritual impetus to Arthur's later art studies in Italy.<sup>28</sup>

As Teed traveled throughout western New York evangelizing, he found the need to reach proselytes more efficiently. His first effort at the publication of a religious newspaper came with the first edition of the "Herald of the New Covenant of New Jerusalem" of which a total of five issues were published as funds became available. Published in the town of Sandy Creek, New York, it served as a means for Teed to propagate his ideas while still practicing medicine in the winter of 1879. But Sandy Creek was not an advantageous location in which to begin the world's salvation, so in 1880 Koresh and some of his disciples went to Moravia to establish their first communistic home. In Moravia, Teed's family offered him the management of the mop factory which they

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<sup>27</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; Bubbett, Sketch, p. 2; Karl J. R. Arndt, George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs: 1847-1916 (Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickerson University Press, 1971), p. 231.

<sup>28</sup>Rahn, "Outline," p. 1.

owned, possibly as an attempt to draw his attention away from the religion his father never accepted. At the Moravian experiment Teed's associates were: his sister Emma and her husband Albert E. Norton, his brother Oliver, Mr. Albert Nerton, Mrs. Ellen M. Woolsey, Mrs. Sarah E. Paterson, and Mrs. Ada D. Welton with her two small daughters. Within two years the adventure ended in failure, probably due to economic problems as well as pressure from the Moravian community when Mrs. Woolsey left her husband to join Teed's group. After the dissolution of the association Cyrus and his brother, Oliver, who graduated from the Philadelphia National Eclectic Medical Association in 1868, set up a medical office in Syracuse, New York.<sup>29</sup>

In Syracuse, Dr. Teed developed a lucrative practice. He and his brother opened an office on West Onondaga Street, "one of the most aristocratic streets in the city."<sup>30</sup> The brothers Teed practiced their eclectic medicine, and Cyrus preached his religious doctrine with a fair amount of success. The "best people" in town were their clientele, until charges were made accusing Teed of having obtained money from a Mrs. Charles Cobb of Syracuse, and her mother Mrs. Willis of Camden, New York, under the pretense that he was the second Christ. Possibly this was just a case of Mrs. Cobb losing interest in Dr. Teed, and trying to force a refund of her money. This event led to Dr. Teed leaving his most successful business adventure and moving to New York City where "hard times" forced him to seek a loan from Dr. Andrews to carry on.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Rahn, "Outline," p. 2; Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; "Prophet Cyrus," p. 1; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>30</sup>"Prophet Cyrus," p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>"Prophet Cyrus," p. 1; Rahn, "Outline," p. 2.



Teed had made the acquaintance with Mrs. Thankful H. Hale during his travelings in New York City. She had been deeply impressed with his teachings. In September of 1886, she was involved with the convention of the National Association of Mental Science, a group which believed in mental healing. She was able to persuade the group to invite Dr. Teed to speak in Chicago, and to send him the funds for the trip. The convention was certainly grateful for Mrs. Hale's guidance, for after hearing Dr. Teed's presentation before the convention, which unfortunately has not been preserved, the suggestion was made that Teed be elected its president. The decision was unanimous. The Mental Science association had found a leader, and Dr. Teed had found a ready made organized following with a definite affinity with his teachings. Within one month, Teed reshaped the group and had formed the "World's College of Life." By June of 1887 he had trained a teaching staff of fourteen women and awarded them their "Psychic and Pneumic Therapeutic Doctorates."<sup>32</sup>

What sort of people followed Dr. Teed in Chicago? As R. A. Knox, a noted historian of religious movements, suggests, "enthusiasm is a disease, not of the starved, but of the full-fed organism. . ."<sup>33</sup> Who were these full-fed individuals who found leadership in Dr. Teed, and who helped create a college at two and four College Place on the south side of Chicago? Perhaps it would be wise to remember that Dr. Teed attracted "the best people" in Syracuse, and that he was endorsed by the Pastor of

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<sup>32</sup>Hedwig Michel, "The Koreshan Unity Settlement," AE, September, 1974, p. 1; Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; Bubbett, "Sketch," p. 2; "The Koreshan Leader Wins," FMP, July 1, 1897, p. 4; Cyrus R. Teed, Metaphysics (Chicago: World's College of Life, hand dated June 11, 1887), p. 4; Hedwig Michel, "The Pioneer Settlement," AE, May, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Ronald A. Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 105.

the First Methodist Episcopal Church there. In remarking about the various people involved in enthusiastic religions whom he met, John Duss of the Harmony Society stated that he had met few who were as agreeable or as real as Dr. Teed.<sup>34</sup>

By far, the majority of those who joined Teed's group were women, and often women who were frustrated with marriage. The Koreshans, those who followed Koresh, were made up largely of middle-class educated people, "intellectual and refined people, students of human ethics with a sincere desire to better the condition of those worse off than themselves."<sup>35</sup> The immediate following in Chicago of his associates varied in number, ranging from fifty to one hundred and ten in 1893. They were an extremely cohesive group, for even in the face of police investigations caused by a rival, no scandals developed within his original Chicago group.<sup>36</sup>

Koresh is described by the Chicago press as a "smooth shaven man of fifty-four, whose brown, restless eyes glow and burn like live coals."<sup>37</sup> He dressed in a black Prince Edward coat that hung to his knees, "his immaculate linen glistened with unusual luster amid its somber surroundings."<sup>38</sup> His oratorical gifts had been praised since his days in Delaware County. This ability was put to use at lectures he presented to the

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<sup>34</sup>"Teed Sued for \$100,000," NYT, June 10, 1892, p. 6; Duss, Harmonists, p. 302.

<sup>35</sup>"Dr. Teed's New Jerusalem," FMP (reprinted from the Chicago Herald, April 26, 1894), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup>Vesta Newcomb, "Conversation with Lynn Rainard," March, 1973. "Miss Vesta" is the oldest remaining member living at the Unity at Estero. She has been a member for eighty years; "The Koreshans Hit Back," FMP (originally published in the Chicago Journal, November 15, 1898), p. 1.

<sup>37</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>38</sup>"Koreshan Wins," p. 1.

public. In his lectures he would first present Koreshan scientific cosmological belief, both theory and practice, using the rectilineator or straight line argument to prove we lived inside a hollow earth; then he would discuss the group's religious beliefs. Control of his followers was exerted through the different managers of the organization, for Teed held no official position.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps we can understand Dr. Teed better by considering him as a charismatic religious enthusiast. He had an air about him which persuaded people to accept his beliefs. He had the ability to captivate his audience, as he did in his speech to the Mental Science Association. His followers gave him their faith in toto. Once a young man, Lin Linton, was asked by an angry group of men at a street rally who he thought Teed was. Lin replied, "the Almighty God!" Over and over again members showed Teed this sort of total commitment. In order to command this belief though, the charismatic figure must also believe in himself.<sup>40</sup>

The Chicago Tribune once made the observation that Teed was undoubtedly sincere, and that "how firmly convinced he is of the ultimate triumph of his new doctrine, and of his own Christ-nature, is shown by the fact that he has started a new era. . . Anno Koresh."<sup>41</sup> A zealous religious figure, such as Teed, whether or not he was what he claimed, will display a certain trait. Self-confidence is a common characteristic of religious leaders. Through constant preaching, religious thought and writing, the figure will lose any subtle distinction between himself and

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<sup>39</sup>Bubbett, Sketch, p. 1; "He is Messiah No Longer," FMP, June 1, 1902, p. 1; "New Jerusalem," p. 1.

<sup>40</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>41</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4.



his deity. They merge into one being. An example of this trait could be made with any number of figures, but an easy parallel would be James Nayler of England. He had a striking resemblance to pictures of the Nazarene; through his constant preaching of the scriptures as a Wesleyan disciple (he was a close friend of John Wesley) he lost any ability to differentiate between himself and his concept of Christ. They merged into one; thus he and Christ were one.<sup>42</sup>

Like Nayler, Ann Lee and sundry others, Teed was "convinced. . . of his own Christ-nature."<sup>43</sup> For "it is the experience of some mystics that their own personality seems more and more to disappear, more and more to be replaced by the divine presence dwelling in them, identifying themselves with it. . . The prophet. . . come(s) to think that he (or she) is Jesus Christ. . ."<sup>44</sup>

While this self-styled divinity was working with his minority religious group in Chicago, he also became involved with various other communities across the country. He traveled extensively establishing branches of his Chicago community. While in California he discussed with Thomas Lake Harris, founder of the Brotherhood of New Life, the possibility of joining all California utopia communities into one. Frederick Evans of the Shakers spoke with Teed concerning the union of the Shakers

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<sup>42</sup>Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 160. Knox discusses many of the problems and characteristics of the charismatic leader.

<sup>43</sup>Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup>Knox, Enthusiasm, ch. III, p. 559; Karl J. R. Arndt, George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965). Arndt does an excellent job detailing Rapp's mysticism; Charles Samuel Braden, These Also Believe (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), pp. 9-12.

and Koreshans,<sup>45</sup> then John Duss of the Harmony Society and Teed discussed the possibility of the unification of all American utopian communities,<sup>46</sup> but such negotiations between Teed and Duss had major repercussions at Economy. Duss was charged with preaching Teed's doctrines in a suit filed against him.<sup>47</sup> Pittsburgh papers read "Teed will Lead". . . and "Trustee Duss is Teed's Tool,"<sup>48</sup> and a poem was published in the pair's honor:

Alas! Alas!  
 It comes to pass  
 That o'er those simple folk  
 A monster low'rs  
 Whose evil powers  
 Would sear a heart of oak  
 With ghoulish greed  
 Messiah Teed  
 Abhorrence now excites;  
 He'd fain assault  
 The money vaults  
 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.  
 Don't aid the plans  
 Of charlatans  
 Or stir up faction fights  
 And none can say  
 You're in the way  
 Among the Harmonites.<sup>49</sup>

Dr. Teed was unsuccessful uniting the American communes, but he did set up several branches of his community at San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Denver, while raising large funds for the Chicago community.<sup>50</sup>

What did Koresh offer his followers? What security did he present them that they could not find outside of Teed's community? Like the Puritans before him, Teed tendered those who would follow "sainthood."

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<sup>45</sup>Edward D. Andrews, The People Called the Shakers (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), p. 222.

<sup>46</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 297.

<sup>47</sup>Arndt, Rapp's Successors, p. 230.

<sup>48</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 301.

<sup>49</sup>Duss, Harmonists, p. 302.

<sup>50</sup>Arndt, Rapp's Successors, p. 231. Dr. Teed left Economy with a \$750 donation from Duss and the Harmonites; "New Jerusalem," p. 4. Teed left California with over \$60,000 in donations.

Revelation refers to the "hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads,"<sup>51</sup> standing upon Mount Zion. Teed extended the number to encompass his idea of the "biunal" or ambisexual god. There would be two hundred and eighty-eight thousand saints to rise at the new millennium. One hundred and forty-four thousand males, and one hundred and forty-four thousand females, who would pair up to form a "new race of men." There would be one hundred and forty-four thousand "gods" standing upon Mount Zion at the end of the world. Those who followed in Teed's righteousness would be assured of being one of the saints, or rather one of the new race of men as promised by the goddess in Teed's illumination.<sup>52</sup>

In order to teach people his doctrine and to train ministers and missionaries to propagate his ideas, Koresh set up the Koreshan University, May 31, 1893, in Chicago, Illinois. As Koresh stated, "Our growth as an organic body has been slow because of the condition of the material we had to build with. It has to be prepared, disciplined, corrected. . ."<sup>53</sup> The object of the University was the preparation of such material:

for teaching and giving general instruction in the common English branches, the higher branches of literature and Modern Classics. . . Modern Languages. . . Scientific research and Koreshan theology. For the purpose of educating and training Koreshan Ministers, Missionaries, teachers, and Shepherds. . .<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Rev. 14:1. (R.S.V.)

<sup>52</sup>Lord Chester [Cyrus R. Teed], The Great Red Dragon (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1916), p. 134; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>53</sup>Hedwig Michel, "Settlement," p. 2.

<sup>54</sup>Koreshan University Certificate, May 31, 1893.

The University's purpose was to train people in Koreshan theology and science so they could go out and teach. The directors of the University for its first year, all of whom had previously been members of the Mental Science group, were Eveline Bubbett, Mary C. Mills, Bertha S. Boomer, C. J. Maclaughlin, George W. Hunt, J. H. Bubbett, and C. Viola Marshall.<sup>55</sup>

The first real home for the community was found in 1894. Taking the name Beth-Orphal, the community moved onto "a tract of fine land and residences, comprising eight and one-half acres, and situated on Ninety-ninth Street and Oak. . ."<sup>56</sup> Here they had a spacious old mansion, seven cottages and one office building which had formerly been a huge barn. At Beth-Orphal the Koreshan doctrine could unfold. One hundred ten followers of Koresh, three-fourths of whom were females, could find utopia in Chicago, and practice their communal beliefs.<sup>57</sup>

In the office building the Koreshans set up their printing press, which had for a number of years operated on Englewood Avenue under the management of Eveline Bubbett. The oscillating type engine of the printing press was an invention of a Koreshan; the community owned its patent. The various papers and pamphlets coming off the press taught Koresh's ideas, and criticized the non-Koreshan world for its blindness in the face of the truth.<sup>58</sup>

As the years passed, the Koreshans came more and more under fire by the "subsidized press" for their economic and religious views. Teed

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

was accused of keeping a harem at the Washington Heights home, and the Chicago Herald called him the Koreshan "absolute, irresponsible, immaculate and inviolate high muck-a-muck. . ."59 The war of words increased in intensity as Teed fired volleys back at the subsidized press through the Flaming Sword.60

Several suits with Teed as the defendant added to the criticisms of him. Koresh had a certain attraction for women; the Chicago papers said he "mesmerized" the opposite sex. Women always constituted over one-half the group, with the percentage fluctuating between sixty-six and seventy-five percent. This attraction he had for women had its repercussions.61 It was difficult for a man who did not accept Koreshan ideology to agree with his wife's idea of joining the Koreshans. Not only did wives create a hardship for their husbands by taking property and money into the community, but they also had to vow to live a celibate existence. Such a disagreeable situation for several husbands led to suits against Cyrus Teed for the alienation of their wives' affections.62

One such case was the suit filed by Sidney C. Miller, President of the National Publishing Company, asking for damages of one hundred thousand dollars against Teed. Miller claimed that Koresh represented to his wife that he would make her the goddess Minerva--a frequent accusation against Teed--if she would donate all her possessions and be converted.63

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.; The Flaming Sword was the official Koreshan periodical.

<sup>61</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4; "Teed Sued," p. 6; "Koreshan Wins," p. 1.

<sup>62</sup>"Teed Sued," p. 6; "Koreshan Wins," p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>"Teed Sued," p. 6.



A similar case was that of Thomas Cole of Chicago, claiming that his wife's association with Teed led to the alienation of her affections. Once again, damages of one hundred thousand dollars were asked for in compensation.<sup>64</sup> The cases have interesting outcomes. Cole's suit was decided in Dr. Teed's favor--utopia indeed had a friend in American justice. The Miller case was settled out of court, the compromise being Miller's wife was allowed to remain with the community, but in return the Koreshans had to return the property that Mrs. Miller had donated to the group. Evidently in both cases the personal property was more important than their wives' affections.<sup>65</sup>

Although the courts were ruling in the community's favor, the notoriety received due to the suits brought renewed harrassment to the community. The neighbors lived in amity with the utopians, but outside of their community neighborhood there was continual harrassment by both the general public and the Chicago police force. There were several near riots resulting from hostile receptions of street side preaching by the Koreshan missionaries. Several cases of police harrassment were reported when arrests were made for preaching without a license, even after the license was presented to the arresting officer; but most reports indicate that in the final analysis the police in Chicago treated the Koreshans judiciously. With intensified pressure against the Koreshans, it became obvious that no longer would Chicago serve as an acceptable home for the community. The search then began to locate a new home outside the city for the utopian experiment.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>"Koreshan Wins," p. 1.

<sup>65</sup>"Teed Sued," p. 6; "Koreshan Wins," p. 1; "New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>66</sup>Linton, "Taped Conversation"; "New Jerusalem," p. 4; "Koreshans Hit Back," p. 1.

