

The Journies of
The
IRON MAN



August 28, 2017

Jean,

I affirm you are well.

This communication is in response to an email inquiry from Beret Griffith.

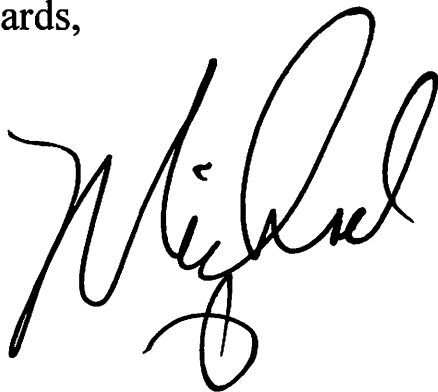
Enclosed is a collection of 33 of the 37 stories of *The Journeys of the Iron Man* that made it through the print shop of the Ecumenical Institute from August of 1972 through June of 1973. These 33 were re-printed in December of 1991 in preparation for the 20th Reunion of the 2nd Generation of the Order. You will find the context on the opening pages if this is of interest.

We have, in great Order tradition, maintained all of the grammatical and spelling errors (including on the title page).

Thank you for all of the work you continue to do with the Archives.

Let me know if there is anything else we can do to be helpful.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael May". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large loops and a prominent initial "M".

Michael May

Bloomington
December 11, 1991

As I approach the twentieth anniversary of what for many of us was a dramatic and intensely formational period in our lives, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. Gratitude, not because it was all such a wonderful experience, it wasn't; but, because I had an opportunity to intimately participate in a community which sought some answers in some right places and which valued some values which needed to be valued.

As I have re-read the stories that follow, most of them for the first time in 20 years, I am forced to remember an idealistic, highly-impressionable young man from a quiet midwestern university town in Southern Indiana. At age 21, he had just left for the big city to save, or at least 'radically fix' the world. From my present point of grown-up maturity, I must humbly confess that I haven't saved much of anything, certainly not the world, probably not myself. Yet, remembering through these stories the unique life we shared, I have a new perspective on who I am. Now when people ask me "what did you do before this?" or "you're not like everybody else, how did you get to be like this?," I am still not so foolish as to try to answer them. However, I have a little warmer feeling inside as I provide a nonanswer and internally remember the unbelievable life we really lived.

I am still not entirely certain why I decided to dust off and open the cardboard Rhinelander beer case that has been home to the Iron Man stories for the past 20 years. I could blame it on some of you who, for whatever motivations, have actually asked for copies. You would recognize this, I'm certain, as a cheap excuse. Perhaps, I hoped to gain some perspective upon the unique moment in history and life that we shared and that shaped us. Twenty years later, we are all very different spirits because of it. As I have labored through some and celebrated other letters to "Conversations," I have felt compelled to communicate. I decided the first step in the process needed to be a communication with myself as to what went on twenty years ago. Out of some weird logic, the adventures of The Iron Man began to bring back some clues that had been deeply buried for a long time. I share these stories with a hope that they might shed some light upon the real and the imagined world within which we all had a chance to grow up. Little did I know that many of the transcripts would finally be typed, not by me, but by my 16 year old son who wasn't even a thought

in my mind. Nor did it occur to me that I would someday be married to one of the young spirits I was inflicting these stories upon. Isn't life something!

We have reproduced the original stories in their complete, uncut, and uncensored versions. Sorry. All of the original jargon, etc. remains. Only a few typos and misspellings have been added. If you can't remember, or never knew, what some of the particular jargon is referring to, such questions will make excellent material for a renewed conversation with your parents about what in the world they were doing 20 years ago.

Furthermore, if you are struck, as I have been, with the somewhat violent flavor of many of the Iron Man stories, let me offer a weak, but truthful explanation. Without question, the most dreadful of all assignments during my first year in The Order was to supervise the children's (alias: "emerging generation") breakfast in the Chapel basement. As some of you will recall, this was an exercise where a hundred or so very tired, irritable, and hungry children of diverse ages were placed at many tables in one huge room with 3 or 4 adults or semi-adults to supervise them. While the children were distributing (throwing) the cold, donated, toasted, stale bread, the globs of grits (also cold, also donated), and the powdered milk (made from fresh Chicago ghetto tap water), one of the designated adults would then have the unfortunate assignment of leading the entire group in an indepth conversation about a scripture verse. They would then relate these insights to some of the daily events in the news. Thus, a 'scripture-news conversation.' In my early days in The Order, I watched many otherwise confident and composed adult pedagogues reduced to quivering, slobbering, blobs of ineffective cowardice in the face of this unforgiving audience. Then one day it was my turn.

Fortunately, I was assigned to read an Old Testament passage which included a fierce bloody battle between two armies, somebody sleeping with somebody else's wife, and somebody else getting burnt up in a fiery furnace. For the first time in my encounter with the children of The Order, I experienced a couple of brief moments of silence, actually attention, as the most gruesome or suggestive passages were read. And, as the moment of attention was captured, some level of almost profound interchange occurred. I learned something about people that day.

Thus began The Journeys of the Iron Man.

I hope sharing these stories with each other for the second time will provide some new insights, some old memories, and some heartfelt laughs.

On the Journey.....

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael". Below the signature is a small, stylized symbol that resembles a dollar sign with a horizontal line through it.

Historical Context

A collection of 37 stories of The Journeys of the Iron Man were written over a period from August of 1972 through June of 1973. Most are included in this document.

Should this document fall into the hands of unsuspecting individuals who were not participants as 'Order Youth,' 'Emerging Generation,' 'Phase One,' or students in 'The Student House' during the decade of the 1970's, a few words of explanation might be helpful.

These stories were written for live oral presentation at the conclusion of community meals for the children and young people of the Ecumenical Institute. A conversation would then follow. The intent of the stories was to serve as curriculum in grounding for children abstract theological and poetic concepts created by intellectually-imbalanced adults. Most of the central poetic images and intellectual content was derived from a creation of what The Institute called The Other World Charts. The central image or concept is indicated at the beginning of each story.

The Other World concept was an effort to capture in poetic imagery the spiritual dimension of life in the midst of the everyday mundane events of ordinary people. Thus, the scene is created for Iron Man who struggles incessantly with the paradox of living in the consciousness of one who is both driven by the everyday cares of 'this world' and the awareness of a higher self (The Other World) within human existence.

The Mountain of Care

August 17, 1972

Iron Man Journey #1

IRON MEN ONLY WEEP FOR OTHERS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Mountain of Care. The day was hot and steamy and it seemed to be the worst day of the year to climb on the treacherous peaks and cliffs of the Mountain of Care. But Iron Man knew that his life was only lived as he received it gratefully each new day---whatever that day might bring. And this hot and sweltering day was no exception, for Iron Man had decided that this was the day to climb to the top of the mountain to do some serious reflection and meditation.

Rather than taking some of the easy paths ascending slowly around the mountain, the Iron Man began his climb on one of the steepest and tallest cliffs. Again and again throwing his rope above him to catch a secure boulder, Iron Man struggled with all of his might in this way almost a third of the way up the mountain. As he reached the edge of the top of the cliff, he stretched to put his left hand over the side and grasp something solid to pull himself up. But as his hand closed tightly, it was not around the solid rock for which he was searching, but a thorn-laden Mountain-Sword Cactus plant. The thorns pierced through Iron Man's hand and the pain was so great that he nearly let go of his rope---plunging to a certain death, splattered across the jagged rocks hundreds of feet below. But with his right hand he held onto the rope and swung suspended in air with blood pouring profusely out of his deeply gouged left hand. With all of his energy, he got his body swinging so that he was soon able to flip his legs up over the edge of the cliff. From there he rolled to safety on the ledge. Iron Man did not cry or complain. He merely got up and walked over to a nearby mountain stream. There he said a prayer of gratitude for the clean water and washed out his wounds.

Iron Man then set out on the steep trail which led up to the summit of the mountain. Before he had walked very far, he came upon a group of the Emerging Generation who were sitting on the trail. All were hot, tired, and sweaty--and four of the smaller children were crying. They had set

discouraged and sat resting----waiting for the energy to complete their journey. Iron Man walked up to them and immediately saw that several of the group had decided not to be their greatness. His first words to them were, "Grace Be Yours and Peace."

E.G.- "From God Our Father And The Lord Jesus Christ."

Iron Man- "Amen."

E.G.- "Amen."

He then said to them, "Get up and come with me to the top of the mountain. Iron Men do not save their energy for some time in the future, they expend it all in the task of the present moment. For Iron Men know that there may never be another day---but the present day is here and it is his to live. The task at hand always requires all one's strength."

With this they all followed behind Iron Man and were surprised to find how easy the walking seemed now. On the way up the path they were passed by Jelly Man who was on his way down the mountain. Jelly Man had been eating wild blueberries all over the mountain and his fat shook all about him as he waddled by them. He smiled as he went down the path but they all knew that he was a very sad man for he tried to live his whole life only for himself. He only grew fatter and fatter with each passing day as he found himself to be a slave to all of the compulsions and lusts of this world.

As they rounded the next bend, the emerging generation was simply amazed to see before them the top of the Mountain of Care. They could not believe they had really made it.

But they were even more surprised as they watched Iron Man while he looked at the City of This World far, far beneath them. For on his cheeks there could be seen tears rolling down as he wept silently. One of the group walked up to Iron Man and asked him, "Iron Man, why are you crying?---Iron Men don't cry."

"In a way you are right," said Iron Man. "Iron Men never cry for themselves, they only weep for others. And there are many people in that city who are losing their lives, for they do not know the truth as you do--- they do not know that life is a precious gift and that they are free to decide. Instead, they have sold their freedom for many passing this-worldly things. It is for them that I weep."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

E.G.- "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man- "Amen."

E.G.- "Amen."

The River of Consciousness

August 18, 1972

Iron Man Journey #2

Iron Men Expose Their Creativity

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the River of Consciousness. Iron Man had been assigned to paddle his canoe up some of the unexplored tributaries of the River of Consciousness which flowed deep into the most terrifying jungles of the Land of Mystery. Iron Man's prior had sent him out to recruit some of the native chiefs and witch doctors for the Caracus ITI which would come at the end of the month.

Iron Man's guide, who was travelling in the front of the canoe, was Excuse Man. Excuse man had brought his dog, Droopy, with him. Droopy set between them in the middle of the canoe.

On the floor of the canoe was a terrible mess of fishing gear which Excuse Man had just dumped when he entered. He did not know that Iron Men always keep their things neat and picked up so that they're ready for use when they're needed. Iron Man then said to Excuse Man, "Why don't you clean up all of the fishing gear so that it will be ready if we see a school of fish?"

Excuse man only shrugged his shoulders and said, "I'll do it later when I'm not so tired."

Before long, Droopy was walking around in the canoe and stepped on a big fishing hook which jabbed deep into his paw. Droopy began barking wildly in great pain as he jumped all over the canoe. He jumped so much that he soon fell out of the boat and found himself floundering in the river. The blood from his foot was oozing out and spreading through the water.

Iron Man then yelled to Excuse Man who was closest to the dog, "Grab him quickly before the deadly Piranha fish smell his blood in the water and eat him alive!"

Excuse man replied, "I think its too far for me to reach, why don't we just wait and see what happens?"

But he had already waited too long for in another five seconds the Pirahna began to attack. Iron Man could now only watch the horrible scene as the viscious fish devoured the small yelping dog. Within another thirty seconds there was nothing left but many white bone chips floating on the surface. Iron Man bowed his head in silent prayer for the tragic end of Droopy's life.

Iron Man and Excuse Man continued alone down the river. Several hours later, after penetrating deep into the mysterious jungle, Iron Man noticed something moving in the bushes along the river bank. In an instant a whirring sound was heard in the air and a spear pierced the side of the boat. Then another spear came flying at them from behind the bushes--- and then another, and another, and another. With spears and poison darts and flaming arrows filling the air, Iron Man stood up in the canoe in the Iron Man Stance and cried out, "The Lord Be With You!"

Natives- "And With Thy Spirit."

Iron Man- "Amen."

Natives- "Amen."

The native warriors then knew that Iron Man was a colleague in the global spirit movement and immediately ceased firing. They began to push their own canoes into the water. Soon the native canoes pulled alongside of Iron Man's canoe and their spokesman said, "Follow us, and we will take you to the village of the Fish Eaters where you may join in council with Chief Flowing Rapids.

As they all paddled down the River of Consciousness together, Excuse Man---still trembling and shaking on the bottom of the canoe, asked Iron Man, "How could you be so brave to stand up like that? Why weren't you scared like me?"

Iron Man then replied, "Never be afraid of those who can hurt or kill your body in this world, but only be scared of the mystery of life which can take away your freedom which comes from the other world."

Excuse Man was not sure that he had understood what Iron Man had said to him but in his interior deeps he wished that he could be brave too.

They had, by this time, arrived at the tribe of the Fish Eaters and Chief Flowing Rapids was standing near the shore to greet them. Behind him were gathered all of the leaders of the tribe as well as the witch doctors and high priests. Iron Man walked boldly before them all and said, "Grace Be Yours and Peace."

Tribe- "From God Our Father And The Lord Jesus Christ."

Iron Man- "Amen."

Tribe- "Amen."

He continued to speak, "I am Iron Man and I have been assigned here by the global order to recruit you, Chief Flowing Rapids, and all of the leaders of the Fish Eater's Tribe, for the Caracas ITI which will be held next month."

Chief Flowing Rapids then replied, "Our tribe is deeply honored that you have called us to participate in this great event but I fear that none of us will be able to attend, for we are now in the midst of a great internal crisis. It is now the mating season for the fish of the River of Consciousness and all they want to do is make love and build their homes. They are no longer the least bit interested in eating the worms that we put on our fishing hooks. As a result, most of our tribe is starving to death. Even our strong men do not have enough energy anymore to work in the Forest of Rubber Trees. We can only come to the ITI if somehow this contradiction is overcome."

Iron Man then stood for several tense moments in deep thought. Then without waiting another minute, he walked over to one of the rubber trees that was being drained into a bucket. He dipped his hands into the rubbery substance and began to smear it all over his muscular body. Within no time at all he was covered from head to foot with a rubber layer. He then moved swiftly to the river and dove in. Swimming below him was a dangerous fresh-water sword fish with one of the sharpest and longest swords Iron Man had ever seen. With all of his power, Iron Man then reached out and grabbed the huge fish in the Iron Man head lock and wrestled it to the bottom of the river. Summoning his total strength, Iron Man slammed the fish's head against a rock and broke off the spear. The sword fish flopped off down the river in great pain as Iron Man rushed to the surface to get a breath of air. After several gasps, he dove down again, picked up the spear off the bottom, and began swimming toward the

dark cave in the middle of the river. For Iron Man knew what lived in that cave. And indeed, peering out of the blackness of the cave were the two blood-filled eyes of the most viscious and power-charged electric eel in the entire River of Consiousness. Before he could strike, Iron Man jabbed the spear through the evil eel's neck and immediately the eel charged the whole river with it's electrical shock. For miles, up and down the river, stunned fish began floating to the surface

as they were totally knocked out by the current of electricity. A shout of joy went up from the natives as they began to fill the canoes with thousands of fish. Iron Man, of course, had been protected from the shock by the insulation of the rubber layer all around him.

As he climbed out of the river, Chief Flowing Rapids said to him, "You have saved the Tribe of Fish Eaters from certain death and destruction. Not only will I and my staff be at the Caracas ITI, but also the chiefs from all the tribes across the jungle of the Land of Mystery."

Excuse Man, simply amazed at all that he had seen, asked Iron Man how he knew to do all of that? Iron Man replied, "Iron Men do not hide their creativity; they make it visible for all to see by freely inventing in every moment of their lives."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Tribe- "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man- "Amen."

Tribe- "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

August 19, 1972

Iron Man Journey #3

CHILDREN'S EUCHARIST: IRON MEN HAVE NO PROBLEMS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out for his journey upon the Sea of Tranquility. His yacht sailed across the silk-smooth waters of this glorious silent sea. Contentment reigned in Iron Man's being as he was consumed by the unspeakable joy which is found only at life's center.

Iron Man, in this moment, experienced a reunion with all of life. He felt strangely as though he was one with all the past and all the future; that he was one with all of creation. As he looked over the waters which seemed to stretch forever, the smoothness of the sea was unbroken. Then, suddenly, a floating object appeared on the horizon.

As Iron Man drew near, he saw that the object was a broken piece of a wrecked ship. Hanging onto this floating fragment for his very life was none other than Complainer Man. Iron Man drew alongside the wreckage and pulled Complainer Man aboard. "What Happened?" asked Iron Man.

Complainer Man answered, "My crew and I were over one of the deepest trenches of the Sea of Tranquility hunting for Killer Whales. The skin of the Killer Whale is now being used to make fancy shoes and wealthy people will pay a lot of money for them. So we were off to harpoon a whale or two and become rich. The problem was that we found a school of some of the biggest Killer Whales to be seen anywhere in the Sea of Tranquility. In fact, when we shot a harpoon into one of the biggest and meanest ones, he simply turned around, and at full speed, rammed our boat. Wreckage and bodies went flying everywhere. The problem was that the boat wasn't sturdy enough. The Killer Whale then circled around again and ate up all of the crew who were still trying to swim in the turbulent wake of the whale. The problem was that they were not very good swimmers. I was the only one who was able to climb to safety before I was wholly devoured by the merciless creature."

"You should be very thankful," commented Iron Man.

"The problem is," responded Complainer Man, "that I would really

rather be dead. After all, who could ever find peace and happiness in a world where Killer Whales wreck boats and eat men alive?"

Iron Man then grew very thoughtful and said, "Only Iron Men can find peace and hapiness in this world---for they always live their lives before the Word which reminds them that All is Good, All is Received, All is Approved, and All is Possible."

As they sailed on, many storm clouds soon began to fill the sky and Complainer Man warned, "A violent hurricaine is developing in front of us, we'd better get back to shore immediately or we'll be wiped out for sure!!"

Iron Man only replied with a deep and hearty laughter. Complainer Man could not understand at all how he could be so happy in the face of such a frightening storm.

Soon indeed the winds began to roar across the sea. Turbulent waves arose to heights that could have destoyed skyscrapers. The sky was black with clouds that poured forth rain and hail which churned the already swirling seas. Lightning cut through the dark and electrified waters all about--killing thousands of fish and creating thunder which nearly pierced the eardrums as it exploded. Iron Man's yacht was tossed about like a ping pong ball in a washing machine. Iron Man stood firmly at the wheel of his craft---never flinching a muscle and never losing his nerve. But Complainer Man had crawled under the covers of one of the bunks. He simply laid there cursing and feeling sorry for himself.

This grueling battle continued for Iron Man throughout the night. It was not until the morning that the first rays of sun broke through and touched the now still waters. Iron Man let go of the heavy wheel and walked into his room where Complainer Man was already stuffing himself with Cheerios, blueberry pancakes, orange juice, toast and jelly, bacon, sausage, fried bisquits with honey, and coffee with cream and sugar. As Iron Man walked in, Complainer Man said, "That is the worst stove I have ever used, you ought to get a new one."

Iron Man did not say anything but silently went to the cupboard and pulled out a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. He then sat down at the table, bowed his head, and said a silent prayer thanking God for bringing

the ship safely through the storm.

Complainer Man then asked Iron Man why he wasn't mad about all of the problems which they had experienced during the past hours.

Iron Man turned his eyes out the porthole and looked longingly into the sky. He then said, "Complainer Man, your struggle is that you do not really love your life---you hate it. You hate it because you hate to live all of the situations which make up your life . Life in this world is always full of problems and trouble and pain and sorrow and despair and death. Life, in this world; like this bread, is broken (BREAK BREAD); like this wine, is spilled out (SPILL WINE). But my home is not in this world. My home is in the other world--which is found at the center of life.

And in the other world there are no problems, there is unspeakable joy and endless life. That is why Iron Men have no problems. For Iron Men take all of the brokenness of life (EAT BREAD); and and all of the spilledoutness of life (DRINK WINE); into themselves and become one with it and all of creation. Thus, Iron Men have no problems.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN NEVER LOOK BACK

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Land of Mystery. The sun was just rising and glared down on Iron Man as he pushed his powerful Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle out of the garage. Iron Man stood tall in the saddle and with all his might he kicked the starter peddle down. In an instant the fiery engine ignited and the combustion of gasoline filled the air with bursts that sounded like thunder and echoed throughout the legnth of the valley.

Iron Man then tightened his fist around the throttle as he revved up the engine----KA - ROOM! KA - ROOM! KA - ROOM! Then, with his left hand, Iron Man popped the clutch of his mighty Greeves 250. The back wheel gripped at the dirt of the road as the front wheel raised straight up in the air. Iron Man held on tight as he popped one of the most terrifying wheelies of his career. For three hundred yards he held the front wheel off the road. People throughout the valley gazed out their windows in amazement at the spectacle. Iron Man roared on through the valley toward the Forest of Frightful Finiteness deep in the heart of the Land of Mystery.

Before two hours had passed, Iron Man reached the trail which led into the forest. But as he began to guide his motorcycle down the narrow and winding dirt path, he noticed that certain items of trash had been carelessly dropped on the trail. First Iron Man encountered a Spearmint chewing gum wrapper. A little further, he spotted an empty Cherrios Box, and then a paper cup, and then an orange peel, then a peach seed, a plastic spoon, a paper plate, a candy bar wrapper, and finally a lost shoe. Iron Man was growing very angry for he knew that all disciplined Iron Men kept the corporate areas of the forest clean and fastidious. So he sped more rapidly down the trail and very soon encounted another motorcycle---the one creating all the mess. And who was it? None other than Litter Man.

Just as Iron Man was approaching Litter Man from the rear, he watched Litter Man finish eating a big fat banana and then throw the peel right on the trail. At that point Litter Man caught a glimpse of Iron Man coming upon him. Litter Man was very scared for he knew that Iron Man wouldn't

put up with such foolish behavior as throwing trash on the ground and not in a trash can where it belongs. So the chase began. Litter Man tore off up the dirt trail on his big Bultaco Matador 250 Scrambler Motorcycle. Iron Man was close behind and the two rode at top speed deep into the Forest of Frightful Finiteness. As they raced down the rugged trail, again and again it was necessary to dodge trees, and boulders, and bushes, and huge holes and pits. Any one of these obstacles had the capacity to wipe out a motorcycle at such fantastic speeds.

As Iron Man turned one corner in the trail he had to lean the motorcycle nearly all the way on its side to make it around. In fact, he leaned so hard that the right handlebar dug into the trail as he spun around the curve---throwing dirt and mud everywhere. Iron Man could barely see as mud covered his motorcycle racing goggles.

As the motorcycle became level once again and Iron Man wiped the mud off his goggles, he saw standing on the trail before him a member of the Frightful Falls Cadre. Iron Man rode up to him and stopped. The cadreman then began to tell his story. "My prioress, Miss Terie, and I were riding through the Forest of Frightful Finiteness doing seventeenth-level penetration. We were recruiting some of the hermits who live in these hills for the CSIIIA course in two weeks.

Suddenly Iron Man's thoughts began to wander as he heard the name 'Miss Terie.' For he remembered well the beautiful, the stunning, the intoxicatingly prioress of the Frightful Falls Cadre. Her radiance was an address on all that met her. By far, she was the best PLC recruiter in the region. Iron Man himself knew he had always had a profound attachment for this magnificent person. After these fleeting thoughts, Iron Man tuned back into what the cadreman was telling him.

The cadreman continued, "We were riding through the deep gorge when we came to the overflowing Contingency Creek. The recent rains had flooded the creek so that it was very very deep. Miss Terie was leading the way and did not know the creek was flooded. When she came to it her hot Honda 350 Scrambler Motorcycle was going much too fast to stop. She hit the breaks but this only flipped the motorcycle high into the air where it fell upsidedown onto Miss Terie in the middle of the creek. Both the Honda 350 Scrambler Motorcycle and Miss Terie sank to the bottom of the deep creek never to be seen again. The cold dark-blue waters of Contingency Creek now flow over the dead body of Miss Terie."

Iron Man was very sad, his heart was filled with terror. Not only did he feel deep sorrow for Miss Terie's tragic end, but he was reminded that he too and all men must die---for death is the completion of a man's life in this world. But because Iron Man knew that his final home was not in this world but in the other world, where there is endless life and deathlessness, he quickly bracketed his own anxieties so that the cadreman would not be afraid and they could both move into the future together.

Iron Man then spoke, "Come with me you sad and weary cadreman. We must finish the task of RS-1 recruitment for the sake of the mission."

"But I can't leave now," sobbed the cadreman, "what about poor dead Miss Terie?"

In a sober voice Iron Man replied, "The Iron Man who sets his motorcycle to the trail and looks back again is lost for the Other World."

Together they rode back down the trail. Before long they came upon a fiery wreck in the middle of the path. Standing by the side of the trail watching his big Bultaco Matador 250 Scrambler motorcycle burn was a very sad Litter Man.

Iron Man and the cadreman came up to the flaming scene and could see immediately what had happened. For there on the trail was the same banana peel Litter Man had thrown down earlier. As he had returned over the path, his tire had slipped on the peel and the motorcycle had wrecked against a large Oak tree. The gas tank had then ignited. In another couple of flaming minutes there would be nothing left of the big Bultaco Matador 250 Scrambler Motorcycle other than a pile of cinders.

Iron Man then said to Litter Man, "You have acted foolishly and irresponsibly and now you have paid for your own misdeeds. But you are free to move into the future and, from this day forth, to help pick up and keep clean all of the corporate forests. For all the earth belongs to everyone. And now I want you to walk all the way down the trail and pick up all the trash---even that which you didn't leave.

As Litter Man walked off down the trail picking up trash, Iron Man turned to Litter Man and said, "Iron Men love their colleagues by reminding them of their responsibilities."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN EXPEND THEIR PASSION

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Mountain of Care. He climbed aboard the big yellow bus. Following him up the stairs were twelve of the roughest, strongest, most powerful, most dynamic, most energy-filled Iron Men in the entire Emerging Generation. These were four preschoolers and eight older E.G. All were on their way for a four-day trail camp on the Mountain of Care. After a short drive, the mighty yellow bus arrived at the Mountain of Care and was quickly unloaded. Iron Man then distributed the corporate food and supplies so each hiker would carry whatever he was able. All the packs were then filled and made ready to strap on each hiker's back. But before they set out on the rugged trail, Iron Man roared, "All right Iron Men, line up for your Iron Man Exercises!" All got quickly into place and within moments blood was pulsating with power through all their veins as each went through the drama of the Iron-Man Twirlers, the Iron-Man Stretcher, the terrible and the terrifying Iron-Man Tummy Toughener Twister, the Iron-Man Toe Touchers, and finally the muscle-bulging, power-fortifying Iron Man Hand Stand. As the Emerging Generation watched the Iron Man do his handstand, they were held in utter awe at how long he could stay up without shaking or falling. One of the boys then told Iron Man, "I can't do the hand stand because I am weak and my muscles are small, but you couldn't understand that because you're so strong."

Iron Man grew thoughtful for he knew immediately that he must not let anyone misunderstand the truth about him and all human beings. So Iron Man told them all, "Iron Men by themselves are weak and crummy, no matter how big their muscles are---it is only their freedom, which is a gift from the other world, that gives them their strength and their power."

Everyone was surprised and could hardly believe that Iron Man would say he was weak and that his strength only had something to do with his freedom which came from the other world. But they all believed that Iron Man knew what he was talking about. So they put on their packs and hit

the trail.

After a hard day of ascending slowly up the mountain, the weary group stopped at the first evening's campsite. Several were assigned to set up tents. Some were assigned to prepare the food for the evening meal, and the preschoolers to gather firewood. Each had his own singular mission to perform.

Within a short time, a raging fire licked with its many tongues at the feast that was now sizzling in utterly tantalizing appeal above the dancing flames. Yes, there, for all to see, slowly turning in the caressing fingers of fire were twenty-four golden-red, big, fat, juicy hot dogs. The aroma from these savory roasting wienies was so profound as to leave one in a state of seduction by mystery. For the desire which was thereby aroused transcended any transient hope of a finite hot dog---here one minute and gone the next---it was indeed a lust after life itself; a human passion probably only possible to experience on the Mountain of Care.

Iron Man called the entire group to their various places around the fire. After singing 'Amazing Grace,' 'Once You are Aware,' and 'In the World of Spirit,' Iron Man called for accountability.

The boys were all accounted for. The girls were all accounted for. But all stood in horror and fear when it was revealed that one of the preschoolers was missing---for he had not returned from gathering firewood out in the darkness of the dense Forest of This-Worldly Destiny. Yet Iron Man spoke; "I am going after the one who is lost."

All were shocked and immediately the boys warned; "Iron Man, if you leave now you will miss our feast of hot dogs and marshmallows."

Iron Man immediately retorted, "Is not life more than food? Isn't living more important than hot dogs and marshmallows? Indeed, one preschooler lost in the forest is more important than ninety-nine who are safe in their sleeping bags back at camp."

All eleven members of the Emerging Generation who were safe around the warm campfire had puzzled looks on their faces. They could not

understand how one lost child could be more important to Iron Man than ninety-nine who were safe and sound. But before they had a chance to ask a question, Iron Man had turned around and disappeared into the eerie blackness of the night forest.

Iron Man trudged through the thick bushes and briars that covered the floor of the forest. As he moved he heard above him a mysterious owl. "Who, Who, Who," called the owl. On his right side Iron Man watched a mother black bear and her three cubs go bounding through the underbrush as he approached. And to his left could be seen the moon's reflection in the ten eyes of a family of viscious grey mountain wolves. As he looked up toward the moon, Iron Man could see a gigantic swirling mass of black cave bats as they circled above him.

But then, in an instant, the entire forest grew silent as there came from across the ridge the most terrifying scream ever to cut through the night air---piercing the darkness of the dense Forest of This-Worldly Destiny. Iron Man stood dead still. The scream came again and again and again---sounding much like a woman undergoing the most painful childbirth. But no creature had a doubt from where the scream came; it was none other than the sleek and seductive powerful prioress of the mountain's animal kingdom, Passion Panther. As Passion Panther continued her shrill screams, Iron Man was filled with both fear and fascination. Yet deep in his interior he wondered if he would ever find the lost preschooler alive.

But Iron Man was soon to have an answer. Before he could take another step he heard the warning rattle of a deadly-poisonous ten foot long timber rattlesnake. Iron Man could clearly see the viscious viper exhibiting its vibrant powers as its head swayed back and forth over the heavy thick coils of his large scaley body. His forked tongue flipped out again and again and the serpent's incessant hissing filled with terror and dread the trembling three and a half year old preschooler who stood directly before it on the rugged trail. Before Iron Man could move an inch, the terrible timber struck it's fangs deep into the child's exposed leg. The viper's viscious venom shot through the boy's veins creating a stinging that can only be known by those who have experienced such an attack. The snake then whipped away its head and quickly crawled into a nearby hole.

Iron Man wasted not a second as he withdrew his razor-sharp beast-skinning knife from its sheath. With a surgeon's precision he then sliced over the two fang marks with the sign of the Iron Cross. Applying his lips over the crosses, Iron Man began to suck out much of the poisoned preschooler's blood before it could get any further into his system.

As the morning sun rose over the Mountain of Care, Iron Man walked into camp carrying the shaken, but alive, preschooler. Hurridly, the rest of the group gathered and Iron Man spoke; "For the return and the safety of this lost one, we have much to be thankful---let us celebrate this event by singing 'Praise The Lord All Nations'." (SING).

Iron Man then continued, "It is only Iron Men who can totally expend their passion in serving this world and loving its cares, for they alone know that they are totally loved by the mystery in the other world."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN TAKE THE HARD WAY

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Land of Mystery. Iron Man had been assigned five days of missional discontinuity. In making out his time line, Iron Man had decided to spend this discontinuity spelunking in the previously unexplored Cavern of Awakened Consciousness. Now the Cavern of Awakened Consciousness was not just any ordinary cave. It was one filled with mystery; a thousand legends and superstitions were told about it and believed by the people who lived in the surrounding metros. The cave itself was located in Security Sector and no one had even tried to enter it for many many years due to the terrifying stories as to its contents.

Yet the absurdity of Iron Man's decision to venture into the forbidden and ominous Cavern of Awakened Consciousness was that he really had no reason for doing so---none whatsoever!! He could not explain the alluring quality that the cave held for him. Yet it aroused a strange passion within him. He experienced the profound attraction of being seduced by the mystery. He simply knew himself to be absolutely driven to make this journey.

When he arrived at Security Sector, several of the local cadre members were sure that Iron Man had gone completely mad. Nonetheless, Iron Man soon found himself standing before the perilous black pit which was the entrance to the much-feared cavern. The Security Sector Cadre had accompanied him to send him out into his adventure. Before beginning his descent into the deep hole, he asked if any of the cadremen would like to accompany him on this trek. All declined, saying that they had more important things to do than to engage in such a frivolous and time-wasting activity. After all, the many demands of the global movement were pressing and there was much doing to be done: RS-1 recruitment, PLC brochure designing and printing, galaxy meetings, cadre formulation, development, assignment rationales for the coming quarter, mini-sector gridding, family meetings, and celebrations. There was just so much to do.

With that, Iron Man grabbed a hold of his rope and signed off to the cadre: "The Lord Be With You."

Community: "And With Thy Spirit."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The walls of the pit were slippery from the waters of the Stream of Solitariness which trickled into the cavern. Above him, Iron Man caught a last glimpse of the sides of the trees of the Forest of Final Limits as they soon disappeared from visible sight. Iron Man continued down and down and down the slippery steep walls of the deep dark pit. After several hundred feet, Iron Man felt his feet hit solid ground. He released his rope and shined his light all around. Several tunnels channeled off into the walls of rock but Iron Man chose to follow the one through which the Stream of Solitariness flowed along the bottom. The ceiling of the tunnelway was not more than five feet from the floor and Iron Man had to stoop low as he sloshed through the stream. Soon he came to a huge chamber. Stalagmites hanging down from the ceiling sparkled as the beams of his light were mirrored in the crystals they contained. Sharp stalagmites raised jagged peaks from the floor of this gigantic room and proved to be a threatening sight. Iron Man followed the stream through the room until it disappeared into another tunnel on the far wall. As he prepared to enter the narrow tunnel, his light fell upon an object resting in the middle of the Stream of Solitariness which filled his being with a terror and fear human words cannot articulate. Iron Man felt the coils of his brain being ripped apart as his terror-struck eyes peered into the face of a craggy skull which must have been centuries old. But the depth of Iron Man's fear was not just because of the presence of the skull---for reflected in the water surrounding the primordial head was Iron Man's own face. Secretly, Iron Man wondered if this skull was that of the last human creature in history to enter the Cavern of Awakened Consciousness? Moreover, he wondered if the skull's fate and his own might not be the same?

Iron Man, however, knowing that Iron Men never allow their reflection on the past to block their movement into the future, stepped past the warning skull and into the lonely tunnel.

What Iron Man could not know was that at this very moment far above him over the Forest of Final Limits, a torrential rain was pouring forth

creating a flash flood. The Stream of Solitariness, only a trickle few short hours before, was now a roaring turbulence of tumbling waters rushing into the cave and filling it from side to side and top to bottom. Within moments, the water Iron Man had just been sloshing easily through was up to his knees and beginning to push at him with great force. As Iron Man stooped low in the small tunnel he soon figured out what was happening. He knew he had only a minute or two in which to get off his heavy pack of supplies so that he would at least have a chance to fight the raging current and look for a trapped pocket of air. But the moment the last strap on his pack was undone, the force of the current pushed Iron Man off his feet and ripped his light from his hands. He gasped for each fleeting breath as he felt himself hurled down the tunnel in total darkness. Only a foot of air remained now between the ceiling and the water and Iron Man had to fight for each precious breath as again and again and again his body was rammed against the hard rock sides of the cave. In another minute the tunnel was full of water and Iron Man knew that he had probably just breathed the last breath of air of his life But suddenly: the rapids became still, the walls of rock all disappeared, and the sounds of turbulence became deathly silence as Iron Man felt himself thrust into a great liquid void. Only black silent water surrounded him as he was now not even certain which way was up and which way was down. Within seconds however the arms of Iron Man embraced what seemed to be a huge stalagmite. With the little strength left in his battered body, he pulled himself toward its top. In another second, the head of Iron Man broke through the unseen surface into a vast pocket of trapped air. His lungs filled with the sweet cool air that he had thought he would never taste again. Iron Man's eyes were opened wide but all he could see was dense and endless nothingness. Yet here he was, alive.

From the echoes of his splashing movements, Iron Man could discern that he was in a mammoth chamber, probably the very heart and center of the Cavern of Awakened Consciousness. He then released the rock stalagmite which had been his only anchor of orientation and allowed himself to float freely for several minutes. Finally as his arms reached out, his fingers grasped a ledge---a shoreline of some sort. Iron Man pulled himself atop it, crawled a few feet, then there in the blackness, Iron Man lay down to rest his battered body and brain. He slept for many hours.

As his eyes opened again, they encountered not the blackness in which he fell asleep, but a radiance of light which shown out of a small pool of water before which he was lying. Iron Man peered deep into the pool and saw it to be full of luminous cave fish. The eyes of the fish themselves were blind but their bodies emitted a glowing light which illuminated a considerable area.

Iron Man had by this time regained some of his strength and knew that he must begin looking for a new path out of the cave. It was certain that the way he had come in was not even a possibility, for, even if he could find it, it would be blocked with water for weeks. He could not go back. Iron Man reached into the pool and pulled out a handfull of the blind luminous fish. The fish soon died when exposed only to the air of this world, but the glowing radiance from their dead bodies continued to provide illumination for Iron Man's search.

Soon Iron Man came to two tunnels, side by side, both leading out of a huge chamber---the center of the cavern. One of the tunnels was large and wide and had a gradual slope---certainly it would have been the easiest to take. For the other was a small and narrow tunnel; it ascended sharply and its floor was craggy. But Iron Man had always disciplined himself to take the hardest way---for in this manner he would never allow himself to become soft and flabby by leading an easy life.

So into the narrow tunnel he entered, often having to crawl on his stomach over the jagged and broken rocks on the floor. Yet as the cave widened and he pushed through to a new area, Iron Man could see an opening into light. Soon he was walking without bending. In another moment, he was standing once again in the light of day. He had come out at a previously unknown point in the Forest of Final Limits. As he gazed about, he experienced a deepened adoration for this strange forest and the secrets it held beneath its soil.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN ACCEPT THEIR SITUATION

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the River of Consciousness. Morality Metro had just assigned Iron Man to a very special task. It seems that the barge carrying the entire month's shipment of wine for the region was making its way down The River of Consciousness. Just as the huge vessel was rounding Parochial Point, an explosion in one of the boilers blew a gaping hole in its side and the entire ship sunk to the bottom. This occurrence took place only a short distance from Creative Cove.

The crisis which now threatened Morality Metro, as well as the rest of the region, was that of being without House Church wine for an entire month until the next shipment arrived from the vineyards up the river. So it was that Iron Man had been assigned to lead the scuba diving salvage team to help raise the sunken barge to the surface. The Secular Salvage Company had already been working on the task but none of their divers could withstand the ambiguity of the continually changing currents and the horror of the flowing Mudaneness Mud which shifted ceaselessly over the bottom.

Acknowledging this apparent lack, the Secular Salvage Company promised to give the Morality Metro one thousand barrels of the new wine if Iron Man, the most daring scuba diver in the area, could be assigned to the recovery process. The Morality Metro agreed and assigned not only Iron Man but also a new intern, Wisher Man, who was said to be a good diver.

After the barge, whose name was "The New Covenant," sunk, the Secular Salvage Company moved a gigantic crane to the edge of the river. The Secular Salvage divers then hooked many thick wire cables to the sunken "New Covenant" from the crane. With a mighty whirrr of its engines the crane began to hoist its load. The cables strained and strained but could not budge the sunken barge far below on the river bottom. Finally, with an all-powerful tug from the crane, a cable broke sending half of its length flying back at the shore and dropping the rest to dangle in

the river currents from the sunken ship. A second more and another cable had snapped; then another, and another, and another. The broken cables fell into the murky black waters of the river. There broken ends were now shredded with hundreds of razor-sharp ends jutting out in all directions. Any diver who might be so unfortunate as to brush up against one of these shredded ends would surely have his skin ripped apart as though he had been lashed with a bull whip.

As Iron Man and Wisser Man arrived on the scene, they peered into the murky black waters of the River of Consciousness. Nothing could be seen below its scum-laden surface as debris and huge hunks of molding fungus floated by. Wisser Man then remarked, "I wish it wasn't so dirty. We won't be able to see a thing down there."

Iron Man, however, embracing the situation, replied, "Since we will have no visibility, it will be necessary to do all of our communication and work by hand. I will go down first to investigate and see just what we are up against."

Before five more minutes passed, Iron Man had on his rubber suit, his mask, fins, and aqua lung. He stood on the pier ready to lower himself into the eerie liquid world. A rope ran from a bouy on the surface to the sunken New Covenant Barge on the bottom. It was this rope that Iron Man would hold to follow all the way down. As his last task on the surface, Iron Man turned on his air valve and then pulled himself below the churning waters.

As his mask went below the surface, Iron Man could see only a muddy brown color in front of him. When he put his fingers in front of his face Iron Man could make out their form if not further than ten inches away. Yet as he descended the brownish water became blacker and blacker. By the time he had reached twenty feet of depth there was no light left. The sun's golden rays could not penetrate the depths of this muddy tributary of the River of Consciousness. The darkness encountered there was more intense than the blackness known at the very fringes of outer space. For the black watery world makes one feel confined and trapped at every point -----not by something---but by nothing!!

About thirty feet down Iron Man put his finger on his mask but nothing could be seen. He then turned on his underwater light---but it only made the murky water a little brown. Visibility was absent.

Iron Man continued to descend. He felt the currents growing stronger. Suddenly, at about fifty feet, his feet touched the deck of the barge. At the depth of this dark and ominous river, Iron Man now found himself to be standing on the New Covenant. He groped around and finally seized the rail on the edge of the boat. Iron Man dropped himself over the side and made his way to the bottom. In another moment he understood the reason the cables had been unable to budge the great ship as his legs plunged into the Mundaneness Mud which covered the bottom of the River of Consciousness. He sunk all the way up to his thighs. Holding to the edge of the ship, Iron Man pulled himself out but the mud had captured his fins. Immobilized by the loss of his fins, he had no choice but to grasp hand over hand and pull himself up the ship's side back to the rope. Upon reaching the rope the struggle repeated itself as Iron Man fought the wicked current with each straining tug toward the surface. Finally the blackness became brown and then Iron Man's face mask broke the surface. His eyes gazed upon the many Secular Salvage workers who had been standing on shore watching for his return.

Iron Man signaled Wisher Man to his side and then spoke, "The situation is this: 'The New Covenant' barge is immobilized on the bottom by the Mundaneness Mud which surrounds it . That is why cables hooked to the deck of the barge only break. To lift it, we must hook a cable underneath the boat on the propeller shaft. This will provide the necessary leverage and should allow the vessel to respond to the power of the crane. Wisher Man, you must help me to hold the cable in place because we will have to be working in deep Mundaneness Mud.

But when we are in the mud you must not attempt to swim as you do in open water. Rather, you must move cautiously and hold tight to the boat."

"Oh but I wish there wasn't any mud. I can work easily in open water and even strong currents but not in sloggy Mundaneness Mud," said Wisher Man .

Iron Man replied sternly, "You know how to swim in open water and even can move with skill in strong currents, so why can't you decide to work in Mundaneness Mud; why can't you decide to slog through the situation you have on your hands?"

With clumsy stumbling movements caused by his deep guilt at refusing the situation which was now his, Wisher Man picked up his aqua lung and secured it on his back. Within minutes he was following Iron Man down the rope to the sunken "New Covenant," far beneath. In their hands they carried both the new cable and a signal rope. Once the cable was securely hooked onto the propeller shaft, Iron Man would pull the signal rope seven times. The crane above would then rip the impeded barge from the Mundaneness Mud through the cleansing waters and into the salvation of the spacious air above.

Upon reaching the deck, the two rubber-clad divers moved over the side and to the rear where the propeller shaft was located. Fortunately the ship had plunged into the mud in a forward motion so that the propeller was only buried by a few feet of mud. Iron Man lowered himself almost up to his neck in mud in order to work. While for other men this might have proved to be a humiliating task, Iron Man worked freely as he kept one hand latched to the solid side of the barge.

On the contrary, Wisher Man, finding himself suddenly standing in mud, let go of the ship and began to fumble around. As he sank up to his knees he attempted to swim as though he were in open water. This only made matters worse. Losing his nerve completely, Wisher Man began to lash out with his arms. Instead of catching something secure, the frayed end of one of the broken cables, hidden in the black waters, shredded his rubber suit and his arm with it. Blood began to mix with the muddy waters as Wisher Man became wholly entrapped in the Mundaneness Mud.

Iron Man, unable to see through the impenetrable waters the plight of Wisher Man, now had the cable securely in place. With seven mighty yanks on the signal rope the crane above began to haul in the cable.

Never losing his grip, Iron Man held to the "New Covenant" as it ascended through the waters, washing away the mud which had been so confining only moments before. Another moment and the rear of the ship, with Iron Man standing atop it, pierced the surface. By this time hundreds

of people had gathered on the shore; all sorts of people; young and old; rich and poor; black, white, red, yellow, brown, and tan; industrialists, businessmen, laborers, and farmers; even many winos dotted the golden sands of the shore. As they all chorused together in glee-filled shouts of joy, Iron Man suddenly became aware that Wisher Man was no longer by his side. Indeed, he had received the most tragic of human fates---he had been buried alive in the Mundaneness Mud. While cheers from the shore still permeated the air, Iron Man bowed his head in silent prayer for the one trapped forever below.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Iron Man: "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

August 27, 1972

Iron Man Journey #8

CHILDREN'S EUCHARIST:
IRON MEN ALREADY POSSESS ALL THEY NEED

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Sea of Tranquility. For the Week II structures of the Illumination Island Religious House, Iron Man had been assigned to Enablement. For months now the house had been existing on a diet made up entirely of rice and rice products, the only crop which grew in abundance on the island. All other foods had to be imported from the continent and were far too expensive to buy. Iron Man nonetheless, had decided that he simply could not face another bowl of rice without some sort of discontinuity in this mundane diet.

Assigned to Enablement with Iron Man was an old movement colleague, Anxiety Man. It was Thursday morning and the two had decided to spend the day gathering a discontinuous diet for the Week II menu. To accomplish this they gathered their skin diving equipment and loaded it all aboard Iron Man's boat. Iron Man then fired up the engine and set a straight course for Realization Reef where together they would search for edible treasures of the sea.

No sooner had the boat pulled away from Illumination Island than Anxiety Man began raising a wraft of questions and issues: "I hope the water isn't too cold, I can't stand cold water; and what if it rains or the water is rough? Will the water be deep? What kind of fish will there be? I hope I can shoot a big one. Have you ever been there before? I wonder if there will be other boats around? Does the boat have enough gas to make it out and back?" Anxiety Man went on and on as Iron Man listened patiently.