## CHAPTER II

## UTOPIA IN SEARCH OF A HOME

Chicago had been fertile ground for the propagation of Dr. Teed's doctrines. His philosophy had taken root and flowered in the form of the Koreshan Unity with the tripartite organization being the Society Arch Triumphant, the College of Life, and the Koreshan Cooperative. Chicago, though, had begun to resist utopia's growth, and so preparations were begun to find a new home for the community. The most advantageous move was considered to be an alliance with an old established community. Correspondence was begun with several of the more important religious utopian societies in the United States, and Teed began negotiations with various communities.

Three groups with which the Koreshans made contact and discussed the possibility of unification were the Brotherhood of the New Life, the Harmony Society and the Shakers. California showed the greatest possibility for settlement in the 1890's. The state had the most rapidly growing accumulation of original religious groups in the nation. Teed spoke to the leader of the California based group, the Brotherhood of the New Life, Thomas Lake Harris, about the amalgamation of several California religious communities and the Koreshans. The probable cause for Harris's rejection of the proposal was that both enthusiast leaders had become convinced of their own Christ-nature, and therefore no agreement could be reached as to which man would lead the unified group. Unable to join

with the California utopias, Teed made other attempts to unify with established communes.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the 1890's he began to negotiate with both the Shakers and the Harmonites. Elder Frederick Evans of the Shaker Society contacted Teed about the possibility of the two group's amalgamation. Unfortunately there are no records left concerning their correspondence and nothing ever materialized beyond the overture. The unrest created at Economy, Pennsylvania when Teed began in earnest to talk with John Duss of the Harmonists concerning the possibility of unification, has previously been discussed. The barrage of criticism which Duss was subjected to convinced him that a union of the two groups would be unwise. The mysticism of George Rapp, founder of the Harmonists, could live only in the German group's native language, whereas Teed's revelation was peculiar to the English language. The two groups ceased any consideration of unification. John Duss, however, never ended his correspondence with Teed. Even after Teed and the Koreshans left for their new home in Florida, Duss kept in contact with them. With the prospect of merging with an established communistic order fading, the Koreshans had to search new frontiers for a home. Koresh then turned towards his Divine Being for direction.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Teed and three members of his "inner court" left Chicago in 1893 in search for "the point where the vitellus of the alchemico-organic

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<sup>1</sup>Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). Chapter 1 deals in general with the extent of the religious fervor in California. For the Harris-Teed talks, see page 1; Edward D. Andrews, The People Called the Shakers, p. 222; Arndt, Rapp's Successors, pp. 231, 232 and 376; Duss, The Harmonists, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup>Andrews, The People Called the Shakers, p. 222; Arndt, Rapp's Successors, pp. 224, 231, 232 and 376; Duss, The Harmonists, pp. 286 and 297; G. W. Gatewood, On Florida's Coconut Coast (Punta Gorda, Florida: Herald Publishing Company, 1944), p. 136.



cosmos specifically determines." Mrs. Annie G. Ordway, Mrs. L. M. Boomer, and Mary Mills accompanied Dr. Teed in his pilgrimage. Each night the group sought in devotions guidance for the following day's journey. Spiritual direction "guided" them into Florida and to their ultimate destination. In January of 1894, Teed and his cortege reached Punta Rassa, Florida, a small settlement at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River approximately one hundred and thirty miles south of Tampa and about twenty miles west of Fort Myers, on the state's west coast.<sup>3</sup>

At Punta Rassa the Koreshans met an elderly German named Gustave Damkohler, and his son Elwin, who were on their way back from their Christmas visit to Fort Myers. Teed engaged Damkohler in conversation which led to the Koreshans being invited to visit Damkohler's homestead at the Estero River, twenty miles down the coast from Punta Rassa. Damkohler, who had been a Florida pioneer since the early 1880's, had lost his wife in child-birth, and all but one child to the treacheries of pioneer life. A man in need of companionship, Damkohler was receptive to the fellowship of the Koreshans and the pampering of their women. At Estero Dr. Teed came to the realization that he had been directed to the remote Florida wilderness by the Divine Being.<sup>4</sup>

Estero, the anglicized version of Ostego, is a small meandering river which empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Populated only by a few hearty settlers, the area was eighteen miles south of the closest city, Fort Myers, a small town whose economy depended on local cattle ranches. The area had been named Estero by the time the Koreshans made their first

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<sup>3</sup>"Estero," The Flaming Sword, May, 1932, p. 3; E. E. Damkohler, Estero, Florida: Memoirs of the First Settler (Fort Myers Beach, Florida: Island Press, 1967), pp. 22 and 23. E. E. Damkohler is Elwin Damkohler, Gustave's son; Gatewood, Coconut Coast, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup>Damkohler, Estero, p. 23.

visit. A sparsely inhabited wilderness, Estero offered the seclusion needed for the growth of utopian dreams, and the realization of Koreshan concepts. Land could be purchased from the few inhabitants of the area, or acquired in the form of homesteads from the state government. Though the land in the immediate vicinity of Estero was accessible only to ships of light tonnage, land could be obtained which could serve as a port for larger vessels. The Koreshans saw Florida as becoming the "greatest commercial thoroughfare of the world,"<sup>5</sup> and they planned for their port in Florida to be in the central distribution center for world-wide commerce. Estero was seen as being advantageous to both American and International shipping. The Koreshans sought not only an area of seclusion for their communal growth and a location which would lead to eventual economic prosperity, but also an area which would be advantageous to the construction of a great holy city, a city of God, the New Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

Estero in the 1890's offered something as important as future economic prosperity; it offered the isolation and the freedom from harassment needed by a religious group in order to train and organize into a manageable religious order. Utopias flourish best when separated from traditional society, from a society which is strongly critical of its communal ideals. Therefore, the distance between Estero and any established society with strong traditional standings served as an impetus for

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<sup>5</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed] and E. B. Webster, The Koreshan Unity: Co-operative (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1907), pp. 20 and 21.

<sup>6</sup>For general information concerning Fort Myers and Estero pioneering days, see Damkohler, Estero, and Karl H. Grismer, The Story of Fort Myers (St. Petersburg, Florida: St. Petersburg Printing Company, 1949); Koresh and Webster, Koreshan Co-operative, p. 34.

the creation and growth of the Koreshan New Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of building a New Jerusalem is a recurring theme in the history of utopian societies. The idea of building a great city as an offering to God served as the basis of many groups. The Mormons, under Joseph Smith, were constantly finding the "original" site of some ancient holy city, reconsecrating it and building it anew. The Koreshans felt a need to build a holy city, and so in 1894 after "divine direction," the site was chosen and a utopian city was begun in southwestern Florida. The Koreshans saw their city as having intrinsic importance for the future of the world. Not only was New Jerusalem to serve as a model community for the rest of the world, but it was also to become the world's capital when the new millennium began and heaven was on earth. When Teed visited Estero for the first time he brought with him a map of the New Jerusalem. In its grandeur, the city was to encompass one-hundred and ten square miles of which twenty-eight were water. The city was described as thus:

The shape of the city is to be octagon. In its center is to rise the most magnificent temple the world has ever seen--the great fame of the Koreshans. Around this temple is to run in a circle a placid sheet of water (an arm of the Estero), and around that, the arcadium, a complex of structures wherein schools, gymnasium, etc., are to be housed. . . . Two principal streets, each 400 feet wide are to intersect the whole city, and these are to be called meridian way, north and south, and parallel, east and west while two diagonal streets, each 200 feet wide, are to cross. The diameter of the octagon from side to side is to be exactly one-half of a mile, and within the inner space is to be a fine park, with the *Triumphia Octogonia*

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<sup>7</sup> For the theme of separation, see Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965). More's ideal society was the former peninsula Abraxa turn into the isle of Utopia in order to gain seclusion, pp. 32 and 43; Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964). The concept of separation for purification is a dominant factor in Miller's work; Arndt, *Rapp's Successors*. The Harmonites' towns were always segregated from neighboring societies.

near it. . . The whole city is to be surrounded by a circular boulevard, and the length of the octagon has been taken from the diameter of the circle, the diagonal of the square of which is ten times that distance, 'which is our way of squaring the circle'. . . Placed at equal distances near the circumference are to be twenty-four distributing centers or stores.<sup>8</sup>

This magnificent municipality was to become the commercial and cultural center of the world, overshadowing the splendor of Rome, London or Athens in their most affluent times. Cyrus Teed estimated the construction cost of such a grandiose city at two-hundred million dollars. Funds to meet this expenditure were to be raised from subscriptions and donations of which Teed claimed, ". . . I'll have only to go out and stir people up to obtain it."<sup>9</sup> The plans for New Jerusalem were made, a map drawn and economic resources taken into consideration; all that was left was for the communalists was to purchase land and build the city.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Koreshan's secular life was their struggle to obtain land for the "Sun City." Purchasing land in Florida was a complicated matter since often claims dated back to the days of Spanish occupation; and then, too, claims frequently overlapped in some areas. The state at the time was working under two methods of surveying land. One was the modern technique of scientific surveying; the plot was located on deeds according to their meridian relationship with Tallahassee, the capital of Florida. The other method

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<sup>8</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Lord Chester, The Great Red Dragon, chs. 9 and 29; Fawn M. Brodie, No man knows my history (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 211; Damkohler, Estero, p. 23. A large map of Teed's New Jerusalem is now located at the Koreshan Art Hall at Estero, Florida; Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 53 and 55; S. J. Sargent, "Koreshan Unity," FMP, December 12, 1895, p. 2. Sargent was a member of the Unity at the time this article was published.



was a holdover from the Spanish days in Florida. Land boundaries were streams, rocks and the big tree that was six steps from the creek's second bend. This unwieldy system of land demarcation required the duplication of deeds in order to insure unchallenged ownership of property.<sup>11</sup>

Florida had several types of land deeds which need to be taken into consideration. The two that the Koreshans dealt with were the Warranty Deed and the Quitclaim Deed. A warranty deed is a legal document conveying ownership of land and attesting to the fact that the grantors, the party selling the land, hold the land free and clear of any liens upon it (no one else who is not involved in the agreement holds any mortgage on the land). The owner guarantees that he has the complete legal right to sell the land free and clear. On the other hand, the quitclaim guarantees only that the grantor gives all claims that he might have to the land to the grantee, the party making contract for the land. Where several people claimed the same property, or portions of the same property, the quitclaim deed was essential to insure complete ownership. Oftentimes several deeds were required to obtain free and clear title to land at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

In analyzing the land purchases by the Koreshan Unity and its members, several considerations must be taken into account. First, the type of claim must be considered, for if all quitclaims are counted indiscriminately, the amount of land attributed to Koreshan ownership would increase to an unreasonable size. Therefore, duplication of claims must

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<sup>11</sup>"Grantee Records, 1890 - 1922," Lee County Courthouse, Fort Myers, Florida, p. 461; "Grantor Records, 1890 - 1922," Lee County Courthouse, Fort Myers, Florida, p. 517. A listing of deeds and land titles, the years between 1893 and 1910 are our primary concern.

<sup>12</sup>Florida Statutes (Tallahassee: Legislative Printing Committee, 1969); Ralph E. Boyer, Florida Real Estate Transactions (New York: Matthew Bender, 1972), pp. 115-126.

be deleted. When acreage and location coincided, they were considered as being the same piece of land. This occurred eight times during the period from 1894 to 1908. (The dates represent the year of the first land purchase in Florida for the community, and the year of Dr. Teed's death.) A problem, again which involved quitclaims, came when a claim was sold by either a known community member or by a Koreshan associate from Chicago, where the validity of the claim could be questioned. An example is the land purchase by the Unity of one hundred and eighty-nine acres of land for one dollar from Charles W. Greenfield and wife. Greenfield was Dr. Teed's lawyer in Chicago during the previously mentioned lawsuit by Cole for the alienation of his wife's affection. The chances of his having a legitimate free claim to the land is questionable since he was a recent settler in Florida and he only gave the community a quitclaim, and the community had no property claims duplicating Greenfield's quitclaim. Therefore, the land was not considered as a legitimate land holding by the Koreshans. Four deeds fit into this category. Members of the community who bought land and then gave the land to the Unity were counted in the overall cost and purchase of land. Another classification of land purchases which have been left out of the total were those deeds which gave no clear indication of the amount of land involved. The grantees on the deeds include the Koreshan Unity, Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, or Annie G. Ordway. The combined volume of land purchased between the years 1894 and 1908 was 5736.78 acres, of which 810.47 acres were in Teed's name alone. This must be seen as a very conservative figure, for eight warranty deeds were not included due to lack of information concerning the amount of land involved. The total value of this land in question was \$3,310, an amount which could have purchased anywhere from seventy-five acres at the average Koreshan land cost of forty-four dollars an acre, to as much as 3,310

acres at one dollar an acre, the lowest price the Koreshans paid. In the community's most dynamic years, the years which Dr. Teed led them in Florida, it grew in area to over five-thousand acres of land, one of the largest land holdings in Lee County.<sup>13</sup>

The development of New Jerusalem was dependent on more than the purchase of land. Any municipality requires townspeople and every citizen has obligations to his community, especially a utopian one. The obligations a member owed to the Koreshan Unity depended upon his relationship to the community. There were a variety of ways one might take advantage of membership without suffering the restrictions. The least restricted group was the cooperative branch of the Unity. This group was free from any religious obligations. A person or family could join the order by buying cooperative Koreshan stock with either a donation or their personal property, or if they had no property, merely by proving their skills. In the event that they chose to leave the community, they were given the choice of either exchanging their stock for seven percent stock and receiving no more dividends, or selling the stock "out right" back to the community at whatever the community leaders felt was a fair price. Within the cooperative group, family life was left to the discretion of the members of the order. The only real restriction felt by the cooperative members was that they lacked social and organizational mobility. Only members of the religious order could attain any position of leadership.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>"Grantee Records, 1890 - 1922," pp. 461 and 334; "Grantor Records, 1890 - 1922," p. 517; "Record of Deeds, 1890 - 1910," Lee County Courthouse, Fort Myers, Florida.

<sup>14</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 27, 73 and 84; Andrews, Shakers. Koreshans had a similar tripartite system as the Shakers, possibly picked up from the Shakers when they were in contact with the Koreshans. The Shaker system of outer, middle and inner court can be seen as a parallel with the Koreshan system of outer or co-operative order, the investigate order and the Ecclesia.

A primary obligation of members of the Koreshan religious order was celibacy. The rationale of abstinence had developed along several lines. Traditionally, continence was seen as a means of preparing for the "marriage" of the Lamb and His elect who were standing upon Mount Zion singing the new song. The Scriptures proclaimed of these:

No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless.<sup>15</sup>

Through the practice of celibacy man hoped to assure himself of election and prepare himself for unification with Christ in the coming millennium. Several communities followed this line of reasoning, including the Harmonists. It cannot be determined whether Teed ever adhered to this line of reasoning for celibacy, for in keeping with his efforts to find scientific explanations for the prophecies of the Scriptures he developed his own "scientific" rationale for the practice of celibacy.<sup>16</sup>

Man, exclaimed Teed, had within him the power to overcome death. This power could easily be demonstrated by the practice of continence. By abstaining from sexual intercourse, and by following Teed, man could conserve his life forces and thus become immortal:

It is not generally known that there is a hidden life principle in man called the hidden manna; the secret of that substance is in the sex function itself; and in the power to conserve the sex potencies, and to correctly appropriate them, resides the great secret of immortal life.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Rev. 14:3 (R.S.V.).

<sup>16</sup>Arndt, Rapp's Harmony Society, p. 417.

<sup>17</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Interpretation of the Book of Revelation (Estero, Florida: The Guiding Star Publishing House, 1925), p. 93.



Celibacy for the Koreshans was not, as it was with many religious groups, a practice to develop a closer relationship with Christ in preparation for the marriage with the "Lamb," but rather it was seen as the scientific method to obtain immortality.

An incoming member of the Koreshan religious order, called the Society Arch-Triumphant, was first installed into the outer court, or the Investigate order. This first step served two purposes. It allowed the incoming member to experience life within a communal celibate order without being totally committed to stay. More important, it allowed the Unity leaders to see if the religious novice was capable of abstaining from earthly vices and sacrificing "everything pertaining to individual loves."<sup>18</sup> When a family joined the community, they were split up. Any children involved had to be given to the Unity for their education and upbringing. Parents were not to be consulted as to the care and rearing of their children. The children belonged to the Unity until they reached the legal age, which was eighteen years old for females and twenty-one years for males. Once the probationary period was over, the postulant was admitted into the Ecclesia order of the Society Arch-Triumphant. At that point he became a full member of the Koreshan religious and communalistic order. The most important secular obligation Koreshans of any of the three orders had was the building of the holy city.<sup>19</sup>

As land was being purchased and members organized, construction of New Jerusalem began. Following the arrival of Teed and his trio of

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<sup>18</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Koreshan Unity: General Information Concerning Membership and Its Obligations (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing Company, N.D.), p. 10. A short period of correspondence was required before a person could enter the Investigate order of the Unity.