Iron Man then replied, "Do not worry so much about what is yet to come, but rather embrace the gift of your life as it is given to you in the present. Because Iron Men know that their final home is in the other world, they have the assurance and the certitude that the future is always open and that they can deal with any situation."

Anxiety Man reflected on Iron Man's insight into life for about ten seconds and then began rambling again about a thousand irrelevant concerns.

Iron Man himself knew that no man could ever fully escape the cares of this-world. He nonetheless knew the futility of expending all of one's life in vague imaginings about an anticipated future. For Iron Man understood well the truth that the future is not controlled by mere human beings, but by the mysterious power which drives history.

Indeed, even as Iron Man had scarcely finished priesting Anxiety Man on his needless worry over the future, his thoughts turned to one of his own secret passions. Before leaving Illumination Island, Iron Man had taken an advance on his stipend, and with it, bought many of the glorious groceries which would provide the foundation for the fantastic and taste-tantalizing feast of succulent seafood which he fully intended to prepare and consume before returning to Illumination Island.

Soon the dark-blue waters over the deep ocean floor began to be spotted by sections of light and greenish areas. A few moments more and the continuity of the sea's coloration was broken in a thousand places by the Realization Reef which now lay directly below their wave-tossed craft. Iron Man immediately cut the engines and threw the hooked anchor over the side. He gazed across the endless horizon of the Sea of Tranquility and its unbroken perfection. The beauty which filled his searching eyes gave Iron Man a happiness which not even the most eloquent poet might articulate. Iron Man peered through the rolling waves to the reef below. His gaze then raised seaward where the dark bluish waters began again, only at a point of new intensity. For directly beyond Realization Reef lay the little-explored, and mostly-uncharted, Transcendence Trench. Of course no human being had ever been to the bottom of the treacherous undersea cliffs which seemed to slope off into sheer nothingness. Yet many old fisherman in the area believed the existence of the trench next to Realization Reef was the reason for the teeming life which inhabited this abundant coral world.

Anxiety Man was suddenly filled with fear as huge fish weighing hundreds of pounds began jumping high into the air all around the boat.

"What are those?", screamed Anxiety Man, absolutely terrified.

"Do not be afraid,' Iron Man replied calmly. 'Those are only Decisional Dolphins, a rare species of dolphins which are only found living over Transcendence Trench. These carefree animals play all day and are most friendly towards humans. In fact they are actually powerful mammals who decided thousands of years ago that they would rather live in the sea than on land. Now they are perfectly content with their home in the Sea of Tranquility and have been known to do extraordinary deeds of service for human sailors in trouble at sea.

Anxiety Man believed Iron Man knew what he was talking about but found that the playful creatures nonetheless made him extremely nervous and uneasy.

Iron Man and Anxiety Man then donned their masks, fins, and aqua lungs, grabbed their spearguns, and plunged into the churning seas. As the bubbles cleared away from Iron Man's mask, his eyes beheld the beauty of a spectrum of brightly colored corals and fishes. This plentiful panorama seemed as an enchanted land to his bedazzled and wonder-filled eyes.

But in no time at all his watchful eyes caught sight of a huge grouper lurking in the shadows of the reef. Slowly, Iron Man lowered himself behind the great fish. Even as he approached, his tastebuds began to water at the thought of the feast this catch would make. With slow cautious motions, Iron Man moved into position and cocked the powerful rubber slings of his spear gun. Just as he prepared to pull the trigger, the monstrous grouper darted off and began moving toward the edge of the trench. Iron Man picked up speed and stayed close behind. Anxiety Man too swam above and behind Iron Man. Soon the marvelous fish disappeared over the side of the trench. Iron Man, not about to give up this tempting treasure of the sea, also ventured over the edge and began his descent downdowndown. into the very depths of the seemingly bottomless trench. As he peered below him, Iron Man could see no object save the big black grouper surrounded by an infinite border of black liquid lustre falling off into forever.

Suddenly and without warning Iron Man stopped swimming. A blissful seizure now grasped his entire being. Iron Man gazed in wonderment

about him. He felt as though he had just penetrated into a new world---a world which did not know him and which he did not know. All cares, concerns, problems, and worries had now left Iron Man. He even totally forgot the grouper. He did not want anything at all. No impulse to know or do anything disturbed the perfect contentment he was now experiencing.

In such a state, Iron Man could not know that he was entrapped by what scuba divers commonly call "rapture of the deeps." It occurs when divers spend too much time working under magnified pressures at great depths of the sea. Yet even in his state of irrational security, Iron Man did not have to face the danger now lurking near Anxiety Man, still at the top of the trench. For circling Anxiety Man in powerful thrusts of its mighty fins was a deadly, man-eating, Future Shark. The razor-sharp teeth of the Future Shark glistened in the sparkling waters about the reef as they prepared to move in and make short work of Anxiety Man.

Iron Man, at this moment, just happened to glance above and see the sinister Future Shark about to attack and devour Anxiety Man. The thought of this gruesome possibility awakened Iron Man from his ecstatic stupor. But even as he began to move back up the wall of the trench, he knew he could never reach Anxiety Man in time. And indeed, the shark had begun its final run as it opened its jaws wide and moved in streamline form straight toward Anxiety Man's head. Then . . . out of no where. . . charged an enormous Decisional Dolphin, who, only inches from Anxiety Man, rammed the Future Shark sending him hurling injured through the water. The shark quickly fled the area for the brutal attacks of Decisional Dolphins are the only thing in the sea which Future Sharks cannot withstand.

By this time Iron Man had reached the side of Anxiety Man and together they swam to the safety of the ship above.

Both sat down at the table in the cabin as Iron Man placed before them a loaf of rice-flour bread and a bottle of rice wine. The two bowed their heads for several minutes in silent prayer and then Iron Man spoke: "We have risked our very lives today in attempting to change our situation. Yet this bread (HOLD UP BREAD) and this wine (HOLD UP WINE) only remind us that we already have in our possession all that we have need of.

Yet as human beings we will forever be unsatisfied with this world and what is given---and this is our brokenness (BREAK BREAD). Even in the midst of this world, we must forever spill-out our lives in uncovering the fulfillment found only in the other world (SPILL WINE).

For in the deeps of the other world, as in the rapture-filled deeps of the Sea of Tranquility, we know that this brokenness (EAT BREAD) and this spilled-outness (DRINK WINE) are transformed into wholeness. And that we might share this perfect wholeness with our neighbor." Iron Man then passed the bread and wine to Anxiety Man.

The eyes of Iron Man grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

**IRON MEN LOVE THE MYSTERY MORE THAN ANY
PASSING THING**

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Land of Mystery. He had been assigned by his prior to a special development mission. It seems that the coming quarter was demanding a schedule of at least twelve courses in the metro. To pull this off would require much more financial support than was presently available to the house. Besides this, another major financial crisis was looming before the house as the price of peanut butter threatened to rise.

But this particular morning there came blarring across the kitchen radio a special news bulletin which gripped the imagination of Iron Man and held him spellbound. It was reported that a group of hikers had spotted what appeared to be the Pristine Princess of Primal Passion sitting radiantly upon a rock high atop Mount Upagainstness.

Well, Iron Man was only too aware of the mysterious power which legend held this ageless Pristine Princess of Primal Passion commanded. For it was told that any man whom she might choose to bless would have wealth untold forever. The thought of such a potential blessing stirred Iron Man deeply and, to his mind, seemed to fall right in line with his development assignment.

Now the only block in getting to the top of Mount Upagainstness is that one must pass through the Pit of Passing Possessions which surrounds the foot of the fabled peak. Yet Iron Man was confident that his mighty Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle guided by his masterful skills was adequate to the task.

Iron Man wasted not a second as he gripped the terrifying throttle; "VA - ROOM, VA - ROOM, VA - ROOM." Then with a flick of the fingers he released the tightly clinched clutch and went charging out of the garage. Up and down the valley the faces of neighbors ritualistically filled

their windows, peering out just to catch a glimpse of Iron Man and his mighty machine as he went roaring by.

Yet as Iron Man became nearer and nearer to the wide road which was the entrance to the Pit of Passing Possessions, he noticed an increasing number of motorcycles. In fact, there was nearly a traffic jam going into the pit. Hundreds of cyclists, just like Iron Man, had heard the bulletin on the radio and responded enthusiastically to its message.

Getting into this particular pit was really no special problem. Within another hour, the mammoth pit was dotted by groups of motorcycles searching for a path up the rugged peak---Just trying to find some way to ascend the majestic Mount Upagainstness.

Iron Man too continued to search but he did not travel with the large packs of cycles like the others---rather, he continued on solitarily.

Soon, Iron Man came to a field covered with hundred dollar bills. He could hardly believe his eyes as he gazed on more money than he had ever seen in one place before. But before he had a chance to drive into it and begin collecting the loot, a group of about one hundred and fifty motorcycles came tearing by him at breakneck speeds. In horror and astonishment Iron Man beheld the sickening spectacle which then took place. For the bills of money were actually only floating on a huge pond of quicksand. One by one the speeding cycles and their riders plunged into the slimy substance and soon sunk to the bottom never to be seen again. But more amazing than this to Iron Man was the sight which followed. For after many of the money-hungry riders had already perished below the surface---some who had watched the tragedy and knew that the quicksand spelled certain death, still tried to collect the free-floating cash and likewise met a similar fate.

A little further down the floor of the pit Iron Man came upon a group of motorcyclists who were having a great feast. All about them were hundreds of tables which could scarcely bear their burden of juicy succulent hot dogs, triple-decker hamburgers, cake, candy, cookies and thousands of gallons of chocolate, blackrasberry, butterscotch, orange, lime, lemon, strawberry, peppermint, chocolate-chip, peach, pineapple, fudge-ripple,

and butter-pecan ice cream. Yet as these bloated riders would get back on their motorcycles, they found that the engines would no longer carry them up the steep slopes of Mount Upagainstness and they would slide back again and again, unable to ascend closer to the beautiful Pristine Princess of Primal Passion.

Finally, Iron Man came to a small and rocky trail which ran sharply up the side of the Mountain. In an instant he knew it must be the little-travelled Discipline Trail. Very few tire tracks could be seen in the dust which covered its surface. Most riders passed it by without even giving it a second thought---considering it to be much too steep for them. But Iron Man only paused a moment at the foot of this perilous path. Then as he shifted down into first gear, he revved hard on the engine, and popped the clutch. Rocks flew in all directions as the rubber of Iron Man's motorcycle ripped into the road and sent him shooting almost straight up Discipline Trail. Leaning fully forward with all his strength, Iron Man had to struggle every moment to keep his front wheel from flying off the ground. Should this happen the motorcycle would flip over on him and possibly send him hurling hundreds of feet to his death below.

Higher and higher and higher the screaming Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle ascended. Leaping over boulders, dodging trees and bushes, barging across or through or under every obstacle. Iron Man knew that he must keep the momentum of his magnificent machine in full force---for if he let off on the power for even one moment all would be lost. It would be impossible to regain again the power of the charge which he now possessed.

Behind him, now far below in the pit, Iron Man could hear the sounds of crumpling metal as motorcycles continued to crash into Clothing Canyon. Huge splashes also sounded as tires slid on Insurance Fungus into the contaminated waters of Lake Security. Crackling flames also leapt high through the smoke which now engulfed Family Forest deep within the pit.

Many cyclists had entered the Family Forest as soon as they got to the pit and with the presence of so much smoke had never found their way out.

With all this commotion and confusion continuing in the pit, Iron Man now brought his motorcycle to a sudden halt. For upon a boulder in the

path before him sat the enchanting Pristine Princess of Primal Passion.

For many long moments neither one spoke but sat silently, entranced totally in the enraptured gaze of one another.

Then finally the princess spoke; "Iron Men have an infinite passion," she said, "but if they try to spend that passion on a passing thing then they shall surely die in the pit. But you, Iron Man, have discovered the secret---the secret that only the infinite is a worthy object of man's infinite passion---only the mystery of life. It was only your love for the mystery above all else which enabled you to climb the treacherous Discipline Trail. But Iron Men love the mystery more than they love any thing---even themselves. And so do I bless you."

With that the princess vanished. Iron Man experienced himself to now have wealth untold. He knew now that he would always be a rich man---even if he didn't have enough money.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build the Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN TREAD THE AGAPE ASCENT TRAIL

After Daily Office Iron Man set out on his journey to the Mountain of Care. Iron Man had been assigned by his prior to discover a new trail which would be suitable for the metro's emerging generation to take a hike upon. Iron Man parked his famous Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle by a tree and began walking into the dense foothills which surround the massive Mountain of Care.

As Iron Man broke into a clearing, he spotted the small wooden hut for which he had been searching. It was the humble residence of the hermit, Roscoe Hayes. Roscoe was the course-coordinator for the Mystic Metro and had always been a close colleague of Iron Man. Iron Man knew that Roscoe understood many of the secrets of the Mountain of Care and should be able to direct him to a new trail for the E.G.

Roscoe sat in a rocker in front of his hut chewing a large wad of chewing tobacco. Every other minute or so Roscoe would spit a long stream of the slimy black substance onto the ground beside him. Iron Man approached the very old man and said: "Grace Be Yours and Peace."

Roscoe: "From God Our Father and The Lord Jesus Christ."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Roscoe: "Amen."

Though he had grown old in these rugged hills, the eyes of Roscoe Hayes glowed with a fire which was the very light of life itself. Iron Man explained what he was searching for and Roscoe grew thoughtful for a long time.

Finally he spoke. "There is such a trail as that which you are seeking; for it trains one to be strong and disciplined as one walks upon it. It is a difficult trail and even if a man would walk upon it every day of his life he could never reach its end. Even more strange than this, is that no matter which direction one travels on the trail, he is always walking upward.

Many men throughout history have known of the existence of this path but few have ever chosen to walk it. For there are many dangers along its way. And the fate of those who learn to walk its narrow rocky surface is always the same. For those who come to love the path soon become lost forever upon it. And more strange than this is that they have no desire whatsoever to be found. This, Iron Man, is the 'Agape Ascent Trail'."

"And one more thing you must know; At the highest points on the trail, one may feast on the golden-green Grapes of Original Gratitude which grow wildly and in great abundance along the path. You may eat as many of the grapes as you want and you will never grow weary of savoring the sweetness of the juices entrapped beneath their ripe skins. Yet if you try to save them or put them in your pockets they will turn to thorns and cause you only pain and grief."

Iron Man thanked Roscoe Hayes for his advice and with that said, "The Lord Be With You."

Roscoe: "And With Thy Spirit."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Roscoe: "Amen."

Iron Man turned and set out to begin his first exploratory walk upon the Agape Ascent Trail. Upon reaching the trail, Iron Man was surprised to see how steep and rugged the path actually was. Even as he stood there gazing at the climb before him, a Vexatious Victim Varmit crawled out from under a pile of mountain lion manure and began running in circles around Iron Man. The little Vexatious Victim Varmit made continuous screeching sounds which scorched the eardrums. Iron Man could scarcely believe that such a small varmit could make so much noise.

"Too Steep, Too Steep, Too Steep,' screamed the little varmit. 'Take pity on yourself---choose another trail. This trail is Too Steep, Too Steep, Too Steep."

As the Vexatious Victim Varmit continued to run around him, Iron Man held his nose and then scolded, "Iron Men never feel sorry for themselves; they only have compassion on suffering humanity." The very instant Iron Man finished speaking the varmit vanished into thin air. Iron Man then began his climb on Agape Ascent Trail.

After trudging for a considerable length of time, a bitter hissing sound soon filled the air. Swaying back and forth on the trail before him was a huge Slovenly Serpent of Self-Will. Again and again it whipped out its wicked forked tongue in the direction of Iron Man. Then it hissed, "Iron Man, you have recieved a rotten assignment. Why do you allow some silly prior to tell you what to do? You're an important person Iron Man; you ought to be out doing something significant---changing history or something---but not running around wearing yourself out on this mountain for children's structures. Don't be a fool Iron Man, choose your own assignment."

Without hesitation, Iron Man spoke back sharply, "Iron Men are always under assignment, for they know that their lives are not of their own making, but are a precious gift from the other world."

Immediately the Slovenly Serpent of Self-Will grew silent and disappeared. Iron Man continued on.

As he walked, Iron Man soon passed a deep dark pit that, from all appearances, seemed to have no bottom. Then suddenly, without warning, a Crafty Creature of Compulsion's Craving crept out of the pit and then leapt onto Iron Man wrestling him to the ground. The Crafty Creature of Compulsion's Craving then wrapped itself around Iron Man's stomach and began to wail, "HUNGRY, HUNGRY, Oh, Iron Man, you must be so very HUNGRY from your long, long climb. Surely your mission can wait while you come with me into the pit for a fantastic feast of fascinating portions. For there in the pit you can eat all you want. You can eat, and eat, and eat: creamy chocolate almond candy bars, butterscotch fudge, cherry pie with mounds of rich vanilla ice cream, blueberry shakes, butter pecan sundaes, thick marshmallow malts, banana splits with fifty-six flavors, huge triple-decker hamburgers heaping with mustard and ketchup and pickles and onions, and fire-red foot-long hot dogs with coney sauce and warm brown buns, and all the strawberry kool aid you can drink."

Iron Man, gasping for air with the creature weighing him down, then declared, "Iron Men do not consume their lives; they expend them."

With that the Crafty Creature of Compulsion's Craving collapsed into nothing. Iron Man stood and continued on his way.

As Iron Man passed under a slender tree of seductive proportions, from one of its branches dropped a shimmering silver Leech of Lustful Longings latching itself firmly onto the neck of Iron Man. Iron Man felt the razor-sharp teeth of the Leech of Lustful Longings sink deep beneath his skin and begin to suck at his rich dark blood. The leech then whispered seductively into Iron Man's tingling ear, "Climb to the top of my tree with me and we shall save ourselves from the doom of this world by clinging tightly to one another forever."

At this Iron Man struggled desperately, even against his own passion-filled desires, as he asserted the truth he knew so well, "Strength and energy and health and sensuality all pass away, but the other world alone is forever."

The alluring voice of the Leech of Lustful Longings then left to be heard not again. And in this moment Iron Man looked before him and his eyes filled with the spectacle of bushes filled with the glistening reflections of hundreds of golden-green Grapes of Original Gratitude. At the sight of them, all of his struggles of the day now seemed worthwhile. Even his pain-filled feet did not hurt so much. (Yes, the past few miles of walking across thistles and loose jagged rocks on the trail had been difficult, for Iron Man had lost his shoes somewhere earlier in the day---but he couldn't remember where. This, however, is a common occurrence among Iron Men). But for the moment, forgetting his bleeding feet, Iron Man began to pick the ripe nectar-filled grapes. As each individual grape touched his tantalized taste buds, the goodness of the golden-green Grapes of Original Gratitude sent Iron Man's heart soaring in deep appreciation.

And in that moment as Iron Man looked down at his bare bleeding feet, he knew that he loved the very dust of this rugged path which now mixed with his own trickling blood. In adoration resolution Iron Man committed himself to tread upon Agape Ascent Trail forever---regardless of where his journeys might take him.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God--and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The

Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN RUN THE ENDLESS MARATHON

After Daily Office Iron Man set out on his journey to the Land of Mystery. The prior of the newly-established religious house in central India had assigned Iron Man to do an initial grid of the surrounding territory. Most of the gridding had already been accomplished except for one metro which no one had dared to venture into until this point. For this particular metro was covered almost totally by the Jungle of the Inescapable Power. So it came to be that Iron Man received the dread-filled task of gridding the Jungle of the Inescapable Power. Assigned for this mission, along with Iron Man, was Iron Man's old colleague, Searcher Man.

Iron Man and Searcher Man had been walking across the dusty plains all day when finally they sighted the edge of the Jungle of the Inescapable Power. Soon the two approached a monk begging by the side of the road. The monk sat on the ground with his legs crossed and holding before himself an empty bowl with which he begged for food. Begging for his daily bowl of rice in this manner enabled the monk to act out the life dynamic of poverty in a radical way. Iron Man and Searcher Man gazed at his small emaciated body with his jagged bones nearly piercing the thin wrinkled layer of skin which covered his feeble frame. Iron Man then said to Searcher Man, "Let's go and ask this man for some help in understanding this strange jungle."

"How stupid," replied Searcher Man. "We need to go find someone else---what could a poor begging monk possibly tell us about The Jungle of the Inescapable Power?"

"We will find out only by asking," replied Iron Man sharply, and with that walked over to the wretched little man. "Tell me good monk, what do you know of this endless jungle?"

A long long silence followed as the monk stared off into infinite space.

He seemed to be in a sort of trance---absolutely unconcerned with anything around him. The monk's state of being was most offensive to Searcher Man and made him feel most uneasy. Then finally Searcher Man whispered to Iron Man, "I told you we should have gone elsewhere, this man is obviously crazy."

But in a second more the monk began to speak with words that were carefully measured and had the ring of authority. "Indeed, I know much of this jungle, The Jungle of the Inescapable Power. Yes, I even know why you have come. But I tell you this, you will never be able to grid the entirety of this jungle---for it may not be seen by the human eye as it lies forever hidden and uncharted deep within your own being."

Growing more impatient Searcher Man again prodded Iron Man, "I told you he was crazy, let's go now."

But Iron Man kept on listening intently to the monk as he continued; "Yet I will tell you that which I can, to help you in your task."

"There is only one way to survive a trip through the Jungle of the Inescapable Power; and this is by trekking the Track of Transcendent Immanence. And this is no easy matter for a more treacherous track nowhere exists. Indeed, if you so much as take your eyes off the Track of Transcendent Immanence you will soon become lost and find yourself as prey for one of the dangerous creatures which inhabit the surrounding jungle. While you are on the track if you should decide to try and reach the fabled Fortune of Foreverness which lies at the end, then you must continue to run hard as though you were in a race, yes, an endless marathon. No man has ever seen the fabled Fortune of Foreverness, but it is true that the Inescapable Power gives some of his own power to those who run on the track and truly believe in the fabled Fortune of Foreverness at the end."

Searcher Man then interrupted by asking, "How can we find this Track of Transcendent Immanence and where is the Inescapable Power?" With that the wise old monk fell perfectly silent and entered into another dream-like trance.

Iron Man, who had understood the monk's message well, immediately began jogging down a nearby trail. Searcher Man then called out, "Where are you going, this doesn't look like the right path." But Iron Man was already too far down the trail to hear his plea. So, Searcher Man began running---keeping close behind.

As he picked up speed, Iron Man's heart began pounding harder and harder. A few minutes more and streams of sweat drenched his clothing. The intense jungle sun beat down upon the track and threatened to blind any creature bold enough to stand with open eyes beneath its mighty beams. Soon Iron Man's head began to grow drowsy and he felt certain that he was going to collapse.

Yet in that instant a glorious thought of the fabled Fortune of Foreverness filled Iron Man's mind. He experienced his power to be renewed totally. Iron Man kept running.

Not too far behind came Searcher Man, who too was growing tired. Searcher Man began to feel sorry for himself for having to run this sun-baked trail. Soon Searcher Man began to think how nice it would be to find an easier path to take. Just then he spotted a shaded trail which ambled off into the coolness of a dense forest of fruit trees. Without a moment's hesitation, Searcher Man slowed down his pace and began following the new path. Before he had gone any distance at all he came to a dead stop. For swaying back and forth in the dancing shadows upon the trail before him was a monstrous Cobra of Consuming Cares. Searcher Man looked all about to find somewhere to hide but before he could take even a single step, the venomous serpent struck its head straight toward the fear-paralyzed Searcher Man. The snake sank its deadly sharp fangs deep into his left hand. Searcher Man felt the fiery pain of the poison rush into his blood system and in utter fright jumped over the snake and began running further up the trail. Soon the trail became overgrown with vegetation and Searcher Man began stumbling through the underbrush. The rustling noise of his clumsy movements disturbed the heavy resting jungle air and echoed through the chambers of the two pointed and fur-covered ears of the most ferocious beast in the Jungle of the Inescapable Power. For now standing, head erect and aroused for action, was the terror-filling Tiger of Fleeting Temporality. For all of the time he has existed in this world the tiger had

never allowed a human being to wander from the Track of Transcendent Immanence and still survive. Searcher Man was not to be an exception.