<sup>19</sup>Koresh, General Information, pp. 10-12; "The Koreshan Unity," FMP, November 29, 1894, p. 10.

disciples, came two groups of Koreshans from Chicago. The first consisted of four men succeeded by a contingent group of thirty adherents, both men and women. The groundwork for the city began with a few cottages and small buildings being raised, accompanied by agricultural activities. Enthusiasm filled the air around the communalists' activities--or at least they talked that way. Reports were sent out that the budding community was the "center of the universe," filled with harmony and good will.<sup>20</sup> The trip from Chicago that each member had to endure entailed seven train changes, a short jaunt by sail boat, and over a week's travel. Their arrival to the community meant a larger work force to build the city, but it also created a strain on the Koreshan food supply. By the end of 1895, the Koreshans' second year in Florida, the settlement numbered over one-hundred members and included a sawmill and planer which had been purchased in Fort Myers, disassembled, moved to the southern tip of Estero Island and reassembled on newly purchased community land. The mill allowed the Koreshans to construct their first "finished" buildings.<sup>21</sup>

Early in 1896 the communalists had completed their first large edifices, which included a communal dining hall (three stories, thirty-eight feet by seventy feet), and school building. City grounds had been laid out with broad walks and shade trees, while banks of the Estero River had been walled up and a large drainage ditch had been dug to drain the flooded lands so prevalent in the Estero area. A second sawmill was built, this one at the community, and machine shops were constructed. By the time

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<sup>20</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 1.

<sup>21</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 1; W. W. F., "The Koreshan Community," FMP, September 13, 1894, p. 1; Leroy Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island: An Old Timer Reminisces (Fort Myers Beach, Florida: Estero Island Publishers, 1967), pp. 4, 5 and 15. Lamoreaux was the son of one of Teed's close advisors, Professor L'Amoreaux. He arrived at Estero in June of 1895; Grismer, Fort Myers, p. 190; Damkohler, Estero, pp. 24-26 and 28; Sargent, "Koreshan Unity," p. 2.

the community moved en masse from Chicago to Estero in 1904, the industries in operation were the utility and electricity works, sculpture and concrete works, tin works, mattress making shop, hat and basket weaving shop, shoe shop, a blacksmith shop and the community's pride--their printing shop. The multi-faceted Koreshan industry only acknowledged secondary importance to agricultural pursuits.<sup>22</sup>

With the aim of dominating world-wide commerce, utopia had little time to devote to agricultural endeavors. Thus, farming was often neglected for the "more important" goals of the community. Whereas the colony idealized self-sufficiency, they were quite content to rely upon outside sources for food when necessary. The areas that the community did venture into with farming ranged from various varieties of livestock to a large apiary. The community planted everything from pineapple and guinea grass to sugarcane and sweet potatoes. As the years passed, the community moved more and more into the industrial phases of the economy. In Bristol, Tennessee, they purchased a furniture manufacturing plant with an estimated value of \$75,000, which they named after the Koreshan Pre-Eminent Annie G. Ordway. The group also tried to arrange a contract for two hundred thousand acres of land from the government of the Republic of Honduras for colonization.<sup>23</sup> The negotiations for the Honduras property fell through after the death of Teed.

The Koreshans held all property in common. This "community of goods" developed several rationalizations for its existence. As a biblical

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<sup>22</sup>"A Visit to the Koreshan Unity, at Estero," FMP, April 16, 1896, p. 1; "Estero," FMP, November 15, 1900, p. 4; Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 75, 76 and 41-45.

<sup>23</sup>"Estero," p. 4; Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 33, 48, 49, 50, 60 and 79; Damkohler, Estero, pp. 25-26; Sargent, "Koreshan Unity," p. 2; "A Visit at Estero," p. 1; "New Jerusalem," p. 1.

basis they quoted the scriptures thus:

And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not plant and another eat, for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.<sup>24</sup>

But with a closer investigation, this biblical front "withers away" into Marxian rhetoric.<sup>25</sup>

The economic philosophy of the Koreshans was based on the concept of class conflict. Without the inevitable hostility between labor and capital, there would be no need for Koreshan communism. Koresh offered an alternative for the worker. The true source of wealth, Teed said, was labor. If a worker created an item which was sold for four dollars, then the total amount the worker should be paid for his labors would be four dollars. Instead, while the worker was "eking out a mere living his employer is amassing a fortune. . ." <sup>26</sup> This form of economics was what Teed referred to as wage-slavery. There was in wage-slavery an inbred class conflict, a dissension which could be resolved only through violent industrial revolution, unless of course Koreshanity was adopted.<sup>27</sup>

Teed warned that many people seeking a solution to the problem of class conflict had turned to "labor-unionism" as the panacea of the workers, not realizing there was an antipathy between labor-unionism and the needs of labor. Labor-unionism was based on the concept of the continuation of wage-slavery in order to perpetuate itself. With the

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<sup>24</sup>"New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>25</sup>"First Wheel-steamer (5 tons) Built at K. U. Launched," FMP, May 21, 1896, p. 1; "New Jerusalem," p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 5-8; Lord Chester, Red Dragon. Chapter XII described the consequences if Teed's ominous warnings were not heeded.

institutionalization of unionism, the representatives of labor sought the perpetuation of their jobs rather than to serve the workers. There was no solution to the problem inherent in capitalism. "Wealth must find its way back to its legitimate creator and owner, either through peaceable means or by violent force."<sup>28</sup> The only solution, then, was to discard the capitalistic system and create a new system based on Koreshan communism.<sup>29</sup>

"The basis of wealth is the relation of labor to the resources of Nature. . ." Therefore the only equitable system was one which equated cost according to labor and resources and not capital. This new system would have to be prepared. The society must be educated into understanding and accepting governmental ownership of industry, by the Koreshans.<sup>30</sup>

The Koreshan method of effecting this education was to show the system at New Jerusalem as the arch-type for the world to emulate. When the capitalist saw that the Koreshan system at Estero was the most efficient and equitable system, he would request being offered the chance to participate. The system which the Koreshans offered was first to eliminate competition and therefore eliminate a large amount of waste. Next Teed proposed to give the workers a stake in the economic system by allowing them to buy into the Koreshan cooperative system with either property or skill. This way the worker would be directly involved with production, for he as a member would benefit from any profit that the cooperative

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<sup>28</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 5-11; See Walter Lippmann, Drift and Mastery (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914) for the concept of the preparation of the hinterland.



showed. In this manner the cause of strikes was eliminated by limiting the possibility of worker dissatisfaction. With the waste of competition and strikes eliminated, the Koreshan system could compete with the rest of the world's industrial nations. With New Jerusalem as the crowning achievement of the egalitarianism of Koreshanity, the world would seek the benefit of the new theory and the cosmos would realize universal peace under the Koreshan economic and religious system.<sup>31</sup>

In the early 1890's Teed had initiated a search for a new communal home for his followers. Unable to unify with an established community, the Koreshans turned to the hallowed ground Teed had discovered on his sojourn in Florida in 1893. As the group reached Florida, they set to work laying the foundation of their New Jerusalem. It was at the great Sun City that the economic and religious systems which Teed envisioned were to be instituted.

Through their travails the communalists found a unifying force in their common belief in Teed's religious and cosmological teachings. It was this aspect of the Koreshan Unity which most distinguished it from other utopian movements of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>31</sup>Sargent, "Koreshan Unity," p. 2; "The Koreshan Unity," p. 10; "Koresh," Flaming Sword, May 1932, p. 3; Koresh, Koreshan Co-operative, pp. 5-11.



## CHAPTER III

## THE CORRESPONDING RELATIONSHIP

## OF UNIVERSOLOGY

As the utopians built their great city in Lee County, Teed began to give a series of lectures to outline his new theology and win proselytes. The speeches were exciting occasions which attracted large crowds such as one in a Fort Myers courtroom:

The courtroom was filled at the time the Doctor started to lecture, many ladies being present. It is evident that a large part of the audience expected to hear something sensational.<sup>1</sup>

What sensational expectations brought audiences to hear this northern interloper into the south, called Koresh? Two possibilities might be suggested here as being typical of this charismatic religious leader. These are man's relationship with the cosmos and with his god. Perhaps the most difficult undertaking in understanding the Koreshan Unity revolves around the topic Teed labeled "Universology," or "the science of all truth pertaining to the natural and spiritual worlds."<sup>2</sup> This philosophy involving man's relationship with his god and universe was the underlying theme of Teed's "Illumination" some twenty-four years before he settled in Florida.

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<sup>1</sup>"He is Messiah No Longer," p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Immortal Manhood (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1902), p. clxxxii.

The problem encountered when dealing with Universology is that the two divisions of the philosophy, natural and spiritual, are closely interrelated, and yet the very nature of the division precludes their being studied concomitantly. Dr. Teed found in his writings that to deal with the philosophical division satisfactorily would mean to deal with them separately in depth, and then integrate them in his more general writings. The primary work by Teed concerning the spiritual order of the universe was The Immortal Manhood (Chicago: 1902), a book which fundamentally dealt with man and his God. To propagate his theories concerning the universe, Teed wrote Cellular Cosmogony (Chicago: 1898). Together, these two works served as the pivotal point of the Koreshan's teachings. In undertaking an explanation of Koreshan Universology, it would be advantageous to begin with their concept of the natural order of the cosmos, what Teed called Cellular Cosmogony.<sup>3</sup>

Cellular Cosmogony was founded upon the basis of Koresh's scriptural interpretations. Variations from accepted translations of the Scriptures were attributed by Teed to incorrect translations, for Teed claimed to have translated the book from the original Greek and Hebrew. Two key passages used in support of Koreshan Cosmogony were from Isaiah and Matthew. The earth, contended Teed, was a hollow sphere with man living on the interior rather than the exterior of the orb's crust. "The Lord's Prayer" was used in support of this "hollow earth" theory, for it read, with the help of a new translation by Koresh:

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<sup>3</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed] and U. G. Morrow, Cellular Cosmogony (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1898), deals specifically with Teed's concept of the universe; Koresh, Immortal Manhood.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,

IN [Teed's capitals] earth as it is in heaven.<sup>4</sup>

From this passage it was asserted man and God were located "in" earth rather than on earth as traditionally accepted. As a means to bolster the legitimacy of this coup on the Copernican theory, Teed added Isaiah's rhetorical question, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow concavity of his hand. . . ?"<sup>5</sup> Certainly, the earth as a concave sphere is a bizarre theory, even for a group known for eccentric concepts. The theory would be worth mentioning only in passing was it not for the inter-relationship with the Koroshan spiritual theories. But the dependence between the two ideas requires further examination of this concept.<sup>6</sup>

There was no argument at the turn of the century as to the general shape of the world. The question centered instead at the point of which side of the earth's crust man lived on. Was man an inhabitant of the outer crust of the orb which traveled around the sun like other celestial bodies within an infinite universe as Copernicus suggested; or did man rest comfortably within the limited surroundings of the universe encompassed by the shell of the earth of which he lived on the inner crust? This question was more than a moot point to enthusiasts. By chance, they may have found security in the belief that the universe was finite and thus open to their understanding, together with Korosh's doctrine that all laws of the universe directly apply to man, and therefore understanding the universe leads to a more complete conception of man. The question was

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<sup>4</sup>Korosh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 177; Mat. 6:9 (R.S.V.), reads "on" in place of Teed's IN.

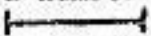
<sup>5</sup>Korosh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 10; Isaiah 40:12 (R.S.V.).

<sup>6</sup>Korosh, Cellular Cosmogony, pp. 10, 156 and 177.

important enough to the Unity to warrant an expedition arranged to undertake proof for their theory in 1897.<sup>7</sup>

Proof of the concavity of the earth's surface was based on the geometric premise that a horizontal line, that is a straight line at right angles to a perpendicular at any given point of the earth's surface, extended an infinite distance will have a different relationship to the outside of a sphere than to the inside of the same sphere. If the horizontal line was extended on the outside of the orb, it might be tangent at one point, but there would be no other points of intersection. Whereas, if the straight line was extended the same distance within a hollow globe, it would intersect at two points of the figure, and therefore be a cord of the sphere. This is the basis of argument that the Koreshan's took for their expedition at Naples, Florida, when they sought to disprove the Copernican thesis.<sup>8</sup> (See diagram on page 42)

Professor U. G. Morrow, a Koreshan disciple and editor of the one-time Koreshan Quarterly The Salvadore and the Scientist as well as a mathematician, invented what was called the "rectilineator" in order to facilitate the proof of Teed's thesis.

The Rectilineator consists of a number of sections in the form of double T squares [  ], each 12 feet in length, which braced and tensioned cross-arms is to the length of the section, as 1 is to 3. 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 Co., Pullman, Ill.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 157; "The Koreshan Expedition," FMP, July 22, 1897, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, pp. 93 and 101.

<sup>9</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 96; "The Koreshan Expedition," p. 1.

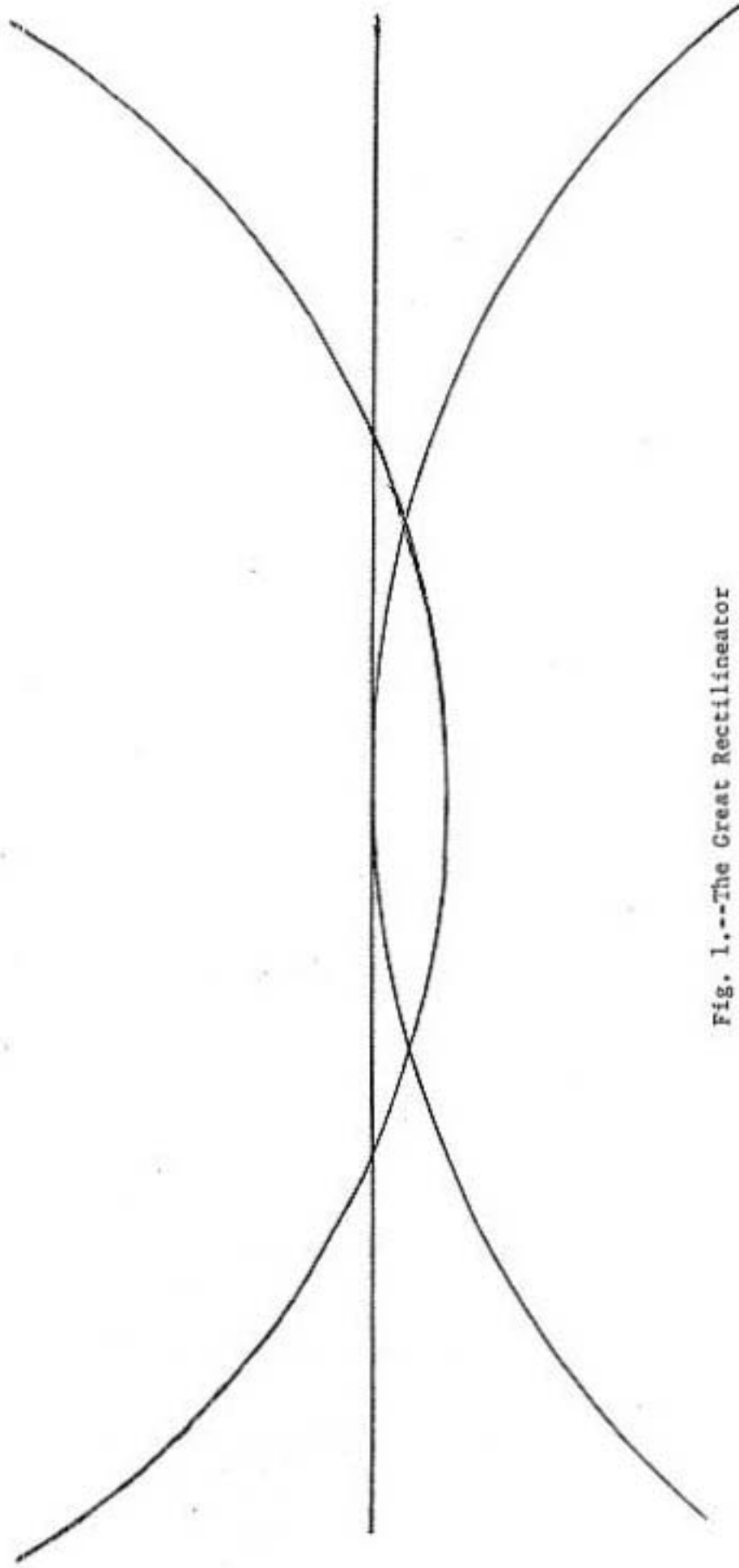


Fig. 1.--The Great Rectilineator

If the horizontal line was extended on the outside of the orb, it might be tangent at only one point. Whereas if the straight line was extended the same distance within a hollow globe, it would intersect at two points.

Plans were made to run four sections of the rectilineator a total of four miles, enough to determine the direction of the earth's curvature. Naples, Florida, was chosen as the site for the coast line, north and south, was comparatively straight for a number of miles; the climate admitted of operations during the winter months; and the site was near the Koreshan Co-operative and Communistic Colony at Estero, Lee County, Florida.<sup>10</sup> In January of 1897 the tests began. Preliminary tests had been done earlier at Lake Michigan and the Illinois and Michigan Drainage Canal, and similar visual tests were to be conducted throughout the Naples expedition. These tests were primarily sightings along the surface of the water with a telescope. After a ship "disappeared" over the horizon, reportedly it would be brought plainly into view with the assistance of a high power telescope. Even the concave curvature of the water was claimed to have been sighted.<sup>11</sup>

As the tests progressed, reports were sent out indicating the success of the experiments. Section by section the rectilineator was moved down the Gulf beach, adjustments meticulously made and recorded. Two and one-half miles down the beach Gordon's Pass was reached, and from there the horizontal line had to be projected by sighting the Koreshan sloop "Ada" with the telescope a mile and a half south, into the Gulf of Mexico. To the "surprise" of the Koreshans, their calculations had been off. The "airline" they projected did not intersect the waters of the Gulf until it extended one-eighth mile beyond their calculations. Cer-

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<sup>10</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 106; "The Koreshan Expedition," p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, pp. 68 and 73, 86-87; "Earth is Concave," FMP, June 22, 1897, p. 4.



certainly this "mistake" served to make their hypothesis seem more reasonable, for it would not be to their "advantage" to err in their calculations if their measurement had been fallacious. An odd number has a more convincing "ring" to it than does an even number. Man, then, reasoned the Koreshans, lived within a hollow orb. If this were the case, what relationship did the earth have with the universe, and what purpose did a concave globe serve?<sup>12</sup>

The universe as a whole is distinctly monistic--every part adjusted to every other so as to constitute just what the name universe implies.<sup>13</sup>

According to Koreshan Universology, every part of the universe has a purpose, and its purpose is dependent upon the rest of the cosmos. Beyond the outer shell of the earth there was nothing, for universe implies one--one encompassed within the sphere. If all within the universe had a purpose, then what was the purpose of the concave earth? Imagine a sun nine million miles away from the earth. Energy is released in the form of light and heat. A small portion of the solar energy comes in contact with the earth and then passes on into the infinite space. Eventually the sun would release its last fragment of energy and then die. A similar fate would follow any inhabited planet. Such a concept could aid in developing insecurity for people looking for eternal answers about their existence. What alternatives, then, would be available to them?<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Teed offered man the security of immortality. The first step towards immortality would have to be a place for eternal existence. The

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<sup>12</sup>Koresch, Cellular Cosmogony, pp. 117, 118, 129 and 130; "Proving Their Theories," FMP, April 22, 1897, p. 1; "The Koreshan Exhibition," p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Koresch [Cyrus R. Teed], Fundamentals of Koreshan Universology (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1927), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Koresch, Koreschan Universology, p. 4.

sun, contended Teed, was encompassed by the concave earth. Seven metallic stratifications made up the shell of the concave sphere.

The Laminae or concave plates of the environing shell of the physical universe are metallic reflectors as well as points of transmutation. As the essences of dematerialization at the stellar nucleus radiate and fall into these plates of environment there is a process of metamorphic transmutation in which the essence becomes matter, the matter of the plates becomes spirit, and the reflection carries the ascending or levic essence back to the central star. This reciprocal interchange or gravic precipitation and levic reaction perpetuates the relation of center and circumference, making of the universe an eternal electro-magnetic apparatus, self-perpetuating and recreative.<sup>15</sup>

Teed described, in a style only he understood fully, the cosmos as being a tremendous electro-magnetic battery with positive and negative terminals correlating with the light and dark sides of the sun. Energy in the form of a positive force was radiated to the crust of the orb where it was reversed in charge and reflected back towards the stars and the "stellar nucleus." After the sun had revolved, the dark portion of the sun attracted the newly charged energy to its terminal. This constant change of charge constituted Teed's contention concerning cosmogony. The hypothesis that the universe was self-perpetuating was founded on the concept that "the stars do not radiate more than they receive, therefore they are perpetual in their permanency; that is, they are eternal."<sup>16</sup> Whereas there were stars and a sun, the moon and planets were only reflections of the sun.

The key to the understanding of such a concept lies in the consideration that under Teed's system man could only understand things which are finite, for the universe must be subject to form and limitation in

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>16</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Univeersology, pp. 3-6, 13 and 15; Koresh, Cel-lular Cosmogony, p. 175.

order to facilitate man's comprehension of his environment. If there were no limits to "size," then there would be no limit to "smallness," and therefore the cosmos would be beyond the understanding of man. Why, though, is it important that man be able to understand his predicament? What advantage could man derive from the key Teed had been given to cosmogony? There was a close relationship between Teed's notion of the spiritual and natural worlds of the universe. This relationship between man's worlds was the key given to Teed in the autumn of 1868, some thirty years earlier.<sup>17</sup>

God, like the universe, occupied the central arena of importance for the Koreshans. An explanation of Cellular Cosmogony reads like a perfect analogy to the community's beliefs concerning God's nature and His spiritual world, with the Deity as the sun and His Son as the reflections from the laminae of the earth's crust. In fact, the purpose of studying the cosmos and its manifestations was to enhance man's understanding of the spiritual world, for the Koreshans maintained that any attempts to understand the Deity would have to be founded upon the book of Nature.<sup>18</sup>

Man has speculated about God's being for many centuries. From St. Augustine's query concerning God's capability of evil to Saint Thomas Aquinas and his proof of God's existence, man has speculated about his Deity's nature. God's capability of evil as well as the question of His actual existence were two of the issues of major importance to Dr. Teed,

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<sup>17</sup>Koresh, Koreshan Universology, pp. 5 and 12; Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Emanuel Swedenborg, His Mission (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1895), p. 1; Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Illumination of Koresh: Marvelous Experience of the Great Alchemist at Utica, New York (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, N.D.), p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Koresh, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 155; Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. lxi, lxxvii, cxii and lxxi-lxxii; Koresh, Revelation, p. 3.

and he asked these questions "In the Name of Humanity."<sup>19</sup>

Teed contended that there were several manifestations of God. The realm of the Deity was the eighteenth century Swedish mystic's world, Emanuel Swedenborg's spiritual world, not a heaven above the clouds. God was within man's mind, beyond the brain's "interposing veil." Therefore, to deny the existence of the Supreme Being would be to deny man's existence, and to deny man's existence would be to reject the "coordinate. . . anatomy of the physical universe,"<sup>20</sup> as well as Teed's revelation from the "Almighty." God perpetuates Himself in much the same way as the sun perpetuates itself. From the environment of man, God raised up a son. Through experience the son had to attain perfection, for the son was both good and evil, and he had to voluntarily reject the evil his Father had manifest in him, for the Lord said, "I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things."<sup>21</sup> After the son had attained a state of grace, the Father was absorbed into the son's consciousness, at which point the son lost his individuality and thus existed as God. For the Koreshans state:

Let it be understood that the Lord Jesus, who was the Son of God, had within him the Father; that he was the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<sup>22</sup>

There was not, then, just one Son of God, but many. According to Teed's doctrine, there were six messiahs in biblical history with the seventh

<sup>19</sup>Koresh, *Cellular Cosmogony*, p. 5; "In the Name of Humanity" was the adage which always accompanied Teed's signature.

<sup>20</sup>Koresh, *Immortal Manhood*, p. lxxvii.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. lxxiii.

<sup>22</sup>Koresh, *Revelation*, p. 51.

expected to usher in the new millennium.<sup>23</sup>

A relationship existed between the seven forms of the Hebraic verb and the son of God. Each form of the Hebrew verb had a coordinate messianic expression. The Hebrew verb forms were active, passive, intensive active, intensive passive, causative active, causative, passive and reflexive. Their messianic coordinates were Adam, Enoch, Noah, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, with but the reflexive manifestation expected. Each divine messenger was the culmination of the experience of the previous. Thus the seventh messiah was to be the highest form of the seven angels. Through "revelation" Cyrus learned of the coming of the seventh messiah. Man's Deity had "announced" to Teed the arrival of the Messenger, the "highest" of God's chosen seven. Upon death the Son would be resurrected, as the Lord and Son became one. Thus the cycle of the Lord's perpetuity would be completed. Note, though, that the cycle, or at least this portion of the cycle, includes only seven messiahs. A number such as seven indicates a finite situation; seven then is a terminal number. What then did Teed speculate the future would hold for mankind?<sup>24</sup>

Since the beginning of the Christian era, the Church has been anticipating the new dispensation, God's revelation to John. Anabaptists, Prophets and Millerites all have prepared for the coming of the millennium, the day the Saints would stand upon Zion, all one hundred forty-four thousand of them with their Father's name on their forehead, singing hallelujah. Certainly millennialism has been a recurring theme throughout the history of the Christian Church, and probably the prime mover of American

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<sup>23</sup>Koresh, Swedenborg, p. 1; William Linton, "Taped Conversation"; Koresh, Immortal Manhood, p. lxxvii, clxxi, cxxiv and lxiii; Koresh, Revelation, pp. 25 and 51.

<sup>24</sup>Koresh, Revelation, pp. 88 and 51; Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. cliv-clv; Sargent, "Korshan Unity," p. 2.



utopian communities before the turn of the century. Shakers, Inspirationalists, and Puritans all had their eyes turned to the advance of the new dispensation. Along the same lines the Koreshans followed, but with an interesting twist. The followers of Koresh seemed to be in search of security. In two thousand years since the death of the Nazarene, the possibility of one hundred forty-four thousand Christians deserving sainthood is great. If this be the case, what path would be left for modern day "saints" who deserved election? Whether or not the ranks of the Lord's chosen few had been filled, it would be a welcome relief to find the ranks enlarged. With the day when the "sign Aries entered the constellation Pisces"<sup>25</sup> at hand, a Gog and Magog prepared to do battle at Armageddon, man could find a deep inner security in the fact that God would select two hundred eighty-eight thousand to fill the roles of the Sons of God.<sup>26</sup>

How, though, does one rationalize a revelation of God proclaiming two hundred eighty-eight thousand eligible for sainthood, when the Lord had previously revealed to John the smaller membership? To understand this paradox, Teed's concept of the Deity must be examined. What is the highest physical manifestation of the Divine Being? "God," stated the Koreshans, "is personal and individual. She is not another person, but the person of the Godhead in her final revelations." This tradition of the Deity being of the feminine gender was first mentioned in Teed's "Illumination" when the "Divine Motherhood" presented him with the key to universology. Teed added scriptural authority with the passage from

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<sup>25</sup>Koresh, Immortal Manhood, p. cxvii.

<sup>26</sup>Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. lx, lxxxv, xcv, lxxxix, ci, cxvi, cxvii and xcii; Koresh, Revelation, pp. 79-80 and 88.



from Jeremiah 31:22, which reads: "For the Lord has created a new thing on the earth: a woman shall compass a man."<sup>27</sup> From this passage Teed drew the concept of a woman compassing a man, or rather that the body of the woman surrounded or encompassed the mind and soul of the man to form the physical manifestation of an ambisexual God. In this line of reasoning, if God is "biune," that is, two-in-one, then his sons would also be bisexual. Thus one Son of God would depend upon a man and a woman to be realized. In this manner one hundred forty-four thousand "Sons of God" standing above Zion singing the "new song" would require two hundred eighty-eight thousand men and women, to come into existence.<sup>28</sup>

Biblical scholars such as George A. Buttrick have long argued the point concerning the passage of Jeremiah from which Teed drew his hermaphrodite God, due primarily to the difficulty of translating the Hebrew verb tesôbhēbh, meaning "protects" to the Revised Standard Version; but the more literal translation in the King James Version is "shall compass." Teed of course claimed that his translation, which concurred with the King James Version, was revelation from God, and therefore could not be questioned. If Koresh's translation was correct, certainly it would not be the first revelation indicating the ambisexuality of God.<sup>29</sup>

There is a long tradition concerning the hermaphrodite god. Half-male and half-female, this figure has turned up in the mythology of many

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<sup>27</sup>Jeremiah 31:22 (K.J.V.); Koresh, Immortal Manhood, p. cxlviii.

<sup>28</sup>Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. lxxxvii, clxix, lxxxiii, clxxi, clxx, lxxvii, cxlib and cxlv.

<sup>29</sup>George A. Buttrick, et al, The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), vol. v, p. 1034; Koresh, Immortal Manhood, p. xxi.

different peoples. The figure of the Aphrodite, "the woman with a penis,"<sup>30</sup> as well as the union of Siva and Sakti to create Ardhanarisvara are long established bisexual gods.<sup>31</sup> The carving of the Hindu god Ardhanarisvara on a cave wall in Central India depicts the Hermaphrodite with the left side male and the right side plainly female, corresponding to Teed's concept of "The Sons of God born in and through the world's catastrophe, where men-women in the likeness of God, each being two-in-one. . ." <sup>32</sup> Included in the list of men-women beings would be the great Sphinx in the Oedipus legend. Within the realm of nature there are some suggestions which might also be drawn upon to indicate the bisexuality of the Godhead. During "rutting" season many animals develop secondary sexual characteristics, and the natives in Australia decorate themselves in imitation of these characteristics for their increase rites.<sup>33</sup> On the American scene there were several groups which indicated belief in some form of a dual god. Ann Lee of the Shaking Quakers believed that she was to be the bride of the Lamb in Revelation 21:9, and they would become one. A similar marriage was suggested with the Rappites at old Economy, with the Harmonist congregation preparing to become the Lamb's bride.

What this all means is that there was a rich tradition from which Teed could have drawn concerning the bisexuality of God. Koresh had been in contact with Hindu doctrine at the 1896 Chicago Exhibition. In many

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<sup>30</sup>Paul A. Robinson, The Freudian Left (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 97.

<sup>31</sup>Alain Danielou, Hindu Polytheism (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), p. 203.

<sup>32</sup>Lord Chester, The Great Red Dragon, p. 136.

<sup>33</sup>Robinson, Freudian Left, p. 96.



Fig. 2.--The Bisexual Deity

The carving of the Hindu god Ardhanarisvara on a cave wall in Central India depicts the Hermaphrodite with the left side male and the right side plainly female, corresponding to Teed's concept of "The Sons of God . . . where men-women in the likeness of God, each being two-in-one. . ."

ways Teed can be seen as a great eclectic, for he was constantly drawing ideas from other groups and incorporating them into his own dogma. Though it may not be possible to find out where he acquired his theories concerning the nature of God, it is possible to develop a hypothesis as to where he acquired them. By association, the choice can be narrowed sufficiently to deduce that he probably received the impetus from the American communes mentioned, and then developed the idea as he came in contact with the Hindu teachings.

With the coming of the millennium, which preceded the holocaust mentioned in Revelation 20:8, the battle of Gog and Magog, the "new race of man would be projected into existence, the Sons of God, the Order of Melchizedek."<sup>34</sup> These "arch-natural" men would be like God, that is "biune"<sup>35</sup> or two-in-one. They would come into existence as the result of a man "ordained for this special office. . . a type of scientist who comes at the end of the dispensation with the true Universology."<sup>36</sup> This man would be the "Messenger of the Covenant." He would be the "seventh angelic manifestation of the Deity."<sup>37</sup>

Before the coming of the new era, the Lord promised to send Elijah the prophet, a messiah. Koreshans felt that this messenger to be sent was God's anointed, Cyrus, of Isaiah 44-45:

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<sup>34</sup> Koresh, Revelation, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. clxxiv and cxlviii.