With a mighty bound the tiger began lurching in huge strides toward his already-wounded prey. In one final leap the merciless beast, in fullness of grace, soared through the air and pounced upon Searcher Man. The long sharp claws of the tiger ripped through the flesh of Searcher Man as its razor-sharp teeth opened ravishingly toward its victim's exposed neck. In that moment all of the seeking of Searcher Man came to an end as his journey met its completion beneath the hot bloody breath of the terror-filling Tiger of Fleeting Temporality.

In a seemingly arid section of the jungle, Iron Man now ran with long strides as his legs stretched sleekly across the distance of the Track of Transcendent Immanence. For Iron Man had discovered this jungle's deep interior secret. He knew that Iron Men never have to search for the meaning of their lives, for it is already present and given. Even as his arms swung freely at his sides, Iron Man knew that he already carried with him the fabled Fortune of Foreverness and that as long as he lived in this world he would be running on an endless marathon.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God---and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN POSSESS FREEDOM OF AWARENESS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the River of Consciousness. The Anchorage Religious House had assigned Iron Man to a special task in order to deal with the symbolic life of the house. An altar cloth was needed for the collegium room but it was crucial that the uniqueness of the region be held by this most visible object of attention. It was therefore decided that the cloth must be a skin of the rare and swift Otter of Ontological Obedience. Now the skin of the Otter of Ontological Obedience is a coat of the Fur of Final Awareness. This fur throughout history has been highly treasured because of its scarcity and great beauty. In fact this rare species of otters have never been seen in any location save that of the Contemplative Quarry which was dug in ancient times by an unknown people alongside the River of Consciousness.

Also assigned to this task was a fellow in the house, Externality Man. Externality Man had been scuba diving in Contemplative Quarry many times before and knew his way around its sheer steep walls well.

But this particular diving mission was not to be an ordinary one. For it was now the very middle of the harsh Alaskan winter and both the River of Consciousness and Contemplative Quarry were covered over by a hard thick layer of the lethargic Ice of Frozen Lucidity.

The morning sun spread its golden beams across Contemplative Quarry as a command of "Mush! Mush! Mush!" rang through the crisp polar air. Iron Man and Externality Man brought their dog sled to a halt by the side of the quarry. Together they walked to the stone wall which led straight down to the water level some one hundred feet below. Only a pile of broken stones where a section of wall had collapsed made it possible to reach the surface from their perch high atop the quarry's wall. A large gap in the wall on the far side revealed the point at which the River of Consciousness flows into this deep deep quarry.

In the gaze of this awesome encounter with the barren, yet beautiful scene before them, Iron Man spoke. "As you know Externality Man, this will be a difficult and dangerous job. We have many obstacles to face. Even though we are wearing rubber diver suits, we must not forget that too much exposure to the cold water could finish us. Also our aqua lungs only have enough air to last for one hour. So we have no choice but to make it back to the hole we will cut in the ice before our time is up. But the greatest danger is the one we will face in the possibility of getting lost. When one dives in Contemplative Quarry beneath the lethargic Ice of Frozen Lucidity, he loses all sense of direction---all orientation is gone. And it is never possible to find out where you are by going to the surface for it is covered with ice. Therefore, when we get to the bottom directly below our hole, you must drive a stake in the floor and tie two safety lines to it. One line will be connected to me and the other to you. That way when our air is nearly gone we can simply follow the line back to our hole."

"No problem at all;" replied Externality Man, "I understand perfectly about things like this."

With that the two divers made their way down the steep, jagged, and broken, rock path to the surface of the Ice of Frozen Lucidity. With wildly swinging axes the two mighty scuba divers hacked through the three and a half solid feet of ice which covered the quarry. When the hole was finished, together they began the long descent to the bottom of the quarry. Down, Down, Down. Fifteen feet. Twenty-five feet. Sixty feet. And finally at eighty-five feet the flat desolate bottom could be clearly distinguished. Externality Man drove the stake deep into the floor and then, with trembling and cold hands, tied the two safety lines onto it. The knots appeared to be secure enough from looking at them so Externality Man did not bother to give them a hard tug as a final check.

With a wave of the hand, the two turned and swam off in opposite directions, each pointing their powerful and deadly spearguns in front of them.

Within ten minutes Iron Man came upon a hill of huge broken pieces of the quarried rock. Darting in and out of the many tunnels and cracks was a

sleek and shiny Otter of Ontological Obedience. His Fur of Final Awareness shimmered in the sparkling waters which surrounded this enchanted mound.

Iron Man slid behind a ledge and slowly aimed the long razor-sharp spear. The rubber slings were stretched back to their very limits for maximum thrust. Iron Man then went snake eyes and "ZING!" The slender spear of sharp steel sped through the silvery waters finding its fateful mark as it sliced cleanly through the neck of the Otter of Ontological Obedience. The otter twisted and turned on the end of the spear as the frigid waters turned crimson with blood. But soon the struggle of the Otter of Ontological Obedience came to an end as its dead body fell limp.

The Fur of Final Awareness was now his. Iron Man latched the dead carcass to his weight belt and turned to follow the rope back to the hole in the ice. But as he swam, his air tank began to breath very hard. He took a few more drags of air and then without further warning his air supply was suddenly empty. Iron Man knew in an instant what had happened. The great pressure at which he was working, as well as the intensified cold, had caused him to breath his air much more quickly and now there was none left.

Iron Man quickly took off the heavy aqua lung and began following the rope. He knew that he would be fortunate to reach the hole within the length of time which he could hold his breath. With powerful strokes of his fins Iron Man followed the rope across the quarry floor. Yet in a mere minute, Iron Man came before a sight which chilled him to his very center ---far more than even the frigid waters could have done---for there dangling in open water was the untied end of his rope. The stake was lost!

Iron Man's lungs now ached and his heart throbbed within his chest. He was still eighty-five feet down and had not even the slightest idea where the hole was located. In that moment Iron Man knew he had only one possibility of survival. For on frozen bodies of water there always exists a single inch of air space between the bottom of the ice and the top of the water. But even knowing this Iron Man was not sure he could make it all the way up.

Nevertheless, with a powerful push off the bottom, he began grasping at the nothingness of the watery void surrounding him---climbing, ascending, moving upward in search of his very life. A thousand thoughts bombarded Iron Man's mind as he passed upward through the water. Yet, while still ascending, Iron Man momentarily experienced himself to be seized by the experience of both the beginning and end of his life. In a single flash he understood that everything that exists was now contained within his consciousness. For now he saw the possible end of his consciousness and his life. His mind seemed to explode as he experienced himself in encounter with the deep center of life. With a knowing that left far behind any rational understanding, Iron Man knew all beginnings and all endings to be but one and the same, and that finally all is consciousness.

This air-starved state came to an abrupt end though as Iron Man's uplifted hands crashed into a solid ceiling of the lethargic Ice of Frozen Lucidity. He curled his lips upward into the narrow space of air. He lapped eagerly at each life-giving breath and with his heart and mind thanked God that he had been spared from a watery grave in the deeps below. His hands caressed the icy surface as he began moving under its endless weight; trying now to find the lost passageway to the top of the ice.

While he searched, Iron Man wondered how Externality Man was doing. For Iron Man knew that the two safety lines had been tied together and therefore must have come undone together.

Indeed, at this very moment Externality Man, cold and gasping, was being hurled down the currents of the River of Consciousness. Having lost his way in the deeps of Contemplative Quarry, Externality Man had, by mistake, passed through the gap into the free-flowing River of Consciousness. And there, trapped beneath the superficial surface of frozen lucidity, Externality Man wrestled ceaselessly.

Moving in long sweeping motions, the fingers of Iron Man now grasped an edge of broken ice. As he pulled himself toward it, the hole appeared and Iron Man ripped off his face mask to once again breathe the abundance of the crisp arctic air. As if miraculously levitated, Iron Man soon found himself standing erect upon the hard lethargic Ice of Frozen Lucidity which covered the deeps of Contemplative Quarry. The Fur of Final Awareness draped at his side.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens, in praise of his father God--and with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Mountain of Care

September 11, 1972

Iron Man Journey #13
Individual Fatefulness

IRON MEN ARE FREE TO NAME THE SITUATION

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Mountain of Care. Appreciation Polis, on the far side of The Mountain of Care, was having the largest RS-1 of the quarter. The Penetration Post of Chicago:Base had assigned Iron Man to be first teacher at the RS-1 in Appreciation Polis. A second teacher, Penetration had assigned Indifferent Man.

The skies at the airport were full of jets soaring in from all points of the globe. Iron Man stood in breathless amazement as he beheld what appeared to be nothing more than the buzzing of a gigantic bee hive. While Iron Man was watching the spectacle, Indifferent Man slept soundly in the chair next to him. Both waited for their flight to be announced. Finally, the monstrous Human Adventure 4 X 4 rolled up to their gate. Iron Man had never seen such a large jet before and even felt a little uneasy at the prospect of riding this new and experimental model of mass transportation over the high and jagged peaks of the Mountain of Care.

Nevertheless, Iron Man nudged his sleeping second teacher and together he and Indifferent Man boarded the great Human Adventure.

As the plane pulled onto the runway the voice of a slim and attractive young stewardess, standing by a microphone in the front of the plane, could be heard over the loud speaker system. Iron Man payed close attention.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome aboard our new Human Adventure 4 X 4. My name is Miss Temporal Solidarity and I will be acting as your head stewardess for the duration of the flight. I hope to be able to attend to all of your needs while we are in the air. We will be flying at an altitude of 40,000 feet until our descent over The Mountain of Care for landing in Appreciation Polis. Please fasten your seat belts for

the take-off. No smoking while the signal lights are on. I hope you have a pleasant journey and thanks for flying Human Adventure."

The smoke from the burning tire rubber cleared away as the magnificent jet screeched down the runway. The long nose of the craft then rose off the pavement and soared nearly straight up into the sky. Higher and higher and higher the monstrous metal machine climbed into the blinding rays of sunlight. Iron Man blinked his eyes as he peered downward through his window, and, what a moment before had been a mammoth airport, now seemed to be but a microscopic dot. Iron Man gazed on in amazement.

By this time Indifferent Man was already asleep beside him. Iron Man jabbed him in the ribs and said, "Wake Up. You need to be preparing for the Tillich and Bonhoeffer seminars. No second teacher teachers with me who does not have a carefully-thought-through lesson plan." Iron Man was already working through his 'God lecture' and, after he had fumbled around for a couple of minutes, Indifferent Man pulled out his notes and began to stare blankly at them.

As he began to doze off again, a turbulence rocked the plane jolting all the passengers severely. The trays of breakfast toast, coffee, oatmeal, eggs, and orange juice went flying all over the place creating a gummy mess from the front to the back of the cabin. A moment more and the Human Adventure entered a bellowing black thunder cloud. Several women and children began to scream and shriek as lightning flashed across the wings and cataclysmic claps of thunder cracked all about. Chills of terror filled the air as a somewhat-shaken pilot's voice came over the loud speaker.

"Please remain seated and fasten your safety belts. A revised weather report has just arrived over the radio which explains the discomfort you are now experiencing. Radar has detected an unanticipated hurricane brewing over the Sea of Tranquility. This unseasonal weather is the reason for the sudden storm of which we are now in the middle. Please remain calm, however, for we will soon be passing over the Mountain of Care and descending for our landing."

No more had the pilot finished speaking than an internal explosion occurred within the cloud and the jostled jet seemed to crinkle under its power. The lights went off and flames could be seen as they engulfed the

engines upon the wings. As horrifying weeping and wailing sounded throughout, the plane could be felt to be descending rapidly. Down and down and down the wounded Human Adventure spiraled. Finally the falling craft broke through the bottom of the cloud. All peered in terror out their windows as they saw before them not the clear open skies which could lead them to safety, but the most treacherous peak on the entire Mountain of Care jutting upward. Before their grief-filled eyes loomed the perilous Peak of Self-Preservation. All held fervently to the hope that somehow the pilot would be able to pull the plunging plane over the ominous peak. In an instant though, all such hopes perished.

A jagged edge of the peak caught the crook of the left wing. The mighty metal bird ripped in two spilling its contents across the sky. Iron Man was still fastened securely in his seat as he was hurled into boundless space. Everything was spinning about his head when suddenly a crash into thousands of tree branches brought the journey of his sturdy chair and Iron Man to an end. Iron Man, unconscious, with his head bleeding profusely, lay strapped to the saving chair on the ground.

After several hours Iron Man awoke. He opened his eyes and stared dimly at all about him. He experienced a strange sensation that he had just appeared. Not just appeared in this particular situation, but that his whole life---had just appeared. The blow to his head had caused Iron Man to lose all of his memory; all of his context for what it meant to be human was now gone.

Iron Man looked indifferently at the raw reality all about him; at the trees, the sky, the mountain, fields and thickets. Iron Man then dropped his head over his chest and glared down at himself. A nauseous feeling grew in his head and stomach as he was seized by the absurdity of his showedupness. Gastric fluids flowed into his throat choking Iron Man and causing him to vomit all over himself.

The putrid odor filled his nostrils as Iron Man hung his head in utter disgust.

At that moment a group of Emerging Generation campers came running across a meadow toward him. As they reached him they immediately recognized the crash victim as the famous movement first teacher, Iron Man.

"Iron Man, Iron Man,' they yelled, 'are you hurt? Are you all right? What happened?"

Iron Man only stared at them, dumbfounded, and finally asked, "Who is Iron Man? And who are you? I do not know your names, or the name of this place, or even my own name." The E.G. were shocked to hear Iron Man say such things but knew immediately that they must get additional help if they were to deal with this situation.

One of the older boys, the prior of the group, then commanded, "Two of you run quickly and get Iron Man's wise old colleague Roscoe Hayes, the hermit who lives near here. He will know what to do."

In no time at all Roscoe was standing before the pathetic frame of Iron Man. He recognized the symptoms in an instant and spoke to the gathered body; "Grace Be Yours And Peace."

Community: "From God Our Father And The Lord Jesus Christ."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

"The situation is this,' declared Roscoe. 'Iron Man is suffering from an affliction that strikes every man who ever crashes on the Mountain of Care. It is a state of being known as the Sleep of Somethingelness. It is the plague of all those who, for a thousand different reasons, refuse their freedom to create the symbols which name their life and their situation."

Without saying anything further, Roscoe reached deep into his pockets and pulled out seven Figs of Individual Fatefulness. For a long time, using hard rocks he beat them to a fine pulp on the ground. He then raised the pulp toward the sky and recited a mumbled prayer, blessing the substance. With no further additives, Roscoe stated, "This, colleagues, is the Powerful Potion of Present Possibility." With care, he then smeared the potion across Iron Man's half-shut eyes.

In a flash, Iron Man felt his being to surge with a strange new power. His eyes opened wide as he saw the beauty of all that surrounded him. He experienced a deep gratitude for the colleagues that now stood watchfully before him.

Seizing the moment, Iron Man unlatched his safety belt and stood---his head held high in the air.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands towards the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed; "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Land of Mystery

September 12, 1972

Iron Man Journey #14
Radical Contingency

IRON MEN ARE FREE TO DIE THEIR DEATHS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Land of Mystery. While doing regional recruitment the week before, one of the Order men of the religious house had been in a tragic head-on collision with a Mack semi-trailer truck. The house car which he was driving exploded into flames and in moments had cremated the collision victim in the consuming flames of the blazing fire. At a meeting following the funeral rites, the house consensed that the best memorial to symbolize the life and death of their colleague would be a cross made of the hard and durable Ultimate Upagainstness Marble. The only difficulty in creating such a cross was to be found in acquiring the scarce marble. For Ultimate Upagainstness Marble is located only along the furthest-back wall of Contingency Cavern.

The task of bringing back a slab of the hard and precious marble was assigned to Iron Man and Miss Terie. Miss Terie was one of the single family units in the house and had a good bit of experience in such matters as spelunking. Iron Man possessed a profound adoration for Miss Terie and was most pleased that she had been assigned to work with him.

Together they stood and peered deeply into the blackness of the small narrow hole in the side of the hill which served as the entrance to Contingency Cavern. Fear gripped their hearts as the dense unknownness before them loomed as a force destined to threaten their very existence.

Miss Terie slipped her small and graceful hand into the firm hold of Iron Man's and together they walked into the dark passageway with their lights shining before them.

Soon the tunnel widened and expanded upward. In fact, the numerous intertwining of channels and chambers created in some places a three-level cave.

All morning and all afternoon they walked. Often holding tightly to one another, their initial fears did not subside as Iron Man and Miss Terie penetrated more and more deeply into Contingency Cavern. Indeed, the forbidding darkness seemed to have intensified as each forward step gripped the fine still dust of the cave floor.

As they approached a huge room, a black furry ball came swooping down toward their lights causing Miss Terie to scream loudly. As another of the furry bodies came darting at them and then another and another, Iron Man tried to comfort her by objectifying the situation.

"Stoop low," said Iron Man, "for these are the dangerous black Bats of Bloody Beginnings. If they attach themselves to you it could well be that they will suck your blood and leave serious disease within the wounds they make. It is always surprising to spelunkers to discover that so many Bats of Bloody Beginnings live at the very center of Contingency Cavern."

But even as Iron Man spoke the few darting forms became a swarm of the blood-thirsty winged rodents. Shrill screeches filled the air as the bats screamed their deathly song. Iron Man grabbed several of the Bats of Bloody Beginnings as their fangs protruded from beneath their whiskered faces in preparation for a plunge into Miss Terie's neck. Iron Man flung the small creatures against the hard rock walls of the cavern. Dashed and broken, they lay dead amongst the jagged rocks.

Out of the corner of his eye Iron Man caught sight of a small crevice in the wall---just large enough for he and Miss Terie to fit securely into. Without wasting a precious moment, Iron Man shoved Miss Terie in the hole and then stuffed himself in as far as he could go. This maneuver threw off even the sensitive perceptions of the bats. Most bats soon disappeared into other parts of the cavern. Six bats however remained in the room flying about. Through persistence, they discovered the unprotected and exposed back of Iron Man as it stuck out of the small hole. Immediately the six soared straight for Iron Man and with quick savage slashing movements sunk their fangs deep into the pool of Iron Man's rich blood. Iron Man could scarcely bear the pain as he reared up out of the hole. With swift power, Iron Man then thrust the back of his own body against a solid wall of rock and smashed the burdensome bats.

Though tired from the fight and loss of blood, Iron Man and Miss Terie continued on; trudging through the cave.

Soon the two reached the edge of the mammoth Chamber of Creatureliness. The Chamber of Creatureliness is the largest room in the entire cave and marks the end of the long tunnel into the deeps of the Land of Mystery. What had previously been the three-levels of the cave now opened out and split apart into this one gigantic chamber. As a consequence, three ledges passed at different heights along the sides of the steep and slippery chamber walls.

Climbing over a pile of boulders that was the aftermath of a rock slide, Iron Man and Miss Terie made their way upward to the highest ledge. Upon reaching the summit of the ledge, the two lights beamed across the expanse of the chamber and were rebounded radiantly back toward their source by the sparkling crystals contained within the marvelous wall confronting them. For now they stood in absolute awe before the Wall of Ultimate Upagainstness Marble. Neither spoke as they were held spellbound by the dazzling sight.

The path which stretched before them leading to the wall was narrow and treacherous. The dropoff over the edge of the path to the bottom of the chamber was a sheer one hundred and thirty feet. Iron Man called forth all his courage as he began to tread cautiously onto the untrusted path. Miss Terie followed close behind. At points the path became so narrow that it was necessary to lay flat against the wall---moving only a hand or a foot at one time. It was in one such place that the pick axe Miss Terie had fastened to her belt caught upon a jutting rock pulling it loose from the wall. In a split second a thousand other rocks and boulders began pouring from the ceiling and sides of the chamber.

A full-blown cave-in had been ignited and Iron Man found himself to be standing on nothing as the path crumbled and disappeared beneath him. Pebbles, rocks, and boulders bombarded Iron Man from all sides as he tumbled downward in the hail of rock and stone. Crashing into a pile of gravel and loose dirt, Iron Man felt most of his body to be covered by this earthly debris. His nostrils filled with the unsettled dust, as slowly, Iron Man extracted his battered body from beneath its entrapment.

All was dark. The lights had been lost and destroyed in the cave-in. Only a seemingly infinite void of chilly, damp, blackness surrounded him.

Though he felt as though every bone in his body had been shattered, Iron Man did not allow himself to feel sorry for himself or to worry about his own injuries. On the contrary, he immediately called out for his missing colleague. "Miss Terie, Miss Terie. Where are you?"

Iron Man was answered only by the silence of the vast chamber. Disturbing the dense black air, a strained groan finally came forth from beneath a pile of rubble. Iron Man reached into the supply pack attached to his belt and pulled out a spare candle. With trembling hands he lit the wick and, from the feeble light it put forth, Iron Man began to move toward the faint whimpering sounds.

Iron Man found himself to be standing on what, a few minutes before, had been a deep hole---but it was now full of fallen boulders of every size and proportion. A few steps further and the light from Iron Man's flickering flame illuminated a sight which instilled in Iron Man a terrifying numbness. Breathless and unmoving, Iron Man was held in a trance-like state by the small bruised feminine hand which reached upward through the surface of the rubble. Dropping to his knees, Iron Man then pulled away a medium-sized rock which revealed the horrifying scene beneath. He lowered his candle to the hole that was opened and bent his head over. In that moment, Iron Man encountered the mortally stunned gaze of Miss Terie as she breathed the last breath of her life. Wrapping both of his strong masculine hands around her single out-reached hand, Iron Man watched for a long long time as the enchanting eyes of her delicate face closed forever.

After many silent hours, Iron Man arose and began to make his way back toward the entrance. He could just not believe that Miss Terie was really dead. Yet he knew so well that it was true.

The sorrow that Iron Man felt for Miss Terie, however, did not allow him to forget that which his encounter with death had reminded him. For he knew clearly that even though he had narrowly escaped death this day, he was nonetheless a condemned man. For death awaits every person. And as he reached the dancing brilliance of sunlight at the entrance of the

tunnel, Iron Man heard also within his deep pain and sorrow the Word that he could live the greatness of his life ---even being a human creature with a death to die. With this knowing, Iron Man experienced a strange absolution in the deeps of his being as he stood before the entrance to Contingency Cavern.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands towards the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

September 15, 1972

Seminal Illumination
Iron Man Journey #15
Children's Eucharist:

**IRON MEN KNOW THEIR
KNOWING IN THE OTHER WORLD**

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Sea of Tranquility. The summer research assembly had just ended in Chicago. To celebrate this event the religious house would be holding a great feast for all of the returning participants. During the feast, stories of the summer would be shared. Iron Man had been assigned to enhance the event by providing an exotic main-dish which could symbolize the uniqueness of the occasion. Iron Man decided the most appropriate option would be the highly-craved delicacy of squid tentacles. And not just any old squid would do for this festive feast but only Squids of Center's Certainty. Now Squids of Center's Certainty live only deep within the Trench of Knowing's End---located in a remote section of the Sea of Tranquility.