<sup>36</sup> Koresh, Immortal Manhood, p. xciii.

<sup>37</sup> Koresh, Revelation, p. 51.

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer. . .  
 "who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd,  
 and he shall fulfil all my purpose';  
 saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,'  
 and of the temple, 'Your foundation  
 shall be laid.'

Thus says the Lord to his anointed,  
 to Cyrus,  
 whose right hand I have grasped,  
 to subdue nations before him. . .<sup>38</sup>

Teed proclaimed, "Every esoteric manifestation of the present time is but the reflex of the presence of the Messiah now in the world since 1839."<sup>39</sup> This is a strong indication that Teed viewed himself as the Messiah, considering he was born in 1839 and his name was Cyrus whose father was Jesse. Koresh added, "Swedenborg says Cyrus signifies the Divine Human" (see Dictionary of Correspondence, p. 78);<sup>40</sup> this as well as the fact that all of Teed's publications were dated A.K. or Anno Koresh, suggests that Cyrus felt he was the messenger who would be absorbed into "the chosen Woman, the visible Mother."<sup>41</sup>

Throughout his career, Teed sought out the Divine Being of his "Illumination," the "visible Mother" who had promised, in 1869, to "walk with thee"<sup>42</sup> in the near future. The woman of Teed's "Illumination" was to become the physical manifestation, the woman encompassing man, of the Deity. Teed actively sought this woman's appearance. The suit by

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<sup>38</sup>Isaiah 44-45 (R.S.V.).

<sup>39</sup>Koresh, Revelation, p. 43.

<sup>40</sup>Koresh, Swedenborg, pp. 31 and 43.

<sup>41</sup>Koresh, Immortal Manhood, pp. clxvii and lxxxvi; Koresh, Revelation, p. 88; Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Koreshan Science and its Application to Life (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1896), p. 13.

<sup>42</sup>Koresh, Illumination, p. 13.

Mr. Miller in Chicago, 1892, for the alienation of his wife's affection, alleged "that Dr. Teed represented to his wife that he would make her the Goddess Minerva."<sup>43</sup> Later when Annie G. Ordway joined the community, Teed recognized her as the chosen one. She was renamed Victoria Gratia, and served as the president of the group where her title was "pre-eminent." Koreshan hymns of the period sang praise of Victoria as well as Cyrus.<sup>44</sup>

By the turn of the century the Koreshans had placed their Deity and the sun at the centers of the "anthropostic" and natural universe. Both forms of the cosmos were proven to be eternal, and the "scientific" basis of this perpetuation was named "Universology." Victoria Gratia and Cyrus R. Teed walked together in a celibate relationship to escort the new dispensation and the Sons of God into their earthly reign. Until the day of the millennium though, the Koreshans had to establish and preserve a harmonious relationship with the people of Lee County.

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<sup>43</sup>"Teed Sued," p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>William Linton, "Taped Conversation"; "He is Messiah No Longer," p. 1; Koresh, General Information, p. 12; Cyrus R. Teed, Tribute to Victoria Annie G. Ordway (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1889), p. 1.



## CHAPTER IV

## THE CONFRONTATION OF SOCIETIES

Writing in 1913 Walter Lippmann, the nation's most important young radical/intellectual leader of the period, commented in his political novel, Drift and Mastery (New York: 1914) that "There have been a few fanatics who lived so absolutely for the millennium that they have made a little hell for their companions." With their enthusiastic activities preparing for the coming era, certainly many millennialists have created "a little hell" for those who were forced to associate with them. Various measures were considered to help reduce any tension between utopians and nonbelievers, but it seems that the most successful measure for the communalists was to segregate themselves from society. Isolation was found to be an effective measure by such groups as John Humphrey Noyes' band of Perfectionists when they were forced to retreat from hostilities at Putney, Vermont, to the isolation of Oneida Creek. A similar experience occurred with both Icaria and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in their moves from Nauvoo to California and Utah respectively. With similar experiences, the Koreshans found that a move from their Washington Heights and Normal Park residences in Chicago would be advantageous for their peace of mind and their growth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Maren Lockwood Carden, Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 18-22; Brodie, No man knows my history, p. 400; Hine, California's Utopian Communities, p. 60; "Koreshan's Chicago Career: Wives Deserted Husbands," Tampa Morning Tribune (hereafter cited TMT), January 3, 1909, p. 4; "New Jerusalem," p. 4.

Emigration from Chicago was found to be necessary when continual social resistance to the community's plans forced them to seek a location which would provide a more cordial atmosphere for their activities. Several areas were considered, including San Francisco where a branch location was begun, but the decision was finally made to move far from the evil corruption of a major city. If seclusion was their prime motive in moving to southwest Florida, they certainly chose an appropriate spot. Thirty miles to the south of Estero, "Naples by the Gulf" was just beginning to show signs of potential growth, and to the north cows were still walking through the streets of Fort Myers, fifteen miles away from the utopians. Since Fort Myers was the nearest town of any political or economical importance, it was necessary to develop a cordial relationship with the community, for there would have to be a certain amount of social interplay.<sup>2</sup>

The question might be raised at this point as to the importance of the relationship between Fort Myers and the Koreshan Unity. Would the experiences of the Unity have been altered if the group had colonized at a location which afforded the community no means of contact with other social groups? Perhaps the best example of community interaction can be illustrated with the Rappites at both New Harmony and Old Economy. In each case, the Harmonists aided their neighbors' growth by both their own economic stability and help in designing Indianapolis. This placed the two groups in a very friendly relationship. Thus the very existence of the Koreshans in southwest Florida had an important effect on Fort Myers

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<sup>2</sup> Information concerning the Koreshan experience in California can be found in The Pruning Hook (San Francisco, California, February 23, 1891, p. 1, which later became The Plowshare and Pruning Hook, May 1, 1891, p. 1.

and Lee County. Social interplay was triggered not only by the notoriety which followed the Unity, but also by the political interaction which came about due to the efforts of the utopians. Thus the relationship between the two communities had a direct impact upon the development of the Koreshans in Lee County.<sup>3</sup>

Fort Myers was a small "cow" town with around three-hundred residents when Dr. Teed arrived in Lee County in 1894. With an eye toward the future, the Unity immediately began efforts to establish cordial relations with Fort Myers. Teed assured the local residents that even though he predicted the coming of the millennium of which he was the first physical manifestation, they could rest assured for, "I take it that we are not undergoing the three woes predicted in Revelation. . ."<sup>4</sup> For a prophet of "doom" these were certainly conciliatory words to a group which might have been suspicious of his actions. But in order to avoid repetition of the hostilities which had been experienced in Chicago, it was imperative that Teed develop friendly ties with the town.<sup>5</sup>

Koreshan efforts to build a solid relationship with the county were remarkably successful. Often members of the Unity were sent into Fort Myers for a weekend as delegates of good will. No better strategy could have been followed, for before the Unity had been in Florida for six months the Fort Myers Press, the county's only newspaper, reported that the Koreshan representatives visiting town were, "all intelligent, well-educated and pleasant people whom it is a pleasure to meet and talk to. . ."

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<sup>3</sup>Karl J. R. Arndt, Harmony Society, ch. 15.

<sup>4</sup>"Dr. Teed," FMP, May 3, 1894, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, FMP, June 28, 1894, p. 4.

. . . They are all workers and will make their part of the country a veritable paradise on earth, if intelligent work will accomplish it."<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the community was preparing to invite the local dignitaries to visit the utopians' new home.

To increase the circulation of advantageous stories of their efforts on lands to the south of Fort Myers, the utopians invited the town fathers to visit their new settlement. Included among the visitors was the editor of the Press who was quite impressed with the Koreshan's activities. Following the visit the paper reported that:

As regards to their neighborly qualities I have never known a people more highly praised by their neighbors than they. As for myself I never experienced a more enjoyable visit.<sup>7</sup>

The visit included a tour of the Koreshan drainage project and a discussion dealing with their plans for the future. A "four or five" course meal which was "bountiful and sumptous [sic]" highlighted the visit. Many more visits such as this one followed during the next few years with each one developing the friendship between the two groups. It was in this manner that the Koreshans were actively committed to the development of strong ties between Fort Myers and themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Teed took an active role by acquainting Fort Myers with Koreshan plans and beliefs both by writing letters to the Press, and by making periodic appearances at the "Phoenix" lecture hall. It seems as if the town was receptive to its frequent guest, for the Press reported

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<sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, FMP, June 28, 1894, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>"The Koreshan Community," p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>"The Koreshan Unity," p. 10.

that Ted, "succeeded in accomplishing the feat of receiving the atten-  
tion and interest of his hearers for the space of three hours." 9 The

Koreshans gave the townspeople the assurance that, "first we are American  
citizens with no purpose to dishonor that privilege. . . 10 Through the  
able efforts of Ted and his followers a strong friendship had developed.  
When a critical newspaper article reprinted from the Chicago Herald  
appeared in the Press, it was a county resident, and not a Koreshan, who  
spoke up in the Koreshan defense. 11

For each new criticism concerning the Unity's ideas, a complete  
explanation and defense was promptly written and published in the Press.  
In order to counter the effects of any attack upon the religious habits  
of the Koreshans, townspeople were invited to attend church services of  
the colony on Sundays. From this practice came additional praise from  
the editor of the Press when he reported his visit:

. . . while slightly different from the usual orthodox  
sermon, [it] was as concise, logical and brilliant an  
address as we have ever had the pleasure of listening  
to. 12

In order to accommodate their visitors the Koreshans even postponed their  
Sunday services until ten o'clock so that the three hour drive could be  
made from Fort Myers by their visitors. Success seemed at hand for the  
Koreshans, but there were more obstacles to be overcome than had been  
anticipated. 13

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Sargent, "Koreshan Unity," p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>W. C. Battery, "To Eds. Press," FMP, December 12, 1895, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>"A Visit to the Koreshan Unity," FMP, April 16, 1896, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



The first sign which indicated that there were potential problems in Lee County for the Koreshans came from the civil suit, Damkohler vs. The Trustees of the Koreshan Unity.<sup>14</sup> When the suit was first filed in April of 1897, there appeared that little would be involved. Gustave Damkohler had in 1893 and 1894 deeded two plots of land to the Koreshans. First there were three hundred acres given to the Koreshans for the sum of one dollar. Then he sold, for the same price, at Teed's insistence, according to Damkohler's son, his last twenty acres to the Unity. By 1897 Damkohler had become disenchanted with utopia and he was ready to reclaim his land. It would be hard to believe, as Damkohler's son insisted, that the Koreshans had promised him a new home at the center of the New Jerusalem, the planned location of the "Great Temple." Clearly there was no evidence to support the old man's claim. At most the Koreshans had taken advantage of the old German's loneliness by offering him companionship. But with the help of an ingenious lawyer a point of leverage was found.<sup>15</sup>

The case was interesting not for its merits, but rather for its lack of them. It is apparent that the case could not be argued with much success concerning the invalidity of the land grant. Instead, Damkohler's lawyer brought the Koreshan concept of the universe on trial. The point of the trial was to judge the validity of Damkohler's deed to the Koreshans for his land. True, the deed for twenty acres of land was submitted as evidence, but more important than that was the fact that submitted in evidence in this lengthy trial were over twenty pages of the

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<sup>14</sup>Lee County General Index to Civil Cases, "Defendants," 1895-1972, Kh.

<sup>15</sup>E. E. Damkohler, Memoirs of the First Settler, p. 23.

Koreshan monthly periodical, The Flaming Sword, dealing only with Teed's convex earth theory.<sup>16</sup>

As the town watched the trial come to a close, a new figure was gravitating towards Fort Myers society, who would attempt to fan any smoldering embers of anti-Koreshan feelings into open flames. While the case was being decided out of court with each party receiving one-half of the three hundred and twenty acres in question, a celibate marriage ceremony was taking place in New Orleans. Editha Lolita, Countess Landsfeldt, and Baroness Rosenthal, daughter of Ludwig I of Bavaria and Lala Montez, god child of Pius IX, divorced wife of General Diss Debar, widow of two other men, and the only legitimate successor to Madam Blavatsky, was taking the name of her latest husband, a former Congregationist minister, James Dutton Jackson.<sup>17</sup> Editha Diss Debar (the name which shall be used in order to avoid confusion) and her husband planned to found a utopian community in Lee County on seven thousand acres owned by Jackson. There they were to worship the "biune" god, subsist on "fruits and nuts," and patiently await the coming millennium. Upon their arrival in Lee County, Diss Debar was "taken aghast" at the presence of such a "scoundrel" as Teed in so fair an area as Fort Myers. But in the cause of truth she felt it necessary to remain silent to see if Dr. Teed had reformed. Such a story has the distinct ring of absurdity to it, and yet the citizens of Fort Myers accepted it. For a period of several

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<sup>16</sup> Damkohler vs. The Koreshan Unity, 59 Lee Co. 211 (1897).

<sup>17</sup> "Old Friend in a New Role," FMP, December 15, 1898, p. 1 supplement (from the New York Herald). Diss Debar showed many similarities to Dr. Teed. This can be attributed to the fact that for a time she had been a member of the Chicago Koreshans; "Princess Editha Lolita [Diss Debar]," FMP, December 1, 1898, p. 1. She had joined the Koreshans after she had been "released by the Jesuit priest" who had "kidnapped her."

months Diss Debar demanded that Teed be driven out of Florida and an investigation be set in motion to determine what was occurring in Estero. Fortunately for the Koreshans, Diss Debar had made a similar attempt to break up the community in Chicago, and it had been reported by the police to the Chicago papers.<sup>18</sup> Shortly after the publication of this story Diss Debar and her husband left Lee County, leaving the Unity and Fort Myers to do battle.<sup>19</sup>

Until early February of 1899, charges and counter-charges were thrown back and forth by the county and the Unity. Diss Debar had done an effective job stirring up trouble, but she could not have done so had there not been some underlying bed of discontent. The best possibility of explanation is that the growth of the Unity was beginning to look like a challenge to Fort Myers. If the Koreshans were to grow to even a fragment of their anticipated size, it would relegate Fort Myers to a secondary position unacceptable to the leaders of the town. If the Koreshans were to prevail, they needed only to buy the land, which they had done with a fair amount of success, and then throw the land open to their "thousands of members." This would destroy the importance of the economic and political leadership of Fort Myers. This was a totally unacceptable position to the leaders of the town, and it was a position they would not accept without a fight.

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<sup>18</sup>"Koreshans Hit Back," FMP (reprint from the Chicago Journal, December 8, 1898), p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>"Is this Another Colony on the Koreshan Order for Lee County?", FMP, November 24, 1898, p. 1; "New Role," p. 1; "Hit Back," p. 1; Diss Debar, "The Princess Furnishes Another Chapter on the Doings of 'Dr.' Teed," FMP, December 8, 1898, p. 1; E. L. Jackson Diss Debar, "Editor Fort Myers Press," FMP, December 15, 1898, p. 1; H. F. Wright, "Arraigns Dr. Teed," FMP, January 19, 1899, p. 1.