Iron Man carried his most powerful speargun onto his yacht, He was followed by three Emerging Generation priors who were loaded down with the rest of his equipment. These three members of the E.G. had been assigned to enable Iron Man on his special task. Soon the three E.G. and Iron Man were well out into The Sea of Tranquility. Iron Man stood up and scanned the horizon for any sign of Rationality Reef.

Rationality Reef is located on the very edge of the Trench of Knowing's End. While the squids live deep in the interior darkness of the trench, at night they swim up the trench's walls to the warm surface waters surrounding Rationality Reef. During these hours of the night, the squid feed on the small Crabs of Ceaseless Speculation which inhabit the reef.

As the boat came to a rest over Rationality Reef, Iron Man called his three E.G. crewmen to his side. With deep conviction he spoke; "My strategy for spearing one of the succulent squids is this. I will go to the

bottom and lay on the sand of the reef's floor. When it grows dark the squids come looking for Crabs of Ceaseless Speculation to eat. When I see its strange phosphorescent glowing approach in the water, I will simply shoot one with my speargun. You see, the most remarkable characteristic of Squids of Certainty's Center is that, while they live their entire lives in darkness, they themselves glow with a radiant phosphorescence. While the amount of light they transmit is always the same, when they become scared or threatened, they simply emit their black Ink of Seminal Illumination into the water. This black ink spreads through the water and hides them in safety from any would-be attacker."

The E.G. all consensed that Iron Man had established a sound strategy for accomplishing his assigned task.

Having put on his scuba diving gear, Iron Man then turned to his three crewmen and said, "The Lord Be With You."

E.G. Crew: "And With Thy Spirit."

Iron Man: "Amen."

E.G. Crew: "Amen."

Iron Man then slipped over the side into the silent blue water. In moments he had disappeared from sight on his journey to the sand floor of the reef.

The white sands reflected an eerie diffusion of light as the last rays of sunset were absorbed by the sleepy sea above. Iron Man lowered himself so that he was laying flat, and even partially covered on the sandy bottom.

Iron Man rested for a long time in this position until he began to lose interest in the project. Then, without warning, deep penetrating pains shot through his left leg. As he turned over in great haste, several jabs pierced into the flesh of his back. Iron Man could not understand what was attacking him. Looking down the length of his body, Iron Man turned his head in time to see many flashing claws begin to rip into the tender skin of his stomach. Iron Man was horror stricken as he watched the onslaught of the pesty Crabs of Ceaseless Speculation. As he wrestled on the bottom, Iron Man experienced himself to be torn apart. At his wits end, Iron Man nearly decided to give up the struggle, when out of the corner of his mask he spied a large Squid of Center's Certainty.

Being perturbed by the ruckus on the bottom, the squid began to shoot all through the water its black Ink of Seminal Illumination. The repulsive liquid reached the struggling form of Iron Man, who, at this point, was covered by crabs. Immediately the crabs began to drop off and seek for safety from the hungry squid they knew must be present. Iron Man began to recollect his composure.

Picking up his speargun from the bottom, Iron Man knew that if he was to capture the squid, now must be the time. The thick cloud of the dense black Ink of Seminal Illumination lay before him. To reach the phosphorescent glowing of the Squid of Center's Certainty, Iron Man knew he must swim straight into the seemingly impenetrable blackness. Without wasting further precious moments on needless reflection, Iron Man entered the lethargic mass of blackness.

No light at all passed through the rim of his face mask as it seemed to Iron Man that he had entered another world. An ominous void seemed to engulf him on all sides and Iron Man sensed a strange unreality about it all.

After what seemed like a very long time, Iron Man lost his fear of the watery abyss in which he seemed to be lost. He now wondered if he might not actually be only dreaming---only sleeping through a wierd sort of nightmare.

Experiencing himself as in the deepest of sleeps, yet simultaneously conscious of being fully awake, Iron Man found himself to be moving through a thick veil of seaweed. Gripped and entangled by the surrounding unseen vegetation, Iron Man felt his head push through into clear water---free of weeds or blinding ink.

And as his eyes peered intensely before him, the glowing phosphorescence he had been seeking could now easily be discerned. Taking careful aim, Iron Man gripped the trigger and "ZING" the hard steel rod of spear ripped through the water---plunging into the leathery head of the magnificent Squid of Center's Certainty.

Once having placed the squid on ice in the cooler of the ship, Iron Man invited his crew to enter his cabin with him. As they sat down, Iron Man

placed a bottle of deep purple wine and an unbroken loaf of bread on the table before them.

With great solemnity, Iron Man then spoke; "In this world all is uncertain. No man can know with any clarity what the content of the rest of his life, or even the next moment, might be. Like this bread, man's knowing is broken (BREAK BREAD). And like this wine, man must pour out his life searching after certainty and clarity in this world (SPILL WINE)."

"Yet in the Other World, which is found at the center of life, there is absolute certainty and all is known. Because Iron Men know this single truth, they may take all of the brokenness of life (EAT BREAD); and all of life's spilledoutness (DRINK WINE); into themselves---becoming one with it and all of creation."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN LIVE THEIR ABSURD LIVES IN THIS WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Land of Mystery. Iron Man had been assigned by his prior to work as a permeator during the new quarter. Iron Man had not been assigned-out as a permeator for many years and could not understand why his many gifts were being so sadly overlooked. To make matters worse, in all of Derangement Metro only one job was available---all others were filled and many were unemployed. The available job was with the post office. Iron Man reported for his interview. The postmaster began to lay out the rigorous requirements of the task.

"Iron Man," greeted the postmaster, "I am indeed grateful that it is you who have decided to apply for this job. For it is a dangerous and thankless task. Few men would be capable of even making the attempt. The job we have to offer is as a mail carrier on a route which follows the narrow and broken Path of Perfect Understanding along the rim of Psychosis Canyon. Much of the path is broken away and, I must admit, many men throughout history have fallen into it to a tragic death at the bottom of Psychosis Canyon. And let me not deceive you or hide anything from your knowledge; our last three carriers to manage that daily route, Rationality Man, Certainty Man, and Sane Man, have all perished on the hard jagged floor of the canyon."

Beads of sweat broke out on Iron Man's brow as he cleared his throat nervously. The postmaster then posed the threatening question to Iron Man. "Iron Man, I offer you the possibility of embracing this task in the face of all its absurdity and impending doom---and of allowing this task to be transformed into meaningful destiny for you. Will you or will you not be the mail carrier now needed by Derangement Metro?"

There was a long silence as a thousand terrifying images exploded in Iron Man's mind. He could see himself walking along the perilous path

with the rocks suddenly crumbling from under him---plunging him into Psychosis Canyon to his death. Even as pictures of his broken body flashed into his head Iron Man pushed them aside. He had always disciplined himself to be guided more by his love of life than of his fear of death. With that, he spoke.

"I will," said Iron Man with resolution.

The shadows danced across the ragged walls of Psychosis Canyon as Iron Man stood before the perilous Path of Perfect Understanding following the circumference of its rugged rim. His eyes peered out over the many homes that dotted the region above the canyon. It was these people that Iron Man would be serving as mail carrier. Most normal people in Derangement Metro could not understand why anyone would intentionally make their home on the edge of such a deep canyon possessing so tragic a history. Nonetheless, the residents perched atop the canyon's rim seemed to live both extraordinary and carefree lives.

With firm and decided steps, Iron Man walked out upon the ridge to make his deliveries. As he walked, Iron Man could not help wondering about the foolishness of the task upon which he was now embarking. As doubts filled his thoughts, Iron Man came to a group of laborers who were working to build rock fences around some of the homes above the path. These men were not at all happy as they cursed and complained incessantly. Iron Man stood and watched them performing their tasks most unwillingly. An agonizing identification with these forsaken laborers then occurred as Iron Man saw through them the experience of everyman; spending most of their lives doing tasks they would rather not do and then receiving nothing more than a grave as their final reward. Iron Man toiled with the absurdity of this thought as he continued to make his mail deliveries. He could not understand.

Soon Iron Man approached some child's pet dog laying in the middle of the path. The dog was dead. It appeared to have been beaten by some cruel person with a wicked wooden club. Blood from the dog's crushed head oozed out his drawn mouth and mixed in muddy trickles with the dust of the trail. An indescribable fear of the unknowness of death gripped at the coils of Iron Man's brain as he contemplated the death of the dog. Through the experience he encountered also the death of all things and of all

men. Sorrow weighed heavy on Iron Man's heart as he walked on bearing the bitter absurdity of the end of all things. He could not understand.

As he walked now upon a long portion of the ridge which contained no homes and no deliveries to be made, a profound loneliness beckoned from deep within Iron Man's interior being. He looked about him and saw nothing that was familiar. Nothing appeared friendly toward him. All about seemed ominous and alien. In that lonely place, Iron Man was suddenly terrorized by a sense of his solitariness such as he had never known before. But now he saw clearly the absurdity of life which must be lived all alone by all persons. Even if one would be married and raise a family of sixteen children he could never escape the reality of his given human solitude. He could not understand.

After resuming deliveries, Iron Man came upon a deformed human figure laying by the side of the path. It seemed to be little more than a large head with a wretchedly small trunk, only crinkled stubs for legs, and one protrusion from his side that looked something like an arm. Laying before the figure was a cup with a few pennies in it which sympathetic passerbyers had thrown. Apparently the family of this defective man would leave him by the side of the path each morning so that he could spend the day begging. They would then pick him up again at night. Deep grief filled Iron Man as he stood before the human tragedy and suffering of this situation. And his grief intensified as he looked with probing eyes into the faces of all the healthy people who were walking by---for there too he saw the same absurd suffering and tragedy present. He could not understand.

Yet Iron Man was surprised to see before him now the end of the path and of his route. He turned around and scanned the length and the depth of Psychosis Canyon. He had made it safely; and this fact in itself seemed strangely absurd to Iron Man. While he had avoided falling into the doom-filled canyon, Iron Man, nonetheless, now sensed himself to be living in a benign madness. He finally decided that indeed, all things in this world are absurd. However, the very making of this decision seemed to transform Iron Man's state of being and give him a new passion and new courage for the fulfilling of his assigned task. And in that moment Iron Man understood perfectly---and knew that he would walk this treacherous yet blessed route for as long as his life did last in this world.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands towards the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN ARE ALREADY WINNERS
IN THE OTHER WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the River of Consciousness. Chicago:Base had assigned Iron Man to enter the Race of the Eternal Relation which is held annually on the free-flowing waters of the River of Consciousness. Now the Race of the Eternal Relation is a four hundred mile race of the mightiest hydroplanes in the world. These streamline speed boats skim at death-defying speeds across the surface of the water. Often these vessels of sleek power will reach speeds in excess of two hundred and fifty miles an hour. At such speeds, even the slightest accident or malfunction can cause a hydroplane to totally disintegrate.

Many movement colleagues who learned of Iron Man's special assignment became very upset as they were sure the grueling race would spell certain death for Iron Man. Yet the Panjayat had not assigned Iron Man without a strong rationale. For they knew that the entire formulation of SEAPAC was blocked until some method of transportation between the thousands of islands could be found. And indeed, the prize for first place in the Race of the Eternal Relation was a huge and powerful Swedish-made ocean yacht. The yacht would be a profound enablement to the movement in SEAPAC. Therefore Iron Man was sent out to win the beautiful boat.

The morning was bright as blinding reflections of light bounced off the blue waters and outlined Iron Man's boat. He pulled up to the starting line and cut off his loud gurgling engines. Crowds covered the beaches along the shoreline for as far as one could see. Even though the race was a long long distance, most every point on the journey would be observed by some of the many movement colleagues who had come to watch. While the spectators were many, the actual number of contestants in the Race of the Eternal Relation was very small. The race itself is made open to anyone in the entire world. Yet all hydroplane racers, know of the horrifying odds against any man living through the entire length of the race. Consequently, few enter, but many watch.

Iron Man looked from side to side at the boats pulling up beside him. He secretly wondered how many of the men who now filled his vision would be seen again at the end of the race. A deep trembling passed through his being as another thought pushed relentlessly upward into his consciousness: 'would he even be there to see them?'

But such concerns had to be put aside as the announcer's voice came over the loud speaker system. "Gentlemen, welcome to the annual Race of the Eternal Relation. In just a few moments you will be speeding across the free-flowing waters of the River of Consciousness as you make your way down the four hundred mile course of this race. But for a brief moment let me have your undivided attention for the context---as it will certainly be a matter of life and death."

"Every moment of this race will demand all of your attention. For numerous dangers await you down the winding waters of the River of Consciousness. At the speedS you will be traveling, every new turn demands an immediate and unflinching decisiveness: Should you wait even a split second too long to make up your mind, you will find yourself wrapped around a tree on the shore. Also, the shifting sands of the river bottom will create a major point of danger. For you will never know how deep the water is where you are---even if you are in the middle. The changing floor of the river sometimes makes it deep on the sides and shallow in the middle. Sandbars, hidden driftwood, trees, and debris will always be a threat to you."

"Very well then. When you see this flag in my hand drop, you may begin the race. Gentlemen, start your engines."

What a moment before had been a peaceful setting by the shore of the River of Consciousness was now transformed utterly; all of existence seemed to crack as the engines exploded into action. In what seemed to be a simultaneous occurrence, the ever-so-meaningful flag dropped and the thirty-three restless ships, spread across the river's width, began to turn the smooth placid waters into a turbulence of churning and spray. Jets of water filled the air as one by one the swift hydroplanes sped off down the river leaving all trace of their presence behind them---all save a spreading wake---and even that would soon disappear into the waters of The River of Consciousness as they returned to their untroubled silence.

Yet the Race of the Eternal Relation was underway. As they entered the first turn Attached Man ruthlessly held the lead. His attractive ship, named the "This-Worldly Hope," left most of the drivers ashamed to be so very far behind. With a sneer, Attached Man peered in back of him at the rest---so far in the distance. That is, all but one. For closing rapidly the distance between them was Iron Man as he skillfully guided his powerful hydroplane, the "Other-World Transparency."

The bows of both ships were elevated high into the air as they moved forward in speeds that shock the imagination. The two leaders of the race moved onward toward their unknown destiny.

After a couple of hours the first reports began to arrive at the grandstand as to the progress of the race. All was not good as many of the contestants had already met with varied and tragic fates. As ten of the speedsters had been sliding around a curve too fast, they lost control and ran onto the beach at Druther's Dune. All of their ships were destroyed instantaneously in the grinding sands. Twelve of the other hydroplanes had attempted to take a shortcut through a swamp but had become totally entangled in the Reeds of Riches. Financial Flies of the swamp then began to attack; biting the stranded drivers all over their bodies. They even made nests of eggs in the driver's hair and created a home for maggots.

And this was not all. Even nine of the more intentional drivers had shattered their ships to bits as they ran aground on the Mound of Finite Models.

So it came down to Iron Man and Attachment Man to finish the race.

The strategy Attachment Man was using was one of staying in the middle of the river and making use of Compromise Current. Attachment Man did not want to lose any of the lead he possessed so he chose not to maneuver about.

On the contrary, Iron Man paid careful attention to follow the deepest channels wherever they might lead---even when they flowed apart from the central part of the river and branched out into its more extreme portions.

As they came within a few miles of the finish line, Iron Man and Attachment Man were held steadily even together. Then, suddenly looming before them, and stretching the entire length of the river was the ominous and destructive Sandbar of the Self-centered Self. In past years hundreds of ships had been wrecked on this huge hunk of sand. No channels of water were flowing rapidly enough to cut through it. As a consequence, it would be necessary to jump over the Sandbar of the Self-centered Self in their boats. Gaining full speed for the jump, Iron Man and Attachment Man both hit the sandbar at the same instant. With splintering sounds of wood and steel being ripped and torn and broken apart, both ships left their bottom portions wrecked upon the beach.

Within moments, Attachment Man and his ship the "This-Worldly Hope" had passed beneath the dark waves of The River of Consciousness.

Iron Man was now the only one left in the race as he experienced the incredible precariousness of his situation. For Iron Man's legs now dangled in the air over nothing as his arms held him supported only by the sides of "The Other-World Transparency." No bottom existed on his boat! Only so long as he could keep the speeds high and the bow raised would he be able to sustain this stance.

Then without warning a split in the river appeared before Iron Man and he did not know which way to follow. Unable to slow down enough to think the matter over, Iron Man chose the left channel and moved quickly down it. Yet in horror and grief, Iron Man's eyes soon opened upon the top of the Dam of Eschatological Doom. Again with no time to pull back, Iron Man and "The Other-World Transparency" went flying over the top of the dam falling hundreds of feet below. The remainder of the visible ship fell apart in mid air and plunged deep into the river.

As he swam back to the top, Iron Man climbed out onto the rocky shore of the Island of Authentic Selfhood.

He stood upon the lonely and rocky beach reflecting upon the reality that not only he but no one else had won the possession of the prize of The Race of the Eternal Relation. Yet Iron Man experienced himself to have grown in the very process of struggling the struggle of the race. And in

his interior deeps he knew that Iron Men have already won in the Other World---even when they lose in this world.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

September 22, 1972

Iron Man Journey #18
Inclusive Comprehension

CHILDREN'S EUCHARIST:
IRON MEN POSSESS INCLUSIVE COMPREHENSION IN THE
OTHER WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Sea of Tranquility. The past three quarters, Iron Man's permeation assignment had been as a research diver for the Humbled Petroleum Company. His job consisted primarily in checking and repairing the underwater rigging of many of the great oil drills throughout The Sea of Tranquility. A great catastrophe, however, now bound the company in a state of agonizing tension.

It seems that the company's largest undersea oil field, which had been plugged and sealed so that its vast resources could be maintained until needed, had been disasterously disturbed by an eruption of the Volcano of Painful Lucidity on nearby Illumination Island. During the eruption, one of the tremors had cracked the seal on the primary Fountainhead of the Petroleum of Ontological Perfection. This precious petroleum formed in a prehistoric setting was now leaking in great abundance into the sea and threatening the marine life for miles around.

The entire ecological balance of the sea surrounding Illumination Island was now in peril. The beaches were sour with a rank and putrid odor of thousands of rotting dead fish. The seaweed which had grown in abundance on the ocean floor now floated on the slimy surface waters of the spill.

Birds which had always made a habit of diving deep into the water to capture fish to eat, now dove only to their own death and destruction. As their feathers would plunge into the thick oily water, the weighty substance would bring to paralysis their freedom of flight. In only a matter of hours the lethargic liquid would seep into the very pores of these winged creatures, smothering them in a cruel death.

With all this endless tragedy weighing heavily on Iron Man's mind, he prepared to enter the slimy waters. As his aqua lung was finally strapped into place, the manager of the Humbled Petroleum Company walked across the deck to set the context for Iron Man. "Iron Man, this is a grungy and dangerous job. While we all know the approximate location of the leaking cap over the Fountainhead of the Petroleum of Ontological Perfection, no one has been able to spot it or exactly mark it with a bouy so that we can manuever our platforms in position to seal it. This will be your task. Somehow you must locate the source of the spill and release a marker bouy at that point. As I understand the situation, Iron Man , there is only one possibility for finding this spot. You must place yourself within the clear Current of Being's Cognizance which whips around across the surface of the fountainhead on the bottom. Yet this current, your greatest possibility, will also be your greatest danger. For you must keep yourself anchored securely while in the midst of this current or it will readily sweep you out to a deep unknown region of the Sea of Tranquility never to be seen again in this world. So when you enter the current, stay on the bottom and continually drive stakes in the sand before you as you move. In this way you can see clearly in the current's waters and yet not be swept away by its swift movement. Just remember, Iron Man, the depth at which you will be working is 180 feet. Should you make any mistakes, you will surely die in the deeps----- a death unseen by any human eye."

With a sense of being absurdly assured, Iron Man lept off the side of the ship and into the black briny foam of the sea. As he began to penetrate the churning surface waters, Iron Man was amazed to discover that he could see almost nothing at all. The leak from the cracked fountainhead was so extensive that the black slimy substance had infused itself throughout the sea making any visibility an absurdity.

The dark and somewhat hesitant descent continued as Iron Man made his way further and further into the 180 feet of depth. As the light of the surface waters soon failed to pierce the dark dense liquid world, Iron Man lost all sensation of sight. Somewhere past 100 feet he began to grope anxiously in the watery void with his outreached hands. But nothing was to be grasped as his dread filled descent continued; sinking and sinking and sinking further each moment toward an unknown destiny. Only a couple of minutes passed of being without sight before Iron Man began to experience himself as actually blind. He placed his hand on his face mask---but what he saw continued to be only nothing---only ths same blackness and emptiness.

Iron Man hesitated his descent for only a moment. But even this momentary halt was a deadly mistake. Losing his singular thrust, Iron Man began to look and feel around on all sides of him. Fully stopped now from any directional movement---a stroke of terror suddenly siezed at Iron Man's mind and gripped his heart. For now he was uncertain even as to which way was up and which way down. Any misjudgement now at these perilous depths would spell certain death. Should he start swimming sideways, thinking it to be up, doom would be short-coming as his aqua lung would soon be out of air.

Horror-stricken panic began to rip through Iron Man's being and his mind, now racing out of control in its fear, echoed again and again, "Get to the surface, Get to the surface, Get to the surface!" Iron Man began kicking wildly as he propelled himself like a bullet through the water in the direction he thought to be up toward the surface. Faster and faster Iron Man moved as adrenalin shot through his system giving him a super human power of momentum.

Then, without warning, a numbing fright froze Iron Man's being as his body went crashing into the bottom of the sea. Rather than swimming toward the surface, in his panic, he had swam downward---only thinking it to be up. Stunned and shaken from the unexpected jolt, Iron Man collected himself and drove one of his metal stakes into the ocean floor. All around remained unpenetrable blackness, yet as he peered, his blindness no longer seemed to be so terror-filling. Merely the acceptance that he could not see, seemed to reassure Iron man and renew his courage. Pulling out his stake, Iron Man then, feeling his way, swan several hundred feet across the bottom until he sensed the power of a nearby current. Immediatley he drove his stake deep into the bottom and held on tightly. In another moment the sweeping mass of the clear Current of Being's Cognizance rushed all around him. As he held with all of his might in the current's force, he too could suddenly see the entire length and width of the area's sand-floor. Within moments he spied the massive seepage of oil spilling forth out of the Fountainhead of the Petroleum of Ontological Perfection.

As the curent subsided and the dark murky waters returned, Iron Man released his grip on the stake. Having regained his orientation in the current, Iron Man moved with precision toward the fountainhead. At the sight of the leak he plunged another stake into the floor, tied a bouy to it, and then released the marker to the surface. Having accomplished his assigned task, Iron Man then returned to the ship.

Without even spending much time to acknowledge the congratulations of many of the ship's crewman, Iron Man moved to the kitchen and after procuring a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread from the cupboard, sat down at a table with two of his colleagues.

In great seriousness, Iron Man then spoke, "Much tragedy and destruction has resulted from our inability to know the exact location of the cracked fountainhead until just a few moments ago. And indeed, in this world man's knowledge is always incomplete and muddled; like this bread, it is broken (BREAK BREAD). Men must incessantly, in this world, pour out their lives in seeking that completeness of knowing that never finally comes (SPILL WINE). Yet Iron Men take that very brokenness (EAT BREAD)---and that very spilledoutness (DRINK WINE)--into themselves--and in so doing discover the Other World which is found at the center of life. And there in the Other World, man's knowing is ontologically perfect and he possesses inclusive comprehension. It is this truth of final wholeness which all Iron Men live before.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed, "Iron Man Shall build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Mountain of Care

September 28, 1972

Futuric Responsibility
Iron Man Journey # 19

IRON MEN ARE FASTIDIOUS IN THEIR CREATION OF THE FUTURE

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out his journey to The Mountain of Care. The religious house of Multiplicity Metro was in the middle of a weekend P.S.U. which was planning movement expansion in the metro for the next twenty years. One of the primary tasks of the weekend was to create a large imaginal grid which could demonstrate the anticipated growth of The City of Multiplicity. Now the City of Multiplicity lies in the valley at the foot of a great cliff on one side of the Mountain of Care. In order to gain perspective on the city, the P.S.U. group consensed that they would climb to the top of the cliff and do their initial sketches and projections for the valley from that lofty view.

Iron Man and Slovenly Man were assigned to go ahead of the rest of the group and set up for lunch on the ledge at the top of the cliff.

Iron Man took care to tightly secure each rope on his backpack as he stood at the foot of the Trail of Transparent Trends which winds its way up the mountain to the cliff's roof. Slovenly Man quickly stuffed all of his supplies in his backpack. He then crammed a last box of Graham Crackers onto the top of the other supplies with a harsh stomp of his foot. Hastily, Slovenly Man made a couple of loose knots in his pack straps and placed the whole bundle on his back.

Iron Man and Slovenly man then began their march up the winding Trail of Transparent Trends.

As they climbed higher and higher, the two hikers could not see the hundreds of broken Graham Crackers which lay spilled out upon the trail behind them. The dust of the path now seemed to be literally crawling with Antci Ants and Just-Wondering Worms who were having a great feast by delightedly devouring the fallen Gram Crackers.

By late morning Iron Man and Slovenly Man reached the summit of the cliff. As they took off their packs and laid them on the ground a strange patter of clicking sounds could be heard about them. Both stared upward intensely until finally Iron Man's eyes opened wide as he saw the source of the noise. He cried out, "There! Above on the mountainside of boulders! An entire pocket of Pebbles of Prophetic Peril has been jarred and is tumbling down toward the ledge." Iron Man then shot a frantic glance over his shoulder at the City of Multiplicity far below. With a lucidity that blasted open the temples of his head, Iron Man continued his warning. "If those pebbles pile up on this ledge it will collapse and create an avalanche which surely will wipe out the entire City of Multiplicity."

Already starting to run, Slovenly man shouted, "Let's get out of here!" Iron Man reached out his powerful arm and latched onto Slovenly Man's fleeing leg. "Halt this moment," commanded Iron Man. "We know that the entire city below will be wiped out if we do not deal with this situation. We are the one's chosen to deal with this just because we are the one's who understand the reality of the situation."

"But what can we possibly do?" implored Slovenly Man.

Iron Man quickly responded with his model, "We must build a wall of boulders here at the foot of the mountainside. This will prevent the tumbling pebbles from falling upon this ledge and weighing it down too heavily."

Without further comment, Iron Man began rapidly selecting boulders and placing them upon one another; creating a strong barrier against the pocket of Pebbles of Prophetic Peril which was slowly spilling out its content down the mountainside.

Exercising great care and intentionality, Iron Man was sensitive to each new rock, placing it just at the point where it was most needed. He moved with mechanical precision as his eyes peered always straight before him--only dealing with one thing at a time and transmitting the impression that he was totally focussed upon that one thing.

Slovenly Man, who by this time was piling rocks with great haste, then spoke; "Don't take so long; he said. Just throw any rock on your pile; but do it hurriedly."

Although Slovenly Man's pile was much higher than Iron Man's, Iron Man contexted him as he continued to work with profound, but patient care. "Iron Men are fastidious. Iron Men are not fastidious for the sake of just being clean or neat or orderly or caring for something. But rather they exercise care in their task to symbolize and dramatize their relationship of original gratitude toward the Other World. Iron Men know that the only possession they have in this world is their relationship to the Other World. For this reason care must be invested in ever-maintaining and acting out this relationship."

No sooner than Iron Man had finished this brief lecturette than the clamor of the rumble above them magnified and the entire mountainside shook beneath their wobbling legs. Above them, the pocket of Pebbles of Prophetic Peril erupted in a profusion of projectiles such as they had not experienced before. Both Iron Man and Slovenly Man dove for protection behind the sections of the boulder wall they had built. As the pebbles began to crash in a flood against the upper side of their constraining walls, Iron Man could not rid himself of the dread filling thought of being buried alive beneath tons of rock. With a bombardment that sent sounds of all-existence-breaking-apart thundering across the mountain, the pebbles and rocks continued to slide into the wall. But to his wonder, amazement, and gratitude, Iron Man's wall held. It did not collapse! As the dust of the rubble cleared away and the serene silence of the mountaintop again filled the air, Iron Man stood up and looked about. He gazed upon his sturdy wall of carefully placed boulders which now supported the brunt of the slide of Pebbles of Prophetic Peril and had saved the City of Multiplicity from certain destruction.

But as his eyes turned, he saw the portion of the wall which Slovenly Man had constructed. Now all that remained was a huge broken pile of rock and rubble. A massive weight of stone pressed down upon the now hidden earth where Slovenly Man had last been. Iron Man continued to survey the area until his eyes came to rest on a dark red stream of blood which was trickling out from under the pole and over the cliff.

During the long sorrow-filled moment, the rest of the P.S.U. group came walking up the trail. When Iron Man had finished telling them what had happened one of the group asked, "Why did your wall stand when that of Slovenly only crumbled over his besieged body?"

There was a long pause. Finally Iron Man replied thoughtfully, "Iron Men are fastidious in all that they do for they know that their creations must stand to become the future."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The River of Consciousness

September 19, 1972

Self Transcendence

Iron Man Journey # 20

IRON MEN ARE TOTALLY FREE IN THIS WORLD;
TOTALLY OBEDIENT TO THE OTHER WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The River of Consciousness. The Religious House of Immediacy Metro was engaged in an intense struggle to create models and timelines for the coming quarter. Iron Man and Propensity Man had both been assigned to lead a series of workshops which would enable the house to take an intentional relationship to the future.

To accomplish this task the house had been divided into two PSU groups; one led by Iron Man and one by Propensity Man. Iron Man's group had stayed up all night brainstorming possibilities for the new quarter. As mid-morning arrived, they were just beginning to gestalt their data. Propensity Man's group was just getting up from their sleep for breakfast--having stayed up late in order to engage in a great celebration.

As they sat around the breakfast table, Propensity Man's PSU group listened to a blarring radio. They had decided it was necessary to be well informed on what was happening in this world and therefore thought the radio would be more helpful than another scripture conversation. Unexpectedly, however, the music stopped and an announcer's voice came across the air.

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special crisis bulletin. The many faceted and mutli-fortified Dam of Eschatalogical Evasion, holding back the powerful free-flowing waters of The River of Consciousness, has shown signs of undue stress. Scientists have warned that it may break within the hour. Government and area officials have ordered residents of Immediacy Metro, living in the valley below the dam, to evacuate in due haste. Repeat. Residents of Immediacy Metro are to lose no time in evacuating their property for higher ground."

The warning bulletin was heard throughout the valley. During the first few minutes following the message many people gathered in the streets. Some heeded the warning and evacuated their homes and possessions for higher ground--these, however, were few.

The religious house too began to show signs of uneasiness in response to the announcement. Iron Man had already sent out his P.S.U. group to seek refuge at some higher point beyond the valley of Immediacy Metro. Iron Man, however, stayed behind in order to attempt to convince Propensity Man of the seriousness of the situation. Propensity Man insisted on staying to finish the documents which held many of his key insights on the future and shape of Immediacy Metro. Besides he simply would not believe that the Dam of Eschatological Evasion could ever break. The entire rumor for him was nothing more than someone's imagination run wild.

By the time half an hour had passed, most people of the community had settled back into their homes. When an hour had lapsed, few even seemed to remember the announced crisis.

But the enlarged crack in the Dam of Eschatological Evasion was not to be ignored. Indeed, a rumble began to creep across the valley floor. It soon reached an intensity which creaked the foundations of all structures within the vibrating valley. Then with a roar that planted terror in every heart dwelling in the valley, a thunderous cracking of cement gave birth to tumbling torrents of water. No longer contained within the limited boundaries of the Dam of Eschatological Evasion, the might free-flowing River of Consciousness spilled into the valley leaving a trail of devastation and destruction in its wake.

Propensity Man stared in horror from his window as he viewed the approaching flood. Propensity Man simply stood there in a state of frozen paralysis gripping his latest models for the metro .

On the contrary, Iron Man wasted no time in climbing through a top floor window onto the roof. Iron Man's strategy for dealing with the situation was not to try to save himself by holding onto some object which seemed secure. Rather, he planned to throw himself into the midst of the swiftly moving waters and flow with them.

As the swirling and bubbling waters crept over the edge of the roof and began to rise above his ankles, Iron Man flung himself into the mercy of the rushing waters. No sooner had Iron Man cast himself adrift, than the house was torn loose from its foundations and ripped apart into a thousand shattered fragments. As he was hurled with the driving waters through the

debris of the city, Iron Man knew that he had but one hope of survival. Somehow he must reach the highest point at the far end of the valley. This lofty perch was to be found high atop the Transcendence Tower of Radio WNRM.

Cries and wails of bewilderment echoed across the walls of the valley and filled Iron Man's ears as he bobbed about in the rough rapids. All about him, terrified residents of Immediacy Metro sought to save what they could of their possessions or to hold onto houses that were still secure or above the water.

Iron Man was amazed as he moved relatively unburdened through the churning waters. For all about him people foolishly attempted to cling to objects being consumed by the swelling waters---somehow thinking these things would provide safety. A child wrestled relentlessly trying to keep his head above water as he also attempted to carry a heavy toy truck. Many families stayed on their roofs not releasing their grip on their homes even when it was apparent that they would soon be washed away. Businessmen tried to salvage their heavy file drawers and records of financial transactions even though their heavy weight spelled certain doom. Iron Man watched two lovers being propelled down the river. Gradually they pulled each other below the raging surface as they clung too tightly to one another--afraid of separating should they give the other enough freedom to swim.

Iron Man continued to tumble this way and that. Again and again his wracked body was rammed against a half-submerged building or his skin was torn by floating debris. But whatever obstacles he might encounter, Iron Man never attempted to hang on to any for safety or to fight the sweeping movements of the current. Rather he surrendered himself totally to the driving power of the raging river. In so doing he submitted his own will to that of the rushing rhythm of the water.

As Iron Man was hurled over the mostly-hidden circus near the edge of the valley, the top of the merry-go-round appeared. And to his surprise Iron Man spied Propensity Man holding on for his very life with one hand as the water began to cover its last portions. With his other hand Propensity Man still held tightly to a bundle of his models. When Propensity Man caught sight of Iron Man he called out. "Come here and

hold to the merry-go-round. Surely you will be safe here if anywhere."

Iron Man only stopped long enough to reply, "Iron Man do not try to be only what they want to be in this world, rather, they decide to be obedient to what is needed in any given moment. In this way their lives are powerfully recreated not by their own self-will but through their total surrender to the Other World. For the secret is this: that freedom in this world means obedience to the Other World." Iron Man then bid farewell by announcing loudly, "Mystery has won the day!" and plunged back into the water.

The next time he looked behind him the top of the merry-go-round had disappeared. And now reaching out his hands, Iron Man grasped hold of the metallic glow of one of the bars of Radio WNRM's Transcendence Tower. His drenched clothing released its water as Iron Man pulled himself out of the flow and, hand over hand, ascended to the top where he stood firmly on the uppermost platform and viewed all that was below.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

October 5, 1972

IRON MEN ARE GROUNDED ON NOTHING IN THIS WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Land of Mystery. Iron Man's prior had assigned him to formulate the first experimental guild in the region. Because of the radical nature of the experiment, it was consensed that this first body of guilders should be composed of the solitary hermits who lived in the Enchanted Forest of Aweful Encounter.

These hermits, hidden far from the gaze of mass civilization, spend their lives planting and harvesting the wonder-full Grapes of Groundless Grounding. Now these grapes in themselves are a strange sort of fruit. For the wonder-full Grapes of Groundless Grounding taste absolutely horrible at the first bite. Throughout history these bitter grapes have been detested by men in nearly every region of the globe. Their wretched sour juices often produce passionate oaths of anger in the mouth of one who partakes of them.

Yet the sole livelihood and financial support of these solitary hermits of the Enchanted Forest of Aweful Encounter is derived from their abundant supply of the wonder-full Grapes of Groundless Grounding. Even with this being so, the hermits manage to get along well. For year after year after year of eating the repulsive grapes actually transforms the tastebuds of the tounge. In fact, many of the older hermits prefer to eat little other than the grapes. When the market in secular society is unresponsive, they simply sell their grapes to one another. Iron Man too had begun to acquire a taste for the Grapes of Groundless Grounding. He was hopeful that on this trip he could discover what was so very wonder-full about them.

The thunder of Iron Man's mighty Greeve's 250 Scrambler Motorcycle rocked the valley as he sped down the narrow road leading from the religious house. "VA-ROOM! VA-ROOM! VA-ROOM!" screamed the sleek cycle as the peacefully sleeping residents of the valley were abruptly awakened by the vibrations of Iron Man passing. Of course not all of Iron Man's neighbors in the valley woke up early enough to attend Daily Office. Many could not understand the passionate enthusiasm which drove him

to his task so early in the morning. Nevertheless, the rumbling combustions of the thundering motorcycle helped to remind them all that a new day had begun and that Iron Man was already off to receive and create it.

After an invigorating ride, Iron Man pulled up to the narrow, steep, and rocky path of the Passage of Sacred Secrets. The passage of Sacred Secrets was indeed the only way to pass over the wide and deep Crevice of Contingent Creatures in order to reach the Enchanted Forest of Aweful Encounter. For the forest itself is totally surrounded by this dangerous crevice and all who live nearby hold it in great fear. Yet by following obediently the winding, shadowed, and often hidden Passage of Sacred Secrets, one can safely journey across the multi-leveled ledge which connects the two sides of the crevice at one point.

Legend, however, firmly holds to the belief that the remainder of the crevice has no bottom whatsoever---that one could fall into it and continue falling forever. Nevertheless, pushing aside his fears and doubts, Iron Man skillfully guided his agile Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle across the Passage of Sacred Secrets---masterfully dodging, but never losing sight of, the Crevice of Contingent Creatures.

Once on the other side, Iron Man came upon the rickety hut of one of the grape-picking hermits. Iron Man parked his cycle and walked up to the small structure with smoke curling out its tin chimney. Sticking his head inside the door of the single-roomed shack, Iron Man peered through the smoke-filled air at a tall, lanky figure standing over an oil-drum stove and slowly stirring a pan filled with roots and herbs and strange liquids.

"Who are you? And what are you doing?" inquired Iron Man.

"Come on in an' sit a spell," replied the old hermit. "I am Outcast Man and it has been your good fortune to come upon me in the midst of brewing some Spicewood Tea. Drink this and it will fix ye up."

The hermit handed a cup of the loathsome green liquid to Iron Man. Iron Man winced as the fumes reached his nose. Hesitating, he responded, "Thank you just the same, but I just finished lunch a few minutes ago and really don't have any room left."

Not even pausing to deal with Iron Man's concern, the hermit stared piercingly at Iron Man and commanded, "Drink it! Drink it! Ye need to drink some of it. Its good fer ye. Why, it's saved my life many a time---many a time! Now drink it!"

Finally deciding to affirm his inescapable situation, Iron Man gulped down the substance---trying to keep from tasting it. Attempting with all his powers of self-transcendence not to reveal the agonizing, burning disaster that was occurring from his taste buds down to his bowels, Iron Man cheerfully commented, "Fantastic! Just Great! Del-i-cious! Thank you very much."

The hermit smiled with great pride as he prepared to pour Iron Man another cup. "Oh, no thank you," interjected Iron Man. "I need to be on my way as I have much to do." By the time he had finished his sentence, Iron Man was out the door and walking toward his cycle.

"Won't chee come and sit a spell," re-invited the hermit who was obviously perplexed at Iron Man's restlessness. "Why are you in such a hurry?"

Iron Man stopped by his motorcycle and grew still and reflective; finally speaking, "Iron Men are perpetually restless in this world because they are aware of the Other World. Being aware of the Other World causes them to know that they have absolutely nothing to attach to in this world. Besides this, they can never forget that while their home is in the Other World, Iron Men are ever-seperated from it as long as they exist in this world."

As Iron Man finished his context and began to move off down the trail, an explosion in the hut shook the forest and sent thousands of missles of fragmented tin and boards and debris flying into the air. The stove had blown open and fire now rained down on the dense dry forest all about. Suddently flames consumed all which stood about him.

Iron Man manuevered his growling Greeves 250 scrambler motorcycle down the disappearing path as, moment by moment, a profusion of smoke filled the air.

Soon Iron Man was wandering along in what seemed to be a thick and bellowing cloud of smoke. Close behind him the fire leapt from tree to tree. In a matter of minutes it would be upon him. Somehow he had to escape the flames or be cremated alive.

An instant later, Iron Man screeched on the brakes as he barely stopped in time to avoid driving right over the edge of the forest into the Crevice of Contingent Creatures.

Feeling the heat of the roaring flames now closing behind him, Iron Man decided to risk everything. In the midst of the blinding smoke, he decided to dare the one possibility that seemed open. He must try to jump with his motorcycle across the crevice to the Ridge of Ultimate Reality on the other side. Backing up as close to the flames as he dared, Iron Man gunned the throttle, "VA-ROOM! VA-ROOM!" He then released the clutch and shot over the side of the cliff---rocketing toward the smoke-hidden Ridge of Ultimate Reality.

Flying through the dense smoke, Iron Man could see nothing above or at his sides as he prepared for the possibility of being dashed against the unseen rock walls of The Crevice of Aweful Encounter. He knew himself to be resting on nothing as he anticipated the momentary encounter with his fate.

Then, amazed and awe-filled, Iron Man landed with an intense shock on the surface of the Ridge of Ultimate Reality. The jolt nearly jarred loose the coils of his brain. Nevertheless, he held the cycle steady --- pulling it to a halt beside a vine of wonder-full Grapes of Groundless Grounding. As the fire continued to roar and bring to naught the once-green forest on the other side of the crevice, Iron Man deposited some of the grapes between his expectant lips. They had never tasted better.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN DENY THEMSELVES IN THIS WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The River of Consciousness. It seems that the preceeding Week II, Iron Man had been assigned to Emerging Generation structures. During the afternoon snack, the group was short five cups of cherry crystal juice. Responding to the need, Iron Man went to the kitchen to mix up another pitcher. But as he turned on the faucet only a few drops trickled out and then even these stopped. Infuriated, Iron Man shouted angrily, "Something must be done about this. For years this town has been short on its water supply. This state of affairs simply must not continue."

And indeed, the town of Temporal Tears had been experiencing a water shortage for as long as anyone could remember. It seems that the Reservoir of Human Resources, from which the town drew its water supply, was seldom deep enough to provide the necessary pressure to force the water of the reservoir up the huge concrete receptive pipes to the city's water storage tanks. Yet, the entire situation was surrounded by mystery. It seems the reservoir had been created by damming up a tributary of The River of Consciousness. By all reasonable understanding this should provide an abundant source of water. Yet somehow the reservoir could never stay filled and was mysteriously losing water.

The town council of Temporal Tears had many times offered a great deal of money for any scuba diver who would risk his life to explore the bottom of the reservoir and discover the problem. While in years past many divers had ventured into the deep waters of the Reservoir of Human Resources, during recent times divers had been unwilling to pick up the challenge. Their fear stemmed from the fact that all the divers who ventured into the resevoir never came back.

Undaunted by such history, however, Iron Man requested special permission from his prior to pursue the challenge. Being himself somewhat perturbed at the necessity of, day after day, eating dry ready-

mix soups without water for lunch, Iron Man's prior was affirmative toward the suggestion. In fact, he went so far as to assign another of the divers in the house, Insatiable Man, to accompany him in the task.

As Iron Man and Insatiable Man arrived at the river, they could hardly believe the huge crowd of people which covered the shores of the reservoir and the banks of The River of Consciousness. It seems that the entire population of Temporal Tears ritualistically shows up whenever a new diver holds up the possibility of changing the situation of the arid countryside. In truth, the depth of this issue for the residents of Temporal Tears cannot be articulated in mere human categories. The throats of these people are perpetually dry from the loss of body fluids through endless weeping over their given plight. As they suited up and placed the heavy aqua lungs on their backs, Iron Man drew Insatiable Man close to his side to set the context. "A dangerous task lies before us. We must be ready for anything. The secret in this regard will be to not use up our air too rapidly. Since we have no idea what to expect on bottom, we may well encounter something which would require us to stay longer than our air supply will permit."

With that, the two masked divers walked down the incline of the beach and slowly disappeared beneath the surface of the Reservoir of Human Resources. Together they followed the slope of the bottom deeper and deeper. Down, down, down, they descended---into the blackness of the mysterious deeps.

As the waters grew darker and the visibility dimmer, Iron Man concentrated on controlling his breathing. He continually denied himself all of the air that his lungs wanted in order to have enough should an emergency arise.

Thinking mostly of gratifying his immediate biological yearning, Insatiable Man gulped down his air in full and rapid breaths. Insatiable Man was afraid of not getting enough oxygen at the great depth at which he reflected he must be swimming---consequently he made no attempt to negate his immediate cravings.

After a long long swim of just moving down the slope of the shore, the two divers finally reached a level plain which appeared to be the bottom.

Without hesitation, Iron Man began moving toward the center of the lake. At this point visibility was almost non-existent. As Iron Man peered to the side, he could dimly distinguish the shadowy figure of Insatiable Man next to him.

Hand over hand, they crawled across the barren clay floor of the bottom. Then, as he reached out again, Iron Man's hand grasped not the firm clay, but only nothing; only emptiness. And in that dread-filled moment, Iron Man and Insatiable were suddenly sucked over an obscured ledge into a proportionless void. A powerful downward-rushing movement of water propelled Iron Man further and further into a sinking shaft that seemed to have no bottom. Losing all contact with Insatiable Man, Iron Man tumbled without control in the wildness of the downward-sweeping current. Suddenly his body crashed against a jagged rock wall. As his descent continued, grating outcroppings of stone ripped at his flesh and bruised his body. Reeling in this torrent, Iron Man finally was able to seize upon a protruding boulder. Firmly, he grasped the solid foundation and, kicking off his fins, began the long climb upward against the power of the plummeting stream of water.

Each new handhold---each new step, required also a new decision to even continue the upward struggle and not let the powerful downward thrust carry him to the relief of death. Pain and agony now gripped every fiber of Iron Man's wracked and torn body. To add to his burden, as Iron Man approached the top of the engulfing tunnel, his air began to suck very hard. The dreadful awareness of knowing only two or three minutes of air remained in his tank, sank penetrating claws of consciousness ripping deep into the coils of Iron Man's brain. The burden of his life screamed throughout his interior. But then, with his right hand outstretched, as through a petitioner before an altar, Iron Man touched not another level of wall, but the solid ledge of the top of the tunnel. With a final lunge, Iron Man was over the side. But the exertion of the effort had cost him his last breath of air.

Quickly he took off the heavy empty aqua lung and began the long and demanding swim to the surface. As voices within screamed from his wrenching lungs to give up the struggle and embrace the relief of drowning in the silent deeps, Iron Man closed his ears to their pleas and continued the ascent. Gradually the black waters of the depths became lighter and lighter---finally breaking into visibility. With a gasp that rang

like an imploded shriek, Iron Man's head pierced the surface.

Several of the onlooking men dove in the water and swam to Iron Man as he floundered weakly. In a matter of minutes they had helped Iron Man from the water to the top of the beach where all the residents of Temporal Tears gathered to hear Iron Man's story.

Feeling his strength strangely renewed, Iron Man spoke with conviction: "Grace Be Yours And Peace."