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Towards the height of the controversy, however, the community began to lose ground. Its membership dwindled, and the leadership faltered, due in part to Dr. Teed's return to Chicago. In the midst of the controversy Fort Myers found all of its worries dissipated. By the turn of the century the Press reported that the colony could then claim twenty-eight members since it had recouped some of its losses of the preceding year. Thus the town's discontent was founded upon rivalry since it was hostile to the Unity only when the utopians threatened the town's predominance over county affairs. Fort Myers felt at times that it had cause to fret over its political and economic supremacy in southwest Florida.<sup>20</sup>

As Fort Myers began to realize, at least for the time, that it would have no trouble maintaining its position as the dominant force in southwest Florida, the battle of words ceased. Soon the Koreshans were able to patch the damaged friendship with the town. Periodically the Press reported the improved situation at Estero. With renewed efforts a general mood of conciliation seemed to have prevailed. Teed returned to his congregation and stayed away from the more controversial aspects of his religion. On the political theme he emphasized that if his followers ever gained ascendancy over county politics, it would govern for the "peoples' good." Thus the relationship between the two groups normalized.<sup>21</sup>

Koreshan hospitality once again came to the forefront. Other than the invitations to visit the work being done at Estero, the colony

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<sup>20</sup>"Estero," FMP, November 15, 1900, p. 4; "Settlers Succeeding at Estero," FMP, October 19, 1899, p. 1; "Koresh's Chicago Career: Wives Deserted Husbands," TMT, January 3, 1909, p. 4; "Teed Poses as a Martyr," FMP, October 18, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup>"Messiah No Longer," p. 1; "Settlers Succeeding," p. 1; "Estero," p. 4.

also extended invitations to Fort Myers to visit during their special festivities such as the Luna Festival in 1903. Such celebrations were grand events highlighted by plays written and produced by the Koreshans. Once again strong were the ties that bind, but not so strong as the constant question concerning the political future of the county. But in the next confrontation, centering this time in Estero, the Koreshans had found an additional ally.<sup>22</sup>

Beginning in 1904, before the November election, the Koreshans were allowed a weekly article in the Press written by Professor U. G. Morrow, inventor of the rectilineator, under the pen name "Veritas," or truth. It appears that the Editor of the Press, Phillip Issacs, traded, allowing the Koreshans a weekly article for propaganda and Press neutrality, in exchange for their support during the election of 1904. Issacs, who was running for the vacant county judge seat at the time, later adamantly denied the charge that he ever sought Koreshan support. It still remains, though, that the Koreshans had unlimited use of the paper as long as Issacs was not personally involved. As mentioned, Issacs claimed that he did not seek Koreshan support in 1904, but rather the Koreshans had solicited his support. Either way, the end result remained the same. "Veritas" was able, even during the height of a controversy, to present an air of impartiality, and thus furnished the Unity with a potent weapon when dealing with "anti-Koreshans."<sup>23</sup>

An important aspect of the Koreshans' move to Florida was centered around the idea of building the New Jerusalem. After having spent ten

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<sup>22</sup>"Koreshans," p. 1.

<sup>23</sup>Phillip Issacs, "Koreshan Methods of Attack," FMP, October 11, 1906, p. 4; "Veritas," "The Expansion of Estero," FMP, June 23, 1904, p. 2. This is one of the earliest articles written by U. G. Morrow under the pseudonym "Veritas."



years in Lee County, the Unity felt that they were ready to venture into their great undertaking. The first step that had to be taken was the incorporation of Estero as a town. In August of 1904 the Koreshans made the initial move toward fulfilling their goal. The Press reported that ". . . the Koreshan Unity has taken legal steps. . . for laying out and building the 'City of New Jerusalem,' and have posted legal notices at the Estero post office, that on the first day of September, 1904 a meeting of the citizens will be held for the purpose of incorporating a city to contain twelve miles square of territory, and elect officers. . ."24 It cannot be discerned if the Koreshans expected the incorporation to be a popular measure or not, but after they made their announcement there was talk among the populace of Estero settling the matter with "powder and bullets."<sup>25</sup>

Shortly after the Koreshan notice of incorporation, the non-Koreshans of Estero bound themselves into a group known as the "anti-Koreshans." For a variety of reasons they vigorously objected to being included in the move towards incorporation. Obviously they were weary of the idea that someday a three-hundred foot wide avenue would pass through their small citrus groves and destroy years of their work. Another problem was their fear of taxation. Who, they asked, would bear the burden of financing the building of the New Jerusalem, and even if they could afford such taxation, they did not want to be under the control of the Koreshans. This was probably the most important reason to desire exclusion from the new city.<sup>26</sup>

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24" Largest City in Florida," FMP, August 4, 1904, p. 1.

25" Veritas," "The Government of Estero," FMP, September 1, 1904, p. 4.

26Citizens Committee, "Citizens Do Not Want to be Included in Proposed Incorporation by the Koreshans," FMP, August 11, 1904, p. 8.

The greatest percentage of lands to be incorporated were owned by non-residents of Lee County. The Koreshans owned only about ten square miles of the seventy-five square miles to be incorporated. Florida law required only the votes of twenty-five legal voters to incorporate a town. The real problem came from the fact that there were over fifty legal Koreshan voters at the time, and under a dozen non-Koreshan voters. According to the Koreshan Constitution, which displayed "no aspect of either democracy or republicanism," no person was permitted to join who would not bind themselves to act as a unit.<sup>27</sup> With this system in force, the anti-Koreshans realized that their only hope for survival was to be excluded from the incorporation, for even if they were doubled in size, they would still be insufficient numerically to either block the incorporation or have any affect on the process of government if they were included. Their hope was not to meet for the September 1st incorporation convention, but to take their problem to the Press in order to win support and bring pressure upon the colony to exclude them. This, of course, ran counter to the plans of the Koreshans.<sup>28</sup>

Formulating the incorporation measures was a precarious job for the Unity, especially due to the fact that the colony owned only just over one-tenth of the land involved. To exclude anyone from the project would be an open invitation for others to bolt from the incorporation. The community also had to deal with the fact that the inclusion and support of non-Koreshans would add an air of legitimacy to the project which

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<sup>27</sup>Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Constitution of the Koreshan Unity (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing Company, N.D.), pp. 3 and 15.

<sup>28</sup>"Veritas," "Government," p. 1; Citizens Committee, "Valuable Property Owned by Outsiders," FMP, August 18, 1904, p. 1; "Largest City in Florida," p. 1; "Election Results," FMP, November 8, 1906, p. 1.

would otherwise be lacking. Considering that most of the land involved was owned by non-residents, and that it was only the unimproved land used for speculation which would be taxed, it was imperative that non-Koreshans be included. So important was this aspect of the incorporation that the Koreshans threatened that anyone who excluded themselves from the measure would be restricted from the great metropolis as well as from the use of the "creek" Estero, and even from the portion of Estero Bay which was to be included within the city limits.<sup>29</sup>

As the first of September drew near the anti-Koreshan's campaign began to take effect. In answer to their plea for help, various groups gave support to the anti-Koreshans. Perhaps in a move to reverse the trend for the coming November election, the tiny Lee County Socialist Party publicly came out in support of the anti-Koreshans. With the passing of the important date, the group was pleased to find that they had found enough support in their cause to convince the Koreshans to exclude them from the planned incorporation, even though as a result of this the Unity threatened to exclude them from the gates of the "great city."<sup>30</sup>

The question might be raised as to who should bear blame for problems between the two groups. It might be suggested that the anti-Koreshans were at fault, for they desired all the advantages the Unity had to offer, and yet they actively sought to avoid any obligations. On the other hand, had they accepted the Koreshan project, they would have lost all identify as a particular interest group with a diverse set of

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<sup>29</sup>"Veritas," "Government," p. 1; Citizens Committee, "Object to Coming Control of a Koreshan Municipality," FMP, August 25, 1904, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup>Citizens Committee, "Object to Municipality," p. 1; "Veritas," "Healthfulness of Florida," FMP, September 15, 1904, p. 4.

needs from those of the Unity, as well as lost all rights to participate in a government where they were the minority and where the majority was required to block vote. They lobbied for their individuality and their independence, and won. The Koreshans could easily be cast as the villains here. But were they? They sought to include people who had nothing in common with them, and planned to tax those who would have no representation in the government (that is the non-resident property holder). Either viewpoint, though, could be argued in persuasive fashion. No doubt they would have treated the non-members well, for they needed their support to add legitimacy to their measures. As far as the taxing of land speculators is concerned, that is taxing land which was purchased with no intent to settle on it, it is a common source of state revenue today and it is certainly justifiable to tax speculative land. Who is the villain then? Perhaps neither since both groups sought only to fulfill their conflicting needs.

With the aftermath of the controversy, once again the county was able to conduct its business in peace, at least momentarily. The tranquility did not prove to be lasting, however, because during the preceding year the Koreshan family had increased in size with the removal of the Chicago group to Estero in 1903. For the first time the Koreshans had the ability to be a power in local politics, and as "Dr." Teed had warned the county, "I am going to bring thousands to Florida. . . and make every vote count in Florida and Lee County."<sup>31</sup>

While Teed had not brought "thousands" to Florida, he had increased the Koreshan vote to around fifty-eight registered voters.

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<sup>31</sup>"Messiah No Longer," p. 1; "Veritas," "Improvements at Estero," FMP, December 15, 1904, p. 6.

Certainly he could not control county politics with just under sixty votes, but he did have sufficient votes to act as a decisive factor in any close primary election. With this in mind, Teed was willing to play fast and loose with his new found power. Perhaps it should be reiterated that Teed exercised absolute control over his members, for the Koreshan constitution provided that all members were required to act as a unit. Under ideal conditions there was the possibility the doctor could elect a candidate if he could form a coalition with the county Socialist Party and disenchanted members of the other two parties. But for the time he was satisfied to play the role of the king maker and work within the dominant party in Lee County politics--the Democratic Party.<sup>32</sup>

Lee County displayed identical voting trends as the rest of the "Solid South," the Democratic South. There was a token Republican Party in the county which boasted of two hundred of the county's "one thousand" registered voters, but it is difficult to accept the partisan claims of the time, for the elections of the period never demonstrated such strength. The Republican voting record proved only forty-nine voters strong. Fluctuating between the claim of sixty votes and an election turnout of fifty-eight voters, the Koreshans were able to prove a match for the Republicans. Assuming that the Democrats voted along party lines where there was no contest, or when the Republican and Koreshan votes could be plainly identified backing their party candidates, there were four hundred and forty-six Democratic voters. Whereas the Koreshans claimed there to be one thousand registered voters in Lee County, only five hundred fifty-three could be counted on in an election which stirred much political interest.

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<sup>32</sup>"Election Returns," p. 1.



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TABLE 1

PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN LEE COUNTY - 1906<sup>33</sup>

	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Koreshans	Soci- alists	Total
Estimate in the <u>American Eagle</u>	740	200	60	?	1,000
Analysis of 1906 Election	446	49	58	?	553

Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed had actively sought power in Lee County for a number of years. He therefore must have been pleased when the Democratic Primary came up in the spring of 1906. The election promised to be a close race. Close enough for the Koreshan votes to make the difference between victory or defeat. The importance of the election was that it would set a precedent. Never before had the Koreshans participated in an election where their vote could be effective. Perhaps this power hid from Teed developments which would decide the fate of the Koreshan vote. To begin with, Teed alienated the Democratic Executive Committee by pledging his votes to the county and state ticket, but he claimed the right to follow his conscience on the Congressional ticket. Adding to this problem he failed to see that the Executive Committee was partial toward one of the candidates for state representative, and he threw his support to the wrong candidate. Had Koresh supported W. L. Long for State Representative instead of W. D. Bell, the Executive Committee probably would have spoken eulogies in Dr. Teed's honor praising his honesty and his belief in democracy. But instead he supported Bell, and

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<sup>33</sup>"Election Results," FMP, November 8, 1906, p. 1; Koresh, "Opportunity for the Public Voice," AE, June 7, 1906, p. 1.

immediately the Committee met and with only the dissenting vote from W. D. Bell, the Koreshan vote was thrown out, "on the grounds that the members of the Koreshan Unity were not legally entitled to vote under the call made by the Executive Committee."<sup>34</sup> Perhaps Toed threw his support in favor of the candidate who seemed most aware of Koreshan needs, for later in the race the Eagle criticized W. D. Bell of "whoring" after votes. Quite probably Bell sought to sell himself to the Koreshans first. The argument concerning the eligibility of the Koreshans to vote curiously was not offered until after they had voted. If they were not eligible to vote, why was it that their vote was accepted? The Committee finally came to the conclusion that Koreshans could not participate in the next primary election, "for the reason that they are not regarded as proper members of the Democratic Party. . ."<sup>35</sup>

As both sides prepared to do battle, the Unity recognized its distinct disadvantage. In their previous controversy concerning incorporation, the editor of the Fort Myers Press, the town's only paper, had been neutral and thus allowed the Koreshans the use of the paper. But Phillip Issacs, the editor of the paper, was also the chairman of the Board of County Commissioners as well as the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party. Thus the Unity was excluded from any use of the paper during the controversy. Sensing its immediate need to be heard, the Koreshans set their press to work and published a new county weekly--The American Eagle. The paper's purpose was to defend the Unity in the upcoming political fight as well as to propagate the ideas of the

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<sup>34</sup>"Proceedings of the County Democratic Committee," FMP, May 24, 1906, p. 1; R. W. R. [oss], "Can He Explain," AE, June 7, 1906, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup>"County Democratic Committee," p. 1; "Results of the Primary," FMP, May 17, 1906, p. 4.

Koreshan supported new political party, the Progressive Liberty Party.<sup>36</sup>

Considering the genesis of the American Eagle, and the history of typical political slander sheets, the new paper was quite remarkable. It provided interesting and tasteful reading, and above all, it was creative. As the November election drew near, the Fort Myers Press reverted to a weekly expose of past rumors concerning Teed and the Unity. It was especially indebted to ten year old publications of Chicago papers for material with which to slander Teed. The American Eagle responded by developing its own original material, whether it was a parody of the actions of the Democratic Executive Committee or a play on words and names. Of course the people about whom the articles were written felt the sting more than they saw the humor in the columns. As the election drew near tempers began to flare, for the Progressive Liberty Party had offered the Lee County Democrats the only competition they had ever known.<sup>37</sup>

One afternoon just two weeks before the November election, Teed and several of his proselytes were visiting Fort Myers. Koresh had frequently worried about the town "mob" "getting him," and thus he always traveled in the company of several of his male followers. On Saturday, October 13, 1906 Teed's fears were realized when a street fight developed centering around him. There were conflicting reports concerning the confrontation between the Koreshans and several town citizens. One thing for certain was that "the Master" (Teed) ended up in jail after resorting to fisticuffs with the town marshal.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>"Progressive Liberty Party Platform," AE, June 6, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup>"Bombastes Teed's Ultimatum," FMP, November 1, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>"Teed Starts a Street Fight," FMP, October 18, 1906, p. 3; Koresh, "Will Myers Redress the Wrong," AE, October 25, 1906, p. 1.

It appears that a few words of disagreement took place between W. Ross Wallace, a Koreshan candidate in the planned election, and a Lee County citizen "Mr. Sellers." When Koresh became involved in the argument it changed from a heated debate to a street brawl. The near riot ended when Marshal Sanchez gave Teed a "good thrashing" and then hauled him off to jail. Townspeople claimed the fight resulted from Teed meddling in the affairs of others, while the Koreshans insisted that the brawl was instigated when R. A. Henderson, the lone candidate for the office of County Treasurer, offered five dollars to whomever would "thrash" Teed. If such was the case the Koreshans were a remarkably forgiving people for they block voted for Henderson in the ensuing election. Whatever problem triggered this incident, its underlying cause was to be found in the animosity created by the Koreshans offering the first real election contest that the Democrats had ever encountered. As the campaign progressed, passions flared and this resulted in Teed's being attacked in town. It is claimed that Koresh never completely recovered from the beating due to several nerves being shattered in his shoulder.<sup>39</sup>

As a result of this confrontation, Teed began making several demands upon Fort Myers, including the removal of the town marshal. He said of his ultimata, "WE DEMAND THEM OR THE CONSEQUENCES OF FORT MYERS AS A WINTER REPORT." Editor Issacs replied sarcastically:

Have pity [sic] on us, O'Koresh! Do not wreck vengeance on a poor, defenseless people. We beseech the [sic], oh the Most Gracious Humbug of the Universe, have mercy!

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<sup>39</sup>"Street Fight," p. 3; "Redress the Wrong," p. 1; Martin Gardner, Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1957), p. 26; "Teed Poses as a Martyr," FMP, October 18, 1906, p. 1; "Election Results," p. 1; William Linton, "Taped Conversation."



With tempers flying as they were, trouble had been inevitable.<sup>40</sup>

With the return of the election results, the Koreans had no reason to be disappointed. They carried three out of the county's

eighteen precincts consistently, with several other precincts being carried in different races depending upon the local popularity of the candidates. In no race did the Progressive Liberty Party carry a

majority, but they did outpoll the Republican candidates in every race,

two to one. Considering the length of time the Liberty Party had been

in existence, less than one year before it participated in its first

election, the election proved a successful campaign. Though the Koreans were unable to capture any offices, they did offer the county Democrats

fierce competition. In the closest race the results offered a mere five votes difference between the two principal candidates, and the Liberty

Party was able to consistently command two hundred and fifty votes.<sup>41</sup>

Strength in a new party can be attributed to several causes, but it seems there was a combination of reasons which won the party votes.