Community: "From God Our Father and The Lord Jesus Christ."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

"Friends and colleagues of Temporal Tears, scan your eyes at this moment across the vast surface of our Reservoir of Human Resources. As you do this, I will tell you the secret of our unending thirst. There in the depths of the reservoir is a hole--at the center. And into this hole flows an inestimable amount of water. We have no hope of completing an alteration of this situation for the consuming shaft disappears deep into the crust of the earth itself."

"My conclusion is this: we will always be thirsty in this world. But our hope must be found in the promise of the Other World which gives perfect satisfaction. Only as Iron Men can we embrace this hope. For Iron Men intentionally deny themselves in order to rehearse the "Final NO" which the Other World has said to this world. Indeed, every moment of the life of an Iron Man is spent in becoming that which he already is in the Other World. By becoming less and less in this world, the Iron Man is perpetually becoming more and more in the Other World."

As Iron Man finished speaking, every man in the attentive crowd experienced the experience of not being thirsty anymore. And all stood in wonder for they knew would never be thirsty again.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN LIVE THEIR LIVES IN THE NOW

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Mountain of Care. Iron Man was about to embark upon perhaps the strangest assignment of his career. It was the Week II before Halloween and the house had planned a great Halloween celebration. To enable this celebration to come off, Iron Man had been assigned to gather three of the plump, golden Pumpkins of Precious Presence. This part of the task was clear enough. But Iron Man found the specifics of the practical implimentation of the task to be most vague--almost like poetry or PSU procedures.

For as Iron Man's prior gave him the assignment all he said was, "Iron man, you are assigned to travel to The Mountain of Care and return with three plump, golden Pumpkins of Precious Presence. You will find these pumpkins just as soon as you stop chasing the Ghost of Tomorrow's Hope. And beware, Iron Man, for this deceitful ghost can take many different forms and lead you down countless barren paths." Without even asking Iron Man if he had any questions, Iron Man's prior turned and closed the door behind him--leaving Iron Man sitting alone in the collegium room.

Utterly mystified, Iron Man puzzled over the concretions of his task. However, many years of movement experience had trained Iron Man well in the discipline of gaining one's rational clarity while in the midst of doing the task. Therefore, Iron Man lunged out the door and into the garage where he flung himself into the hard leather strap seat of his mighty Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle. Waves of heat rose off the warming engine as Iron Man accelerated again and again and again: "VA-ROOM! VA-ROOM! VA-ROOM!" Then with a sudden release of the clutch, the motorcycle stood straight on end with its front wheel high in the air. In this wheelstand Iron Man went charging out of the garage and into the sunlight which followed the morning valley. Up and down the road leading from the religious house, Iron Man's neighbors gathered at their

windows to watch him go roaring by. As his speeding figure filled their bedazzled eyes, young children dreamed of the day when they too could join the Order and be under assignment by the Global Movement like Iron Man. And traces of wishful longing could be observed across the faces of mothers who saw in Iron Man an exemplary symbol of authentic male ontology. Regardless of their age or sex, none of the residents of the valley failed to be addressed by Iron Man's extraordinary style.

Soon the sky before him was nearly blocked as the magnificent Mountain of Care loomed across the horizon. Iron Man pulled his cycle to a halt beneath a group of towering green timbers. Iron Man's mind was filled with naughtiness until his eyes were suddenly mirroring the flashing presence of The Ghost of Tomorrow's Hope. Iron Man watched as the ghost whipped around a corner and sped down a shaded trail deep into the forest surrounding the foot of the mountain. Iron Man wasted no time as he tore down the trail behind the ghost. Rocks and mud and sod and leaves flew in all directions as Iron Man's tires ripped into the soft mountain trail. A short distance ahead of him Iron Man could see the ghost. As he blinked again, however, Iron Man saw not the deceptive ghost, but in its place the huge Tree of the True and Beautiful. Iron Man rode up to this majestic masterpiece of the plant kingdom and parked his hot and weary motorcycle. Iron Man stepped off and stood tall as he breathed deeply the coolness of the tree's shade. Then on the west side of the tree's mammoth trunk, Iron Man spied a spectacular smorgasbord of his favorite meats, cheeses, bread, salads, cake, ice cream, and candy. After filling his third plate of the fantastic feast, Iron Man leaned back into a generously-padded easy chair. Iron Man discovered the latest issue of 'Delight-full Discontinuity Magazine.' By it was a large glass of iced pink lemonade. Bloated and feeling completely at peace with this world, Iron Man soon fell into a deep deep sleep.

Several hours passed when Iron Man awoke abruptly as freezing cold rains poured through the branches of the trees upon him. Chilling winds whistled around the peaks of the mountain and Iron Man stood up in the muddy slosh that had been solid ground only a couple of short hours before. Angrily grumbling, Iron Man climbed onto his soaking motorcycle. The first two kicks on the engine's starter brought forth only sputtering and coughing. Another more determined pounce with his foot finally started the motorcycle growling with power once again. As Iron Man sat beneath The Tree of True and Beautiful, wondering which way to go through the torrents of rain, the Ghost of Tomorrow's Hope appeared as a glowing cloud of light before him.

Not letting it out of his sight, Iron Man raced off through the mud and slop of the trail as the luminous cloud moved upward on the mountain.

After following the ghost some distance, Iron Man watched the ghost disappear beneath a great ledge which jutted out from the side of the mountain. As he drew closer, Iron Man recognized it to be the well known Ledge of Love's Longings. Iron Man pulled to a stop beneath the ledge and immediately experienced a profound gratitude for the dry shelter and warm air he felt all about him.

As he dismantled, Iron Man heard a soft feminine voice whisper to him in a most coaxing manner; "Iron Man, Iron Man. Welcome. We have been expecting you."

"And who are you," called out Iron Man into the emptiness of the chamber beneath the ledge.

"I, Iron Man, am merely one of many. And we are the much sought and highly cherished Deceitful Dancers of Sensual Distraction. We have performed all over the world and in all times of history. But be not concerned with such questions now, Iron Man. Simply make yourself comfortable and allow us to attend to your every need."

Before Iron Man had a chance to respond, one of the walls of the ledge melted away and out of it twirling and tossing and tumbling came seventy-seven of the most beautiful and seductive specimens of female ontology that Iron Man had ever encountered.

Seventy of the dancers began intertwinning across the floor of the chamber as they pulsed in an erotic snake dance. The other seven moved toward Iron Man. Before he could set up his defenses, four of them had lifted him off of his feet and onto a soft feathery couch. Of the remaining three, one handed Iron Man a tall rose colored glass of delightful rum punch and a long, savory, black Jamaican cigar; another manicured Iron Man's fingernails while the last wrapped her long teasing fingers around Iron Man's sensitive neck and whispered a thousand sweet lies into his gratefully-deluded ears.

Soon Iron Man's drunken head swam with the profusity of rum punch

he had consumed and visions of the dancing delicacies before him. In this state, Iron Man slipped into another narcotized slumber.

Hours of restful bliss passed until Iron Man began to choke as his snoring mouth was filled with the dust and grime and filth which began to crumble away off the ceiling of the ledge. Spitting and sputtering, Iron Man awoke to the damp darkness of a situation that was fully transformed from his last moment of wakefulness. All alone now, Iron Man stood up and walked out into the forest that had become night.

Searching all about for somewhere to go, Iron Man frantically lurched onto his motorcycle and began racing up the black trail in a fit of rage. As he rounded a sharp corner, however, a jagged granite boulder caught the footpeg of the leaning cycle and sent both Iron Man and the mighty Greeves 250 somersaulting through the air. Iron Man's flight ended decidedly as his body crashed against the solid trunk of a rugged walnut tree. The ragged edges of bark ripped into Iron Man's flesh and left him a bloody mess from head to toe. As he feebly tried to stand, jabbing pain from every portion of his body caused Iron Man to wonder if he had any bones still unbroken.

Gritting his chipped and crumbling teeth, Iron Man clenched his fists and yelled forth an addressing oath of anger. "Curses Be Upon You Bloody Ghost Of Tomorrow's Hope! May you rot in a worn infested grave! May an everlasting fire of seering flames consume and bring to naught your wretched soul! And may no foolish man ever waste any moment of his given life in chasing after your illusory promises as I have disgustingly done this day---for certainly I shall never chase you again."

No sooner had these words left his mouth than Iron Man could sense that the ghost was no where around. Moreover, he could now see that he himself was standing before the deep green Gorge of Given Glory. As he peered down into the gaping mouth of the gorge, the first rays of morning sun illumined an abundance of Pumpkins of Precious Presence. In that moment, Iron Man's heart swelled with a fullness and joy that he seldom had known. Throughout his being, Iron Man intuited that his whole life had been predestined to stand at this point before the deep green Gorge of Given glory. And indeed, he resolved that he would plumb the deeps of the gorge for as long as his might dwell in this world.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN LIVE THE ONENESS OF ALL CREATION

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to the Mountain of Care. It was Saturday morning at the religious house and Iron Man's new prior had only arrived the week before. The new prior was a fanatic of incomparable proportions and impressed many movement colleagues as being absolutely mad. It seems that for years this strange, dynamic, and powerful prior had been hidden away at Order Base in Chicago relatively unexposed to mass society. Yet the house seemed to be off to a great start under his experienced guidance. This Week II marked the first RS-1 pedagogy training under the new prior.

However, the event which had shaped the nature of Iron Man's Week II assignment had occurred during the witness at Daily Office. Iron Man and several others were fighting sleep as they tried to sit through the Saturday morning RS-1 witness which they had all heard a thousand times before. But then the new Intern giving the witness reached the famous lecturette: "...And liturgical East represents the final mystery of life itself; just that which is, that which is always there; that which Everyman is overagainst. I don't know what would hold it for you, but I suppose to symbolize that reality, I'd just stick a huge rock there."

No sooner had the fumbling intern released these words than the new prior lept to his feet and rushed to the center of the worship hall where he stood in silence with his arms stretched out toward liturgical east. His eyes were boiling vats of fire and he gazed encaptured at the barren floor and wall before him. At the sight of him in the ecstatic trance, some of the house children started crying as several of the adult order members crawled behind their seats and stared out in puzzled wonderment. Without expectation, none could figure what was going on with their new prior.

The awe-filled silence, however, was then pierced by the prior's own ringing voice. "That's it! That's it!" he exclaimed, 'A rock! A rock! A huge monstrous rock! How many years have I listened to this absurd

lecturette without truly hearing it. But of course! This is the greatest decor idea we have ever had! Yet now we must bring its possibility into actuality."

Rather than fighting his sleepiness, Iron Man was now trying to fall asleep in order to keep his life from being addressed too deeply by this strange discontinuous situation. Yet the prior's voice then rang out with a crispness and a clarity from which Iron Man could find no refuge. "Iron Man! You are now assigned to bring back a gigantic rock to be placed at the focal point of liturgical east. And the substance of this rock may not be of an ordinary kind. To be appropriate, it must be a Rock of Reunited Reality."

Secretly, Iron Man shuttered all through his being. For Iron Man knew all too well that Rock of Reunited Reality can be found only on the Ridge of Regenerative Return. And this legendary ridge rests high atop a treacherous peak on the Mountain of Care.

As the final gong reverberated through the Great Hall, Iron Man rose and directed his trembling body to the steadfast yellow International panel truck parked outside. In a few hours Iron Man was standing before the foot of the overwhelming Mountain of Care.

The peak which he had been seeking towered high above and Iron Man gazed in awe-filled contemplation at the scene before him. The most spectacular characteristic of the peak was the gaping Fissure of Fragmented Fellowship which split through an outer section. From the floor of the fissure flowed the wounding waters of the Stream of Tumbling Time. The cutting action of this stream had done much to deepen the fissure and weaken the structure of the peak.

As the stream flowed on down the mountain and passed before him, Iron Man watched as a Rainbow Trout jumped high out of the water. Captured by this encounter, Iron Man felt as though he actually experienced the fish jumping within his own being.

Yet without hesitating further, Iron Man packed all the equipment on his back and began the gruesome climb upward. The walls of the peak were steep and each new step required an intensified decision of presence. Hand

over hand, Iron Man climbed as he kept his eyes firmly on the top of the Ridge of Regenerative Return above the fissure. Finally, the moments of strain came to an end as Iron Man's hands reached over the top. With a powerful thrust he pulled himself up onto the ledge.

Beams of sunlight illuminated the probing of Iron Man's radiant eyes as he peered into the sinking depth of The Fissure of Fragmented Fellowship. Still probing with his gaze while in a highly reflective mood, about one hundred feet into the fissure Iron Man noticed a discontinuity jutting out from the smooth downward sweeping walls . The boulder-sized shadow reflected by this creation suggested immediately to Iron Man that this must be a Rock of Reunited Reality---the object of his quest.

Resecuring his rope, Iron Man lowered himself over the side and down into the fissure itself. As he descended, he encountered huge groupings of fossils in the rock of the wall. Staring out at him were the hollow eyes of ancient squids, and clams, fish and crabs. Skeletal imprints sent cold shivers up and down his spine as Iron Man experienced a fear-filled kinship with all of these now-past creatures. As the biological foundations of human existence continued to pass before his eyes, the dreadful lucidity forced its way into Iron Man's consciousness that he was now responsible for carrying on the same mystery-laden journey which these primordial ancestors of the plant and animal kingdom had begun for him.

Jarring his thoughts, however, Iron Man's feet rammed into the top of the hugh outcropped Rock of Reunited Reality.

Only a moment's investigation of the situation was necessary to reveal the strategy which would be required to remove the magnificent rock. Reaching into his pack, Iron Man pulled out three sticks of dynamite and planted them fastidiously into a crack between the wall and the boulder. Iron Man knew that the explosion would not only cast the entrapped rock out of its prison in the wall, but would also rip the entire outer portion of the fissure from the mountain. Yet, this dual action should be enough to send the rock plummeting down the mountainside to a spot nearby the awaiting truck below. Cautiously lighting the starter fuse which led to the blasting cap which would explode the dynamite, Iron Man knew he only had two minutes to climb back to the safety of the ledge above. With quick

grasps of his clenched hands, Iron Man pulled himself upward. As only seconds remained Iron Man reached a point fifteen feet below the ledge.

Then terror struck Iron Man's blood-filled eyes as he saw wrapped tightly around the last section of rope a thick, leathery-scaled, diamondback rattlesnake.

Scarcely did Iron Man have time to be frightened by the snake when the dynamite below him exploded and sent him hurling into space. Pebbles, rocks, and stones pelted him from all sides as Iron Man fell in agonizing pain toward an unknown fate at the bottom of the fissure. Yet amazement filled his being as Iron Man felt his body not to be dashed to death against the jagged rocks of the mountain but rather to be plunged into the swirling waters of the stream of Tumbling Time. While safe from death upon the rocks, Iron Man still had to contend with the wracking journey which the wounding waters of the Stream of Tumbling Time was now taking him on as it flowed down the mountain.

Soon, however, smooth easy currents gently grasped Iron Man's battered body as he floated down the meandering stream of the valley. Bruised, but not blind, Iron Man spied the Rock of Reunited Reality resting on a bank of the stream not far from the truck. Crawling out of the current onto the shore, Iron Man trudged toward the huge inert rock. As he reached the magnificent symbol of mystery, Iron Man flung his arms around its expanse in an enraptured embrace. Tears of joy streamed down his face as Iron Man struggled to find words which could articulate the deep kinship he experienced for this strange colleague of his journey. Still weeping in gratitude, Iron Man intuitively blurted out; "Uncle Rock. Uncle Rock. Oh, Uncle Rock! How grateful I am that we are together again, dear, dear, Uncle Rock!"

As he was speaking, with all of his attention focused on the rock, Iron Man finally noticed the family of campers which had been standing directly behind him during the entire scene. They had come running from across the valley when they heard the explosion and now could not believe what their ears were hearing.

As they continued to watch Iron Man weep and carry on, the family all

agreed that he must be a crazy man and that something must be done. Before his parents could constrain him, the four year old rushed up behind Iron Man and began biting him on his legs.

Iron Man lept reeled around facing the suprised family. Taken aback, the father loudly questioned Iron Man: "What in heaven's name are you doing? Are you absolutely insane? And what is with this sadly perverted relationship of 'Uncle Rock, Uncle Rock?'"

Swallowing his embarrassment, Iron Man responded; "Iron Men, whose home is in the Other World, are not fooled by all the sneaky tricks of separation in this world. For in the Other World, Iron Men are wholly engulfed in mystery. In that state of being, they have had a vision of the oneness of all creation. It is this awareness which permits Iron Men to live within the family of being and to heal the wounds of time as long as they exist in this world."

At these words of depth insight, the entire group fell into a state of profound silence.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

November 22, 1972

Contentless Word
Iron Man Journey # 25

**CHILDREN'S EUCHARIST: IRON MEN LIVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE WHIRLING TENSION**

After Daily office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Sea of Tranquility. Job placement across the metro was at a standstill and unemployment rates were rising daily. This slow-down in the economic pole of the social processes had created devastating repercussions on the religious house. In fact, three of the house's permeators were unable to find any work whatsoever. A scowl crossed the face of the house prior as he opened the notice from the Cutrate Coffee Company informing him that no more peanut butter, coffee, cookies, or kool aid would be delivered to the house until they paid the previous quarter's bills. Most irate at this harsh word from the Cutrate Coffee Company, the prior slammed his fist on the desk and yelled to the three unemployed permeators in the next room, "Guilders, Come Out!!" They came running quickly from their one-hundred and twenty third P.S.U. on "Implications of the Social Process Triangles on the Local Job Market." The three guilders, Iron Man, Stoic Man and Gnostic Man rushed into the room and sat down before their prior as he began to speak.

"You are all aware of the many wild stories which have been coming out of The Sea of Tranquility recently. It seems that native pearl divers have been finding more and more fragments of precious stones, jewels, gold nuggets, and pieces of silver coin spread on the bottom of the sea near the Shoals of Sacred Sands. Historians at the university have speculated that these precious souvenirs from the floor of the Sea of Tranquility are from the long lost Treasure of Tension's Trial. It seems that this treasure was contained in a great iron chest which was being transported across the sea by a pirate ship. The ship wrecked during a storm upon the shoals. Thus, was the treasure lost. It has become a much sought mystery."

"Nonetheless, gentlemen, I have decided that with your prowess in the art of scuba diving, rather than have you sitting idly around here all day,

you are hereby assigned to re-discover the treasure and thus alleviate our financial struggles. If there are no questions, The Lord Be With You."

Community: "And With Thy Spirit."

Prior: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

As their small craft chugged by the shoals, The Sea of Tranquility appeared to be peaceful enough. Scarcely a cloud could be seen in the sky save for an occasional puff of cumulus. The waves were still and the horizon made an unbroken line of endless promise.

Soon Iron Man called out, "Cut the engines!" as Stoic Man and Gnostic Man came to him he explained, "We are now over the area where the pieces of treasure have been discovered. So let's get on our diving gear and prepare to investigate." No sooner had the three divers donned their rubber suits and aqua lungs than a swell began to surge in the sea beneath the ship.

Iron Man and his colleagues rushed to the side to see what was happening. As their terror-struck eyes beheld the sea beneath them, the strange phenomenon in which they were engulfed became all too clear. For a giant whirlpool began to spin all around the ship. Faster and faster and faster the circling waters began to move. Soon the flat whirling sea became a great funnel which plunged down into the depth. Strain ripped through every board in the ship. As the pressure of the violent whirling became too intense, the entire craft disintegrated into thousands of fragments of wood and metal. Iron Man, Gnostic Man, and Stoic Man were catapulted through the air----plunging them into the sides of the whirlpool.

As the three crewmates were being wildly spun on the inner surface of the whirlpool, they called across the open interior surface of the whirlpool, they called across the open interior of the funneling waters to one another. Stoic Man was the first to speak. "I can hold up," he cried out, "I know the methodoogy. I'm a trained scuba diver."

Gnostic Man then contributed, "This is not really happening. Actually, I feel very happy---for I'm not a part of all this." No sooner had these words been spoken than the whirlpool dropped away beneath the surface of the Sea of Tranquility--penetrating into a new unseen depth and carrying with it its conscripted passengers.

Stoic Man tumbled and turned and twisted in the wild raging waters until a crashing blow grated his body against the sandy floor of the sea. As he began to crawl along the floor, Stoic Man placed his right hand upon a Spiny Sea Urchin of Unconditional Demand. A sharp poisonous spine pierced through his flesh and sent an agonizing pain burning to the core of his being. The blood which spilled into the water attracted a Whomped Up Whale of Peaces' Possession which was swimming nearby. With a single powerful thrust of its mighty tailfin, the whale propelled across the bottom, swallowing Stoic Man whole in one great gulp.

Gnostic Man was not doing much better. Still pretending that he was not in the whirlpool but somewhere else, Gnostic Man did not see the Eel of Ethereal Experience which was slivering up the whirlpool toward him. Unnoticed by Gnostic Man, the slimy eel ripped his filth-laden teeth into the exposed flesh of Gnostic Man's leg. The torn wound sent Gnostic Man floundering around like an injured fish. Mistaking him for just such a fish, a school of Baracuda of Blissful Blindless moved in to attack. Their sharp slashing teeth made short work of Gnostic Man.

Iron Man too was caught in the violent spinning and was experiencing a round of struggles. As he tried to swim out of the ripping currents, he was only pulled back. As he tried to fight them, he only was overpowered by their massive force. With his courage and strength totally drained, Iron Man was about to give up the struggle as hopeless. Yet in that very moment of doubt and indecision, a strange voice filled his head. He was uncertain as to exactly what the voice was saying, but it sounded something like, "Whirl, Whirl, Whirl"---and then he heard no more of it. Yet for no especially good reason, Iron Man now stopped trying to fight the whirlpool or escape from it. He resolutely decided instead to whirl with the whirlpool within which he was entrapped.

Suddenly his struggle was transformed. Iron Man felt his body to be levitated through the whirling mass of water upward toward the surface. And indeed, a short distance beneath the surface of the sunlit waters, Iron Man found himself resting in the calm of the peaceful liquid universe of The Sea of Tranquility. A few short strokes brought him to the surface. As his mask broke into the air, his eyes beheld the massive Gallion of Grace-full Living.

As the crew of the sleek gallion watched from the side of the ship, a rope ladder was lowered over the side and Iron Man began his ascent. Upon reaching the deck, the captain of the ship greeted Iron Man with the logical question, "What in the world were you doing down there?"

Iron Man replied without hesitation or embarrassment, "I was searching for the Contentless Treasure of Tension's Trial."

"Well did you find it?" asked the captain.

"No", replied Iron Man, "But I didn't find it because I learned, there in the deeps of The Sea of Tranquility, that I already possessed it all along."

The captain smiled knowingly and did not ask Iron Man any more questions. Together they then moved into the captian's chambers. The captain went to the cupboard and brought forth a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine which he placed on the table before them.

Iron Man then spoke, "Life in this world is forever a violent wrenching of thoughts and feelings and needs and demands and desires. Like this bread, life is forever broken. (BREAK BREAD) Yet in the Other World life is perfect, and whole. There, one has no thoughts or feelings or demands or desires and the need is only to be that which one is already. And like this wine, (SPILL WINE) man spills out his life in striving to live before this present possibility. But finally, Iron Men are those who decide to whirl in the tension between these two worlds. In so doing they become one with the brokeneness (EAT BREAD); and one with the spilledoutness (DRINK WINE); of life. In this way, Iron Men live forever before the Word which gives them the possibility of living their lives in both worlds. And moreover, Iron Men can share that possibility with their neighbor (PASS BREAD AND WINE)."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands to the heaven's in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN DWELL IN THE DEEPS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Land of Mystery. The tragic news of the explosion at the Mine of Paralyzing Paradox had just reached the religious house. The state government was pleading for volunteers who could help sift through the rubble to search for any signs of life. As a symbol of the movement's collegial relationship to community structures, the house decided to assign both Iron Man and Anesthetized Man to enable the work force in whatever way they could.

Upon reaching the scene, Iron Man and Anesthetized Man climbed out of the trust-worthy yellow International van and gazed in rapt horror at the scene before them. Boulders were strewn everywhere around the entrance of the mine. Everything was charred and blackened from the roaring flames of burning gas which had poured from the mouth of the mine. Those trees which stood near the entrance were now reduced to mere frames of ash and broken embers. As the two stunned men continued to look at the long row of waiting ambulances, they wondered why none of them were taking any of the injured miners to the hospital.

As tears filled Iron Man's eyes, Anesthetized Man pulled a copy of "Better Homes and Gardens" magazine out of his jacket and sat back down in the truck to read.

Soon the foreman of the rescue squad spotted Iron Man and came running up to him. "Iron Man! Iron Man! How good it is to see you here---and how very much we need you now."

"I only hope that my feeble gifts can be of service in this situation," replied Iron Man.

"They certainly can,' affirmed the foreman, 'in fact we will soon be ready for two skilled spelunkers to enter the mine and discover if there are any survivors of the blast. The reason the ambulances are still immobilized is that we have not yet broken through the rubble into the main shaft."

Iron Man then inquired, "Just what exactly happened here to cause this great tragedy?"

"The situation is this, Iron Man,' began the foreman. 'The Mine of Paralyzing Paradox tunnels deep into the Land of Mystery. One of the dangers we are therefore always overagainst is that of breaking open pockets of the glowing Gas of Auroraic Awe entrapped deep within the crust of the earth. Whenever the gas of one of these pockets is released, it forms a highly explosive mixture with the air of this world. The slightest spark is capable of igniting it. This seems to be what has happened. A new pocket of the glowing Gas of Auroraic Awe must have been accidentally burst and then came into contact with the spark of a swinging pick-axe or a lit cigarette.

As I see it, the only hope that any of the seventy-seven miners who were in the mine might still be alive would be the possibility that they may have made it to the cool soothing waters of the Pool of Primordial Wonder which rests at the heart of the mine. Immersion in the waters of this pool during the time when the mine was ablaze could have saved someone from being cremated alive."

At that moment one of the volunteers came running up to the foreman yelling his message loudly, "We've broken through! We've broken through! Someone can now enter to investigate for possible survivors."

The foreman turned again to Iron Man and in stern tones said, "Iron Man, this is a task which will require the prowess of you and your colleague Anesthetized Man."

Iron Man nodded his head in humble acknowledgment and in a short time he and Anesthetized Man were standing before the charred and blackened entrance to the mine. Iron Man's eyes peered deep into the apparent void as Anesthetized Man clicked his fingers in beat with the rhythm of the transistor radio in his pocket. Anesthetized Man blew another bubble on his huge wad of bubble gum while Iron Man began to speak. "As we move toward the Pool of Primordial Wonder we must remain extremely sensitive to all that which is about us. Let us keep our eyes and ears alert for any signs of life. We must also be on guard in every instant for fires of burning gas which may still remain."

The two figures then switched on the beaming lights of their helmets and disappeared into the engulfing darkness behind the entrance.

At a point not far into the tunnel, a strange quivering sensation filled the atmosphere and the sides began to shake as a rumble of some sort could be detected in the distance. Iron Man rushed to the side of the mine and held his ear hard against the wall trying to detect the nature of the disturbance. On the contrary, Anesthetized Man moved to the middle of the tunnel and began humming "Voom Voom Astronaut" in a loud unconstrained manner. As the tremors subsided, the two moved on and entered a spacious room whose walls opened out in all directions.

After only a few steps into the room, their lights fell upon the form of a charred and shriveled ash laying on the floor. Anesthetized Man kicked over the form. As it rolled over, the distorted face of a dead miner stared back at them. And, as their lights swung around surveying the remainder of the room it was revealed that the entire chamber was filled with similar burnt bodies. Iron Man dropped to his knees before the tragic form and wept in bitter sobs. Reaching nervously into his pocket, Anesthetized Man pulled out a cigarette and moved to an empty corner of the room where he smoked in long sucking drags.

Recovering from the initial paralysis of this shock, the two moved on through the room and into a new section of the mine. As they walked, burnt bodies appeared strewn all along the floor of the mine. The sight of these wretched forms filled Iron Man with dread-filled mystery.

Iron Man felt as though the walls of his eyeballs were cracking wide open as internal explosions blasted throughout his mystery-engulfed head. No where was release to be found from perpetual encounter with the dark tragedy.

Soon the tunnel narrowed into a very small passageway. The passage was in fact so narrow it was necessary to crawl. Iron Man could hear the sound of water dripping into water at the end of the tunnel. He knew they were near The Pool of Primordial Wonder.

Anesthetized Man, who did not at all like the necessity of crawling through the narrow squeeze of the muddy-floored tunnel, went first. Attempting to delude himself as to the possibility of avoiding the situation,

Anesthetized Man crawled down the tunnel backwards. Once he was well into the passageway, Iron Man followed, only crawling straight ahead. Then as mud gushed between his fingers, Iron Man witnessed the form of Anesthetized Man to drop off out of the tunnel. Immediately an agonizing scream filled the mine and then a sound of sizzling---as if a burning log had been plunged into a lake.

In the opening where Anesthetized Man had been, Iron Man could now perceive a radiant illumination. Iron Man soon reached the spot and the confronting reality held him entranced in its grip. The entire surface of the pool was covered by a fiery swirling cloud of the glowing Gas of Auroraic Awe. The burning gas had roasted Anesthetized Man to a crisp as he fell out of the tunnel and into the pond. His burnt, lifeless, blackened body now floated in the caressing fingers of the ripples upon the Pond of Primordial Wonder.

As Iron Man peered out of the tunnel over the pond, he felt himself to be helplessly suspended at the very heart of the Mine of Paralyzing Paradox. As he looked into the swirling blanket of flame, fear such as he had never experienced before filled his being--not the fear of the fire but of something else--of something quite unknown. Simultaneously, Iron Man felt aroused within him a gripping fascination for the mass of enflamed gas. He experienced an inarticulable oneness with its intangible reality and an almost overwhelming urge to throw himself into the midst of it--to burn with it forever.

Yet as the leaping flames singed his face and eyes, a strange driving power seemed to force his movement. Slowly and cautiously, Iron Man began to crawl back through the tunnel. Upon reaching the mine's more open portions he stood erect and moved quickly through it in ascent toward the entrance.

All of the workers were gathered at the entrance as Iron Man's battered figure burst into the sunlight. His long stay and the absence of Anesthetized Man was all of the report that was needed to communicate the reality of the situation within the mine.

A profound silence swept through the group as they beheld Iron Man standing before them.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."
Iron Man: "Amen."
Community: "Amen."

**IRON MEN ARE ASSIGNED BY THE POWER OF BEING
ITSELF**

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The River of Consciousness. A feeling of 'being suddenly adrift' swept over Iron Man as the Week II assignments were passed down the long rows at Friday morning collegium. For as his eyes scanned the endless lists of names and teams, Iron Man became aware that his name had been left entirely off the sheet. No where was he included in the Week II assignments.

Iron Man continued to sit paralyzed as the final "The Lord Be With You..." was pronounced. The Great Hall quickly emptied as everyone moved to their various assignments. An unbelievable aloneness permeated Iron Man as he sat in silent dialogue with his own unlimited freedom.

Entranced within the vacuum of the future, Iron Man stood and began walking. For no apparent reason or understanding, Iron Man soon awoke to the reality that he had walked out of the building and was now far into the countryside.

As the fact of his own 'just having-showed-up-in-this-situation' dawned on him, Iron Man finally began to notice the external realities about him. Rows of tall pines stood majestically beside the road. Behind them, Iron Man could hear the gurgling and bubbling of the free-flowing waters of The River of Consciousness.

Suddenly, the void of Iron Man's volitional state was seized by a driving power which forced him in the direction of the river. His feet moved quickly over the dry leaves of the forest floor until he found himself standing before the river itself.

His protuding eyes moved up and down the length of the winding river and consumed it entirely. Near him, resting on the bank, was a large log raft with a long wooden pole for steering next to it. A creative urge drew

him to the river craft and, with scarcely a reflection on his actions, Iron Man pushed the heavy raft onto the water. Stepping on with the pole in hand, Iron Man pushed off from the shore and immediately was caught up in the movement of the river's current.

As the pole dipped in and out of the water, steering and propelling the raft down the river, the burden of its weight seemed to grow greater and greater. Sweat covered his brow and a state of tiredness crept over Iron Man as he mechanically acted out his task. Dulled by the tediousness of it all, Iron Man did not notice as a long slimy Leech of Lethargic Lucidity slowly crawled up the shaft of his pole. Flipping himself up through the air, the leech latched onto Iron Man's exposed neck and sunk his blood-thirsty teeth deep into his head. Being so very exhausted from his work, Iron Man thought he could hear the leech begin to speak.

"Iron Man you can't flow down this river. Iron Man, Oh foolish, foolish Iron Man, what are you doing on this filthy smelly river anyhow? Especially when you know that you are free to be absolutely anywhere in the world you might decide to be. And should it really be the case that you take this 'movement thing' seriously, then you ought to feel guilty for taking off without a Week II assignment."

Iron Man gripped the slimy creature and tugged and tugged. As he pulled, Iron Man vigorously addressed the leech. "What you say is indeed true. Everyman has the freedom of inventiveness as he shapes his given life. But Iron Men decide to use that freedom by embracing their given situation and not employing that freedom to escape to another situation. So it is that, knowing what I know about my endless possibilities, I nonetheless decided to embrace this one and not some other."

With that, Iron Man ripped the slimy Leech of Lethargic Lucidity off his head and slammed it down onto the back of the raft. Picking up the pole Iron Man continued on his way.

As the river continued to wind through valley after valley the flowing current seemed to diminish. The water became more and more shallow until at last Iron Man was straining with all of his weight to move the raft with his pole. The logs of the raft scrapped bottom and the grating action increased Iron Man's struggle immeasurably.

Then with a solid "Thud" the raft came to a total halt as it rammed into a huge Turtle of Temporal Toil lying in the middle of the river. Iron Man jabbed his pole underneath the huge turtle and attempted to pry him out of the way. As Iron Man's bulging muscles strained though every fiber, the turtle's voice found its way into his mind. "Iron Man you can't flow down this river. Iron Man, oh foolish, foolish Iron Man, just look at yourself; working so hard and wearing out your body in an absurd endeavor. You know that there is no need of your doing this task. And should you reach your destination, what have you accomplished? Certainly you understand all too well that all a man's doing comes to naught in this world."

Iron Man energetically lent his weight to the pole as he used it as a lever. In scorching tones he addressed the turtle.

"What you say is indeed true. Everyman knows that all he might do in this world finally amounts to nothing. Yet, an Iron Men also understands that his life in this world is the only life he has the possibility of freely shaping and that that life is nothing more than sheer creativity. Indeed, Iron Men decide to receive their sheer creativity as a precious gift which is given to them in every moment and which they must use every moment or lose it forever. So it is, that in this situation I decide to invest my creativity in the hard work of this demanding task."

At that proclamation, the turtle rolled over from the force of the pole and Iron Man guided the raft around its awkward rolling body. He then pushed the huge Turtle of Temporal Toil out of the way and continued down the river.

The journey had not proceeded far when the river split into several forks. On a sandbar in the middle of the main stream lay coiled a long Python of Passion's Possessive Power. As the raft was flowing unburdened down the stream, Iron Man stared longingly into the fluffy puffs of cloud in the sky above. Enraptured in the swirls of white softness, Iron Man noticed nothing of the river around him. In this distracted state, he did not see as the python left its spot on the sandbar and crawled up onto the raft as it drifted.

In seductive slithers the python wrapped around Iron Man's legs. Sensual pulsating squeezes rippled rythmmically along the snake's smooth

body bombarding Iron Man with a plethora of dark turbid thoughts and desires. Confused by the ambiguity of this many-faceted state of being, Iron Man thought he could hear the coaxing voice of the python whispering gently to him.

"Iron Man, you can't flow down this river," came the voice. "Iron Man. Oh, foolish, foolish Iron Man. Why do you stay on this single coarse down this boring river. Your problem Iron Man is that you do not have enough variety in your life. Why not come with me and together we can explore the many new and exciting off shoots and tributaries from this dull and unchanging mainstream?"

With both fists Iron Man gripped the tail of the long Python of Passions Possessing Power and, coil by coil, began unwrapping the crushing creature from around his body. As he twisted and turned Iron Man ruthlessly addressed the snake, "What you say is indeed true. Everyman has an infinite longing and lust which yearns to be invested in life. But Iron Men do not spread out these powerful drives in a thousand different places. Rather, Iron Men invest their passion in the single missional thrust of their lives. Iron Men discipline their heart and mind to keep them single--to hold them focused to the task at hand."

As Iron Man finished speaking these words the powerful python released its grip and Iron Man flung him to the rear of the raft and continued down the river.

No sooner had Iron Man begun the next phase of his journey than a Water Mocassin of Willful Missional Defiance slipped up through the logs of the raft and sank his vicious, razor sharp fangs into Iron Man's left ankle. A feeling like fire burned throughout Iron Man's leg. As Iron Man struggled to bear the pain, he thought he could hear the vipor's vexing voice speaking within his head.

"Iron Man, you can't flow down this river, 'the voice resonated. Iron Man; oh, foolish, foolish Iron Man. There is no glory here: no victory: not even a battle to be fought. And even if there were a fight to fight there would be no human eye to see your triumph; no voice to sing your praise. Iron Man, you're not even assigned to be here. Why don't you just leave and go do something significant with your life. Go somewhere and change

history, but don't simply rot away floating on this scum laden river.

Iron Man reached down and pinched the back of the water moccasin's neck. Raising it up, Iron Man pinched the creature's dangerous mouth wide open. With precision and power Iron Man plucked the poisonous fangs from the snakes malicious mouth. As he worked, Iron Man addressed the snake: "What you say is indeed true. Everyone seeks to engage his life significantly in shaping the history he is given. But Iron Men do not change history by setting out to do something. Rather by simply willing to be the selves they are given to be, history is recreated."

"And by deciding to be the selves they have been given to be, the power of Being itself radiates through them. For in this world Iron Men are assigned by the global movement, but in the Other World, Iron Men receive their assignments from the power of Being itself."

Iron Man then tossed the wounded Water Moccasin of Willful Missional Defiance to the back of the raft and continued his journey down the River of Consciousness.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Mountain of Care

November 19, 1972

Iron Man Journey #28
Sacramental Universe

IRON MEN GIVE THANKS IN ORIGINAL GRATITUDE

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Mountain of Care. The spirit nurture of the newly-formulated cadre of Happiness Hollow on The Mountain of Care had been sadly inadequate. The long and dangerous path around the mountain to Happiness Hollow made most contact with the religious house almost impossible. With a profound fear of spiritual reductionism setting into the cadre's life, the first prior of the house made assignments for Thanksgiving Day. Assigned to lead the Thanksgiving Celebration feast for Happiness Hollow Cadre were Iron Man and his colleague Cynic Man.

Being located in such a remote and isolated area, Happiness Hollow could only be reached by the prowess of a skillfully maneuvered motorcycle. So it was that Iron Man and Cynic Man threw their legs over the saddles of their two motorcycles. With a powerful downward thrust of his left leg, Iron Man catalyzed the engine of his mighty Greeve's 250 Scrambler Motorcycle into screaming, exploding, bursts of power. Sensitively gripping the throttle of his precious mechanical possession, Iron Man chilled the entire valley with echos of the resounding, "VA-ROOM, VA-ROOM, VA-ROOM."

With both intentful care and utter abandon, Iron Man popped his tense clutch as he and the mighty Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle lept into the streaming sunlight of the early morning valley.

The neighbors of the religious house all hastened to their windows and threw open their drapes to witness the passionate procession of Iron Man down the valley road. Mothers gripped their shuddering daughters and young boys ran for their bicycles to imitate Iron Man up and down the length of their yards. Fathers rolled over in their beds vainly attempting to shut out the self-auditing address of this virile symbol of authentic masculinity. None, however; not man, nor woman, nor child, escaped the

impact of the transformation occasioned by Iron Man as he freely-embraced the mundane assigned task of driving to his job.

Far behind on the road came Cynic Man, cursing the sun in his eyes and bemoaning the fact that Iron Man was not waiting for him to catch up.

A few hours of travel brought the two cyclists to the foot of the massive Mountain of Care. Pulling to a halt, Iron Man and Cynic Man cast their eyes over the wide expanse of rock and mud and trees and sky and streams and hills and valleys and crevices which composed the setting of The Mountain of Care.

"See what you see,' said Iron Man to Cynic Man in rather prophetic tones. 'There is nothing more to see. What you see is what you see. But mark my words, before this day is ended, we shall burn it all up and offer it to the rushing winds."

Beneath his breath Cynic Man grumbled a few sarcastic remarks which sounded vaguely like, "Drop dead Iron Man. I'd prefer to forget both you and all your romantic wish-dreaming poetry. Let's get on with our work."

Without further comment, Iron Man charged up his engine and tore into the trail before him. The way to Happiness Hollow was long and grueling. Yet Iron Man did not allow this thought to deter his forging ahead for even an instant. It was all that Cynic Man could do to keep up. Soon the two toughened trailers came to a section which had received rain throughout the previous night. Because of this, the deep dust of the trail had been transformed into a thick covering of Mud of Mundaneity's Madness. Both motorcycles began to slip and slide back and forth across the trail. In order to keep the heavy metal machines from spilling over out of control and crushing their riders of flesh, Iron Man and Cynic Man had to constantly use their legs as supporting crutches against the trail as they would lean first to one side and then the other. The jutting knobby tires flung hunks and spatters of mud everywhere. Only a short period of time was required before both were totally covered by the dripping gom and guck of mud. Cynic Man drew close behind Iron Man's motorcycle and began to yell, "I cannot believe that this situation is really this bad. You must have been absolutely crazy to have chosen this way. Surely there must be a better, more dignified path to Happiness Hollow."

Cynic Man then opened his mouth to continue his accusation when a huge cruddy hunk of mud was hurled from underneath Iron Man's spinning tire right into his mouth. Cynic Man choked, and spat, and cursed, and spat again. He continued to spit the raunchy matter from his mouth as they passed onto a new section of trail.

Rounding a bend, the path suddenly shot nearly straight up the side of the mountain. For the barren dirt path before them was none other than the greatly-feared Hillclimb of Absurdity's Hilarity. Cynic Man immediately blurted out, "We can't climb that steep trail. Either exhaustion or a heart attack would strike us down before we could push these heavy machines over the top."

Iron Man only responded with a great shout of self-annihilatory glee as he revved up his engine, "VA-ROOM, VA-ROOM, VA-ROOM," and popped the clutch. The screaming Greeves 250 Scrambler Motorcycle gripped deep into the dirt and began to claw its way up the severe steepness of the mountainside. About half way up the hillclimb the cycle was only inching its way forward. Iron Man hopped off the side and began pushing as well as giving the engine full power. Sweat streamed across Iron Man's body as he toiled to aid the heavy machine over the top. Cynic Man was not far behind and struggled equally from a walking side position.

Angrily, Cynic Man yelled up the hillclimb, "Iron Man, you are out of your mind. Why don't you just give up? How can we ever find Happiness Hollow on such a rugged path? What do you think you're looking for, anyhow?"

Responding over his shoulder, Iron Man replied, "I'm not looking for anything, for I've already found what I'm looking for. And when I go looking for something it is always the same thing and when I find it, it is always in the same place. And the place is always wherever I am when I decide to go looking for that which I've already found. For mystery is in everywhere."

Reflecting on his non-answer, Iron Man then added, "I'm in love with life."

Leaving Cynic Man's rational appetite somewhat unsatisfied, Iron Man continued up the Hillclimb of Absurdity's Hilarity. Cynic Man meanwhile,

stood immobilized in an entranced stupor as he stood witness to the nothing that was bursting out all over.

Once on top of the hillclimb, the path began its descent toward the rocky Ravine of Ruthless Responsibility, on the far side of which, lay Happiness Hollow. Stones of all shapes and sizes clanked against their metal skid-plates as Iron Man and Cynic Man experienced every cell in their bodies to be jarred in a ceaseless bombardment by the boulders, rocks, and pebbles of the trail.

Nonetheless, a grassy opening awaited the vibrating cyclists on the far side, as they passed through the rocky Ravine of Ruthless Responsibility. Bursting into Happiness Hollow, Iron Man and Cynic Man rode immediately to the cadre's Great Hall from which the set-up team was just leaving.

As the two cyclists dismounted, Cynic Man found himself to be deeply offended by the joyous smile which covered the face of Iron Man. "What are you so happy about?" shouted Cynic Man in a condemning voice. "Haven't you experienced all of the frustration, pain, agony, toil, suffering, doubt, despair, sorrow, and regret that I have in following this God-forsaken path to this historically insignificant spot in order to lead a parochial and nationalistic celebration?"

"Well, surrrrrre," said Iron Man in tones which were far too obviously appeasing."

Quickly readjusting his stance, Iron Man decided to deal seriously with Cynic Man's question. With a more solemn and objective quality, Iron Man began his short-course on the act of giving thanks in a state of original gratitude. "Iron Men gratefully embrace and consume all the states of being which are given to them as an unending gift of life itself. By rushing to receive and be that which they are given to be, Iron Men explode and make sacred all the dead matter of this world which they encounter; they consume the lethargic stuff of dead life into their own vibrant being and in so doing transmute it into the living spirit of The Other World."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed; "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

The Sea of Tranquility

December 11, 1972

Spontaneous Gratitude
Iron Man Journey # 29

IRON MEN RECEIVE IN GRATITUDE THE ONLY GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Sea of Tranquility. Smoke had filled the Penetration Office in the late hours of Thursday evening as Week II was rapidly approaching. The many demands of research had left shortages of staff everywhere. Nonetheless, the Problem Solving Units, planned to begin in a matter of hours, were still not full. The entire staff of Penetration Post sat in a burdened silence as they awaited some way to move on this great dilemma. Finally the prior of the post stood up, walked to the blackboard, and as he began scribbling assignment shifts, announced his solution; "Cut the Emerging Generation staff in half and in replacement for the shortage assign Iron Man."

"But we can't do that, objected one of the post members seated at the table. 'We've already cut the E.G. staff to bare minimum and Iron Man has been on children structures for the past five weeks---certainly he would never accept such an assignment."

"Oh, don't be so sure about that,' responded the head prior. 'Iron Man's willing affirmation of the assignment can easily be gained simply by assigning one very special member to his staff. Snickers could be heard around the table and mischievous grins flashed from face to face as all detected the delightfully devious maneuver their prior was about to perform. And sure enough, up on the board immediately under the name of 'Iron Man' appeared the name of the one who by her very persence called forth a life response from every representative of male ontology she encountered--indeed--it was the enchanting name of 'Miss Terie.'

While many others had been fooled by Iron Man's overtly detached stance, the cunning prior of Penetration knew the seldom-spoken truth that every man was sectrly in love with Miss Terie and yearned to belong solely to her.

As Iron Man received his assignment sheet during Friday morning collegium, he started looking under the headings he found most distasteful first. He began with 'Emerging Generation.' As his eyes immediately spotted his name, those seated near Iron Man could hear him exclaim, "Oh dread," but as his eyes continued down the row a sound of astonished wonder passed through his trembling lips as he pronounced "Miss Terie."

Being the middle of December, Iron Man discovered that the Saturday curriculum layed out an appropriate