Obviously there was a need for a second strong party in a country which demonstrated the existence of only one party, thus offering the elector-

ate no alternatives. Another strong possibility is found in the effective campaign the new party managed. It is difficult to understand the com-

plexities of the Lee County 1906 election. The key to the Democratic victory lay in party numbers, whereas the key to the Progressive Liberty

Party success lay in party issues. The Liberty Party offered an

<sup>40</sup>"Ultimatum," p. 1; "Teed Poses as a Martyr," p. 1; "Teed's Flagrant Disregard of the Truth," *KMP*, October 25, 1906, p. 1; "The Gospel According to St. Isaac," *AE*, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup>"Election Results," p. 1.

alternative to the cut and dried election of Democrats. Democrats in Lee County had abandoned the use of a party platform by 1906.<sup>42</sup> Any candidate elected by the Democratic primary in the spring was assured of election in November, for the Republicans could muster only forty-five votes and the Socialist candidates dropped out of the election in both 1904 and 1906. The new party stimulated both animosity and interest as November advanced.<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting to note what sort of rule the Koreshans proposed to impose upon the county. Teed displayed a certain political adeptness when he played down the theocracy which he advocated in favor of a milder form of "progressive" leadership. Sensitive to the interests of the electorate, he advocated a system of recall by which an official's constituents could demand his recall upon dissatisfaction. In another bid for public support the Liberty Party demanded an equalization of taxes which would force large land owners, especially those from out of state, to pay their "fair share" of the taxes. In line with their doctrine of communal ownership, the Koreshans also offered as part of their platform public ownership of "public utilities."<sup>44</sup>

The process by which these policies were chosen was through an open convention which adopted both the party platform and party leadership.

<sup>42</sup>The only thing which the Democrats offered which bore any resemblance to a party platform in the 1906 election was their criticism of the Progressive Liberty Party and Dr. Teed. "The Progressive Lying Party Platform," FMP, October 25, 1906, p. 1, is a typical example of the Democratic stance on party issues.

<sup>43</sup>"Election Results," FMP, p. 1; "Progressive Liberty Party Platform," AE, June 7, 1906, p. 1; "Wanted: A Platform for Lee County Democracy," AE, August 8, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>"Liberty Party Platform," p. 1.

Of the numerous candidates nominated to office, only one Koreshan was picked and he was to campaign in the district which encompassed Estero. The party chose locally popular men to carry its banner in each of the districts. This system proved remarkably successful as demonstrated by the election returns which placed the Liberty Party well above the Republicans and in close race with the Democrats.

Koreshan political activities were soon to come to a close. Following the election of 1906, Dr. Teed began to slow down his activities. By the time of the 1908 election the Progressive Liberty Party could boast of barely one hundred pledged voters. This slowdown came as a result of Teed's own change of pace.<sup>45</sup> Whether it was the blow he had received from Marshal Sanchez or just his sixty-seven years taking their toll on his activities, the Unity became quieter because of the change. For two years the community rested quietly in southern Lee County and then on December 24, 1908, the Fort Myers Press announced:

--DR. CYRUS REED TEED DEAD--

HAS PASSED AWAY AND IS

NO MORE<sup>46</sup>

Two days prior to the report the doctor had died at Estero. With the announcement, rumors began to fly. It was suggested that Dr. Teed was to be resurrected. In fact, Koresh had intimated his resurrection in several of his tracts. The real question that troubled everyone was when the resurrection was to take place. It was hoped that since he had died

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<sup>45</sup>"Election Results," p. 1; Following the election return there was no mention of the Koreshans; "Returns of General Election," FMP, November 5, 1908.

<sup>46</sup>"Dr. Cyrus Reed Teed Dead--Has Passed Away and is No More," FMP, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

on December 22, he would rise in three days. Certainly it would provide for a spectacular and symbolic occurrence. As each day passed rumors spread concerning the condition of Teed's body and the coming resurrection. Newspaper headlines mockingly proclaimed:

Disciples Await New Breath of  
Life for Clay of Dr. Teed,

and

Teed Expected at Washington

Then on the twenty-seventh of December the Tampa Morning Tribune received a telegram from Victoria Gracia, the Unity's new leader, reporting Teed's burial.<sup>47</sup>

With the passing of Dr. Teed the group had to determine the direction it was to follow. Henry D. Silverfriend, the Unity's vice-president, returned from his Bristol, Tennessee manufacturing plant, and Victoria Gracia returned from one of the community's new branches in Washington, D.C. The obvious leader to take charge was Victoria Gracia (Annie G. Ordway). Ever since Dr. Teed's "Illumination" in 1869, he had searched for the earthly manifestation of his vision. He had announced that Annie G. Ordway was that physical manifestation and thus he appointed her the pre-eminent of the Unity; that is she was the group's secular leader while he was its spiritual leader. "Queen" Victoria Gracia packed her bags and left for Tampa where she wed a fellow Koroshan and the mayor of Estero, Dr. Charles A. Graves.<sup>49</sup> There are

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<sup>47</sup>"Disciples Await New Breath of Life for Clay of Dr. Teed," TMI, December 25, 1908, p. 1; "Teed Expected at Washington," TMI, January 2, 1909, p. 7; "Victoria Gracia's Wife," TMI, December 28, 1908, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup>Teed, Tribute to Victoria; E. M. Castle, Koroshan Songs (Estero, Florida: Guiding Star Publishing House, N.D.), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup>"Victoria Gracia Weds the Mayor of Estero," TMI, August 29, 1909, p. 13; "Mr. Silverfriend Kaps Priestess," TMI (reprinted from the New York Herald, September 5, 1909), p. 1.

several explanations for this marriage. Obviously the first to come to mind would be that for all her praise of celibate life, deep down she was a hypocrite. Or possibly she was never committed to celibacy. On the other hand, it may be that while Dr. Teed was alive she could sublimate her sexual desires by worshipping Teed and by managing the business of the community. When Dr. Teed died she reverted to her physical needs and married Dr. Graves. Still another possibility was that she married for security. This seems like the strongest possibility, for she was forced to leave the community due to increasing dissension. There were several people deeply committed to her and to the belief that she was the chosen one. At sixty-three years of age there was little she could do to support herself, and having a single man support her might cause people to suspect her morality. With this in mind, it seems likely that Dr. Graves married her to support and care for her, and thus there were no conflicts of belief involved in the marriage.

After Teed's death the colony began to slowly lose momentum as the older members died and the younger members left for more exciting lives. With the passing of Koresh little excitement was generated between the two communities. Following Teed's death and the loss of membership, Fort Myers no longer had to worry about the possibility of the Koreshan Unity becoming the guiding political force of the county. The town was content to let utopia languish in its southern home, declining, as its celibate membership, with age.



## CHAPTER V

## UTOPIA WITHERS AWAY

With the death of Dr. Teed in December, 1908, the Koreshans regrouped in order to determine the direction which they would follow in the coming years. From the various branch communities in the county came Koreshans for their meeting in Estero. Henry D. Silverfield, the community's vice-president, returned from his activities at the group's manufacturing plant in Bristol, Tennessee, and from Washington, D.C. came Annie G. Ordway, the Koreshan president. Before the coming of the new year the Board of Directors had met in an effort to determine Koreshan policy.<sup>1</sup>

It was quickly decided to follow Teed's plans and to have Ordway, whom Teed had designated as the chosen one, implement his plans.<sup>2</sup> Even without Teed as their "earthly" leader, the community expected rapid growth and prosperity until the coming of the new advent.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately for the Koreshans, progress was not to be as smooth as they had anticipated. Undoubtedly one of their most costly ventures for the Koreshan Unity had been the Ordway Manufacturing Plant in Bristol. It was this

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<sup>1</sup>"New Head of the Koreshans on the Scene," TMT, December 27, 1908, p. 1; \_\_\_\_\_, FMP (reprinted from the Atlanta Georgian, December 30, 1908), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Teed, Tribute to Victoria, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>"New Ruler of Koreshan Unity Gone to Take Charge," TMT, December 26, 1908.

plant which tested the cohesive force holding the Unity together.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after the death of their "master" the Koreshans were confronted by financial problems originating from Bristol. In order to "set up shop" so to speak, the utopians were forced to borrow money and purchase equipment on credit. Even before Teed's death the creditors of the plant were demanding a return of their investments. With Teed in the forefront the community was able to present a unified defense in explaining to creditors that payments would be made. But without Teed's personal magnetism to hide behind, the community was almost helpless. The problem arose from the group's inability to unite behind "Queen Victoria Gratia," otherwise known as Annie G. Ordway.<sup>5</sup>

Female equality had always been one of the Koreshan's supreme tenets. With the creation of the College of Life, Teed had found women to be its teachers. Even the Unity's constitution reserved positions of leadership in all three branches of the Koreshan organization. The Society Arch-Triumphant, the Koreshan Co-operative, and the College of Life were all guided by a board of directors consisting of men and women, and headed by a woman president--Annie G. Ordway.<sup>6</sup> From the time of the Montanist movement around A.D. 175 onward, "the history of enthusiasm is largely a history of female emancipation. . ." It would be hard to ignore the parallel between the Montanists and the Koreshans, for with the Montanists, like the Koreshans, "the female converts [especially

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<sup>4</sup>"Tottering," TMT, January 6, 1909.

<sup>5</sup>ibid., p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Koresh, Equalize the Burden and Reward and thus Perfect Life (No place of publication, N.D.), p. 1; Koresh, Women's Emancipation (No place of publication, N.D.), p. 1; Koresh, Constitution of the Koreshan Unity, pp. 1, 7, 21 and 24.

Priscilla and Maximilla] of the group ranked next to the leader himself." The Koreshans then were merely following along the lines of tradition where enthusiasts supported female rights.<sup>7</sup>

Although the group had supported female equality and had accepted women in managerial positions when the Doctor was in the lead, there was a different reaction to this practice in 1909. Dissent seemed to develop almost at once, or so it appeared. Ordway had actually been the group's president for many years before its official move in 1904. As early as 1894 Ordway had been one of Teed's closest advisors when she was one of the three women to accompany him to Estero for the first visit. On the first listing of teachers for the College of Life, Ordway's name is to be found.<sup>8</sup> Thus the group was certainly familiar with her ideas and leadership. There are two possible interpretations to explain the actions of the community in their failure to unite behind Ordway's leadership.

Henry Silverfriend, the Unity's vice-president, suggested to various news publications that as Ordway asserted more control over the group she began to visualize herself as the community's "Queen Bee," and her leadership became difficult and thus the workers were forced to revolt, discharging her from her duties as president.<sup>9</sup> Considering that Ordway had always held a special position in the community and had always been granted special privileges, such as having her own home within the community, this conclusion seems faulty. A stronger possibility in

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald A. Knox, Enthusiasm, pp. 20, 568, 37 and 29.

<sup>8</sup> Teed, "Metaphysics," p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "Silverfriend," p. 1.

explaining the Koreshan rejection of "Queen Victoria" seems to be that the male members of the group were not willing to be subjected to the rule of a woman. As long as Teed was on the scene the men could satisfy themselves with the idea that whereas Ordway served as the community's president, it was actually Teed in the position of "prime counselor" who directed the destiny of the Unity. This rationale was sufficient only as long as the "Master" was alive. Following Teed's death the men were confronted with the fact that the leader of the community was not only in name but in fact Annie G. Ordway. As jealousy took reign, dissension concerning Ordway's leadership grew.

Their choice was a simple one. Either submit to rule by a woman, in a period of history which did not cherish women's rights, or else make her leadership difficult to the point that out of frustration she would abdicate her "throne."

Perhaps this interpretation seems all too simple. The men refused to follow a woman's leadership and thus they toppled her rule. What role did the other women play in this struggle for power? Why did they not go to the aid of their fellow feminist, and fellow community director? Though the information on this point of Koreshan history is extremely sketchy, there is one clue which might explain the action of the group's women, who it must be remembered represented the majority of the Unity's membership.<sup>10</sup>

To digress for one moment, it might be remembered that one of the pillars of Koreshan theology was reincarnation. Teed was the reincarnated son of God, having passed through various physical manifestations such as Jesus, Elijah and Enoch. At the same time Ordway was a

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<sup>10</sup>William Linton, "Taped Conversation."

physical manifestation of Teed's "illumination" for, "thou hast been in preparation from the ages past."<sup>11</sup> With such a dynamic duo on hand, and with the concept of reincarnation as official religious dogma, it is not hard to perceive why other community members began to vie for similar status. In their jealousy many women began to fantasize as to their origin whether it be Rachel, Sarah or Ruth.<sup>12</sup> There developed then direct competition between the women as to who was the most "exalted one." Regrettably, such competition often has victims, and when Ordway's authority began to be questioned it was a logical step also to question her "holiness." Thus for their various reasons, the community members began to unite in their opposition to Queen Victoria.

In August of 1909, Ordway with several members of the Unity left Estero and moved to Tampa, Florida. Among her followers to Tampa was a Doctor Charles Addison Graves. Dr. Graves had been a close friend of Teed's for many years. He had been with Teed in Fort Myers during the political street brawl in 1906 and he was also the Koreshan Mayor of Estero. It was this association of Graves and Ordway which caused quite a bit of surprise and disillusionment among Koreshans, as well as the rationale for rejecting Ordway as their official leader.<sup>13</sup>

"Victoria Gratia Weds the Mayor of Estero," read a headline from the Tampa Morning Tribune on August 29, 1909. Nine days earlier the

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<sup>11</sup>Teed, Tribute to Victoria, p. 1; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>12</sup>"Silverfriend," p. 1; "Victoria Gratia Weds the Major of Estero," TMT, August 29, 1909, p. 13; \_\_\_\_\_, FMP, August 2, 1909, p. 2; Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>13</sup>"Silverfriend," p. 1; "Gratia," p. 13; \_\_\_\_\_, FMP, August 2, 1909, p. 2.



ceremony, which surprised most if not all Koreshans, had been performed at 2713 Florida Avenue in Tampa by Judge Graham, Circuit Court judge for Hillsborough County.<sup>14</sup>

On receiving word from Tampa reporting the sexagenarians' marriage, the Koreshan board of directors expelled Mr. and Mrs. Graves from their ranks for violating the vow of celibacy.<sup>15</sup> Obviously the directors at Estero had no proof that the couple ever violated the oath. As previously mentioned in chapter four (page 80), there could have been a variety of reasons for this marriage. The fact that Ordway and Graves were married was presumably only a rationalization to explain their expulsion. The question still remained, though, could Teed have been mistaken when he called Ordway the "chosen one"?

In order to negate as much of Victoria's influence with both Koreshans and outsiders as possible, the community leaders had to explain to the best of their ability how Teed could have been wrong when he reported that she was "the chosen one." Unfortunately for the directors, they lacked the creativity needed in explaining how a manifestation of the Deity such as Teed could have made a mistake. Therefore they were forced to rely merely on the rationale that celibacy was one of Teed's teachings. Ordway married and therefore violated that tenet and could not then have been the personification of Koresh's vision. Teed then must have made a mistake in depicting Victoria as the chosen one. This argument was simply based on the fact that she had married, and the assumption that she had failed to honor her vow of celibacy. Actually

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<sup>14</sup>"Gratia," p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>"Silverfriend," p. 1.

this argument had little effect upon the Koreshans,<sup>16</sup> for by this time most of the utopians had already decided upon their allegiance.

Although Mrs. Graves had been removed as the "pre-eminent" Koreshan by the group's officials, this act had little effect on Koreshans who deeply believed in her. As late as 1918 there was a group of Koreshans gathered around Mrs. Graves in Seffner, Florida, just a few miles east of Tampa.<sup>17</sup> This group, which was quite small, remained faithful to her until her death in St. Petersburg on January 8, 1923.<sup>18</sup> Even today there are those who knew her in Seffner who still believe she was the personification of Teed's vision and the "chosen one."<sup>19</sup> As the years have passed, time has taken its toll on the Koreshans, both in Seffner and in Estero.

Following the death of Dr. Teed and the expulsion of Ordway, the group began the process of slow deterioration. For the first few years this process was retarded by the inertia which the movement developed while Teed still lived. Preceding his death though, the group's leadership found themselves unable to sustain this inertia.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the problem can best be explained as the failure to institutionalize Teed's charisma.

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<sup>16</sup>"Silverfriend," p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>18</sup>"Certificate of Death, for Annie Grace Graves," January 9, 1923, Bureau of Vital Statistics, State of Florida.

<sup>19</sup>Linton, "Taped Conversation."

<sup>20</sup>Michel, "Conversation with Robert Lynn Rainard," March, 1973.

It has been noted in Chapter II that the elements which Teed possessed would characterize him as a charismatic figure. Certainly a man who could lure two-hundred and fifty northerners into the swamps of Florida must be seen in this light. The problem confronting the Unity in 1909 was: could they find a way of transferring this charisma from the aura of Teed to his organization? Could Koresh charisma be institutionalized?

The continuation of a religious organization is dependent upon its passing from the spontaneous to the institutional. Religious groups throughout history have been confronted by the necessity to instill the charisma of their founder into the institution of their church. This was the situation faced by the Koreshans after Teed's death.<sup>22</sup> Soon, though, the Koreshans found they could neither institutionalize Teed's charismatic nature nor prolong the inertia which he had developed. Thus, following Teed's death the community began its prolonged deterioration.<sup>23</sup>

Those who were first to leave the Estero commune were the children who had been brought into the community by their parents. As they reached maturity and the Unity could no longer supervise their movements, they left Estero. There was nothing in the wilderness of Florida that could satisfy the impetuous curiosity of youth, and thus they left in search for fulfillment of their innate needs. Those who stayed often did so because they had established a position of authority within the group or else because they felt insecure in their own relationship with the outside world. In staying on they followed the example set by most of

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<sup>22</sup> Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 40 and ch. II.

<sup>23</sup> Michel, "Taped Conversation."

the community's old guard.<sup>24</sup>

The primary reason for the Koreshans to stay on at Estero was faith. They believed in Teed and so they waited at the chosen ground for his return. Another reason for the "old guard" to remain in their communal adventure also comes to mind. Most Koreshans must have felt uneasy at the thought of entering into the "outside world" not in their former middle class status but rather as paupers. For it must be remembered that in joining the communal organization all material goods were donated to the group, never to be acquisitioned again as permanent property. To leave the group then meant to leave penniless unless the community leaders felt compassionate enough to help old comrades in their new beginning.

With the passing of the years the ranks of the Koreshans were slowly depleted. At the closing of the twenties the last of Teed's intimate disciples passed from leadership. President Hunt handed the role of leadership to the generation which discovered Estero in its youth. One such member of the community was the son of Dr. A. W. K. Andrews, Dr. Teed's first disciple.

Allen H. Andrews was one of the first settlers to travel to Estero with the Koreshans. Leaving his family behind in Chicago, he helped build the Koreshan home in Florida, where he was impressed with the harsh life he experienced in the wilderness. While only a youth in

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<sup>24</sup>Two examples of the younger members in this group are Allen H. Andrews and Leroy Lamoreaux, both of whose parents were close advisors to Teed. Andrews after becoming editor of the American Eagle stayed with the community until 1949 when he was dismissed as president of the Unity. Lamoreaux left the community in search of fame and fortune and became instrumental in the development of Estero Island, now known as Fort Myers Beach. See: Allen H. Andrews, A Yank Pioneer in Florida (Jacksonville, Florida: Douglas Printing Company, 1950); and Leroy Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island: An Old Timer Reminiscences.

his early twenties, Andrews had been chosen by Teed to edit the Koreshan political sheet, The American Eagle.<sup>25</sup> The community was impressed with his abilities, and showed their appreciation by appointing him community president. He held these positions concurrently until 1949. As the United States drifted towards the Second World War, and the Koreshans vegetated in the wilderness of south Florida, there were developments in Germany which would alter the course of both the nation and the community.

It has been reported that earlier in the century Peter Bender, an ex-sviator in the German army, had become interested in Koreshan ideology and had begun a correspondence with the group. He soon began a group in Germany known as the Hohlweltlehre or Hollow Earth Doctrine. The concept developed a certain amount of popularity as demonstrated by the Nazi expedition, under a Dr. Heinz Fischer, attempting to photograph the British fleet from the Isle of Rugen with "an infrared camera tilting upward at an angle of 45 degrees!"<sup>26</sup> It is impossible to learn Bender's reaction to this expedition, for he died in a Nazi concentration camp. Before he died though, he was able to make arrangements for a fellow Jew and school teacher, Hedwig Michel, to leave Germany and sojourn in Estero, Florida.<sup>27</sup>

With Michel's arrival in Estero the Koreshan's acquired new life blood. The youthful (in her fifties) German had strong leadership qualities and thus was elected to the group's board of directors. Perhaps it was inevitable or perhaps it was not, but in the 1940's there developed

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<sup>25</sup> Andrews, Yank Pioneer.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Gardener, In the Name of Science (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1952), pp. 26-27.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-27.



dissension within the Unity. The trouble rose over President Andrews's constant ramblings. It could be seriously argued whether Andrews was more interested in himself or in his community. In the book he wrote a few years after he was deposed as president, entitled A Yank Pioneer in Florida, he reported the growth of his state, his travels, and his growing list of friends, but he was at a loss when discussing the Koreshan Unity. Of course, it might be suggested that he felt his book was a story of the development of a Yankee in Florida and not a religious tract, but then his cold objectivity towards the religious order of which he was part makes one wonder if in fact he did take advantage of his position as president of the order, as well as the funds made available to him in that capacity, while others lacked the luxuries he afforded himself.<sup>28</sup>

Miss Michel and Laurence W. Bubbett, the son of one of Teed's associates, were able to convince the directors that Andrews was not sufficiently interested in either the community or the remaining members of the order. At that time the two were able to establish a hold on the organization through the manipulation of the directors. Bubbett held the reins of leadership until his death in 1954 and Michel has been the community's president since that time.<sup>29</sup>

Often the question has been raised if Michel's leadership had a positive effect upon the group of which she is now the sole remaining member. The acid test for this question must be: does the community still exist(?), and will the Koreshans be remembered? Prior to the time Miss Michel took the role of president of the Koreshans in the 1950's,

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<sup>28</sup> Andrews, A Yank Pioneer.

<sup>29</sup> "Hollow Earth Cult," Newsweek, December 6, 1949, p. 26.

the community had lost its newspaper the American Eagle and the periodical the Flaming Sword to a fire. Koreshan lands were being sold off at a rapid rate. In particular, Kinley L. Engvalson made over eighty land purchases from the Koreshans between the years 1938 and 1960 with over 85 percent of these transactions occurring before 1954 when Miss Michel took charge of the Unity. At the rate the Koreshans were selling off their land they would have sold everything by 1970 had not the trend been stopped.<sup>30</sup>

In 1960 only four Koreshans were left at this community home. Miss Michel, the youngest member of the group, was in her sixties. The utopians had reached the age where they could no longer attend to the maintenance of their community home. Seeing the dilemma they were in, Michel offered to the Florida State Board of Parks approximately three hundred acres of land to be named the "Koreshan State Park." On November 24, 1961, the transfer was completed whereas the Unity donated 272 acres of their land to the State Park System. Michel has retained the right to sue for the return of these lands if any provisions of the deed are violated. Although the State has violated Section F of the "Amendment to Deed and Trust and Agreement" by changing the park's name to Koreshan State Recreation Area, Michel has not filed action against the state. Her primary interest has been to preserve the community.<sup>31</sup>

Not only did Michel guarantee the existence of the Koreshan lands as such, but she has also begun the publication of the American

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<sup>30</sup>"Grantor Records, 1922-1960," Lee County Courthouse, Fort Myers, Florida, p. 517.

<sup>31</sup>"Deed and Trust Agreement between the Koreshan Unity and the State of Florida," pp. 1-5; "Amendment to Deed and Trust Agreement between the Koreshan Unity and the State of Florida," pp. 1-4.

Eagle once again. And in a surprise announcement at Dr. Teed's annual birthday party on October 18, 1972, she uncovered plans to build a reading room at the site of the old publishing house, and to begin the re-publication of Koreshan religious tracts.<sup>32</sup>

In short, the only action which has prevented the Koreshan Unity from passing into historical obscurity has been Hedwig Michel's actions to prevent this. This must be seen as a positive effect upon the Koreshan as well as on the state which now has a beautiful and important state park.

#### The Koreshan Unity Reassessed

Of all the religious utopian societies developed in the nineteenth century, the Koreshan Unity was quite possibly one of the most bizarre. It is difficult then to determine whether a study is being done in order to satisfy a morbid curiosity of the absurd, which Mark T. Holloway has suggested in his book Heavens on Earth, as the case in many instances; or if the study was done in order to aid in a greater degree of understanding of man. It would be satisfying to those who depend on parallels to compare the Koreshans with such a group as the German Harmonists who had a direct positive impression on each locale they were situated in. It could also bring a sigh of relief if the Koreshans had developed an industry to carry its name on as did Oneida and Amana. The

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<sup>32</sup>Speech by Hedwig Michel on October 18, 1972 at the Koreshan Unity Art Hall; The Koreshan reading room is to be built on property still owned by the Koreshan Unity, Inc. "Lee County Tax Rolls" place the value of the various land holdings in the county at \$140,800, according to the 1967 assessed values, with \$3,287.31 the aggregate taxes. Considering the boom in Florida and Lee County land values, the Koreshan lands have risen anywhere from five to ten times their 1967 assessed values, according to a county tax assessor, placing the value between \$704,000 and \$1,408,000. These lands include a commercial trailer park called Trail Acres as well as beach front property.

Koreshans did neither and thus they have become an obscure little community to the south of Fort Myers. Even in Lee County a mention of the Koreshan Unity will bring an inquisitive look of disbelief. Those who have heard of the Unity are only capable of citing a few unusual rumors concerning Ted spending seven days in a bathtub after he died and before he was buried, or else tales of "outsiders" visiting the Koreshans, never to be seen again. Is there a valid reason to study the Koreshan Unity or is an investigation of the Unity merely an exercise in the process of historical investigation and writing? Perhaps the study of a utopian community can be justified if it can be demonstrated that it presents a valid example of man's actions which will lead to a greater understanding of man. After all, the study of "history" must be something more than a display of the student's intellectual prowess.

With the idea of justifying an effort to seek comprehensive understanding of the Koreshan Unity, it would be wise to base such justification upon a statement by a modern day Koreshan--William Linton. Most Koreshans, or at least those who were once associated with the Unity, have a complete aversion towards any discussion of the community. They lack, or at least they do not display it in regards to Koreshanity, one completely human trait--faith. Mr. Linton is at this time anticipating the day when "thousands will flock to Estero for the return of the Master."<sup>33</sup> He possesses the faith that brought two-hundred and fifty Chicagoans into the endless swamps of Florida; the same faith that guided the Shaking Quakers as they followed "Mother" Ann Lee into the new world and as they persevered through their persecutions. Faith is a major

these throughout the history of eschatological organizations, and one which can offer a key to the common bond between man and Koreshans. Similar to the experience of the Rappites, the Koreshans were willing to follow their Messiah into a land that offered them little if any security. This experience suggests the strength of the power of faith that is capable of motivating man. Any insight into this human facility that a study of the Koreshan Unity could provide would certainly justify the work.

Still another insight the Unity provides is an understanding of a charismatic figure such as Cyrus Teed. As with James Nayler who lost any ability to distinguish between himself and the Nazarene, Teed believed himself to be the final manifestation of the seven incarnations of the Deity. Thus as they embarked on their great adventure to Florida, not only did the proselytes have faith in Teed, but he firmly was accepted as having divine position in the universe. For "It is the experience of some mystics that their own personality seems more and more to disappear, more and more to be replaced by the divine presence dwelling in them, identifying themselves with It. . . The prophet. . . come(s) to think that he (or she) is Jesus Christ. . ."34

Another purpose behind the study of the Koreshans is to see the social interchange between the community and Fort Myers. Though it never reached the stage that it did in Carthage, Illinois where Mormon Joseph Smith was murdered, it did approach such a situation when Teed was beaten in the city streets. As with Mormons, the Koreshans actively engaged in attempts to gain political dominance in their own locale.

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<sup>34</sup> Knox, Enthusiasm, p. 159.



Each group suffered ostracism as they were defeated in their attempts to control their neighbors.

In delving into the relationship between Lee County and the Koreshans a theme comes to the surface which has been predominate in most idealistic societies. When the Puritans traveled to their new home in North America their idea was to set up a perfect society which might serve as a guide for the mother country to follow. The Koreshans also sought to develop a society so refined that others would be anxious to join in. But utopians have had the tendency to be an impatient lot, and have sought to bring about conformity to their standards before they themselves have attained their ideals. The outcome has often been repeated. The jealousy that was aroused when the Koreshans attempted to dominate Estero and Lee County community affairs alienated the county and thus prevented a cordial relationship from ever developing. They attempted to set up a millennial society which would be emulated by the world. Instead of developing their society first they attempted to develop Lee County emulation. Certainly the effort to develop friendly relations with Fort Myers must be seen as a failure on the part of the Koreshans.

With an overview of the development of the Koreshan Unity during the years which Teed held the reins of leadership to what extent can the community be considered successful, and what would be the criteria for such a stance? The most obvious view would be that the Koreshan Unity failed, for utopian experiments are all too often "deemed" failures. These failures are attributed to the fact that the communities never achieve their grandiose goals. It is a valid generalization to note then that all such communal experiments have been failures. Father Rapp has never come to lead the Harmonists to the new millennium; the

chilistic expectations of the Shakers have never been fulfilled; and the Koreshans have yet to see Estero become the center of the new world order. Each group has in common the fact that they failed to achieve their ultimate goals. Did the members of these groups ever fulfill physical and psychological needs and thus satisfy man's quest for security? Were the Koreshans successful in offering its members an alternative to the American life experience at the turn of the century?

To discuss member satisfaction at the Koreshan Unity is a difficult task. No writings other than religious tracts and newspapers remain from the community. But there are a few hints given by ex-Koreshans who left the Unity for either the "outside" world or another communal organization. Both Samuel Armour, an ex-Koreshan residing in Tampa in 1908 and Peter Hanson, a former Unity member living at Llano Co-operative Colony at New Llano, Louisiana in 1924, defended the efforts of their former comrades.<sup>35</sup> Their disagreement with the colony came with the explanation of the hollow earth concept. It would appear then that they had been satisfied with most aspects of their life at Estero. What did the Unity have to offer those who came to Florida of their own volition in 1894?

First and foremost there was the sense every member of a religious utopian community felt: the sense of mission. They had come to Florida to prepare for the earthly millennium. This must have supplied many of the communalists with the innate human need of job satisfaction.

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<sup>35</sup> Earnest S. Wooster, Communities of the Past and Present (New Llano, Louisiana: Llano Colonist, 1924), p. 101. Wooster calls Hanson, "an enthusiastic believer in the creed and in the other principles of Koreshanity."; "Koresh is Not Free Love Says Former Member," TMT, December 28, 1908, p. 8. Armour left the Unity due to his disagreement with the hollow earth concept.

Their work, spurred on by their deep-seated sense of duty, supplied them with all their physical and psychological needs. They experienced adventure and yet they lacked the sense of competition within their own field, and were thus able to establish a certain feeling of security. These components together gave the utopians a life style far superior to their former situations in Chicago.

From a short term perspective, the Koreshan Unity must be termed a successful utopian experiment. True, the community undertook several enterprises that were abortive: the most notable being the political campaign of 1906. Yet these were not projects which directly effected the survival of a utopian colony. The success of the Koreshans may be measured in terms of their relative effectiveness in their main endeavor which was to offer Americans an alternative to their conventional way of life.

Considering the long term perspective, though, Koreshanity must be deemed a failure, for member satisfaction declined following Teed's death due to his inability to fulfill the expected resurrection. In the final analysis religious communities in general fail to offer permanent member satisfaction due to the failure of the Teeds to be resurrected from the dead as well as the failure of the millennium to materialize.

What is in store for the Koreshan Unity in Florida? The community has all but disappeared. Miss Michel is now the sole remaining member. At least when she dies there will remain the Koreshan State Park, saved only by her forethought. In recent years the State of Florida has been considering the idea of restoring the communal buildings and grounds as they were in Teed's time. If such a worthwhile idea is ever implemented

the "Koreshan State Historical Site"<sup>36</sup> shall serve as a constant reminder to those who visit the old community that there are no limits to the power of man's faith.

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<sup>36</sup>The name "Koreshan State Historical Site" is the alternative name which the Amendment to the Deed authorizes.

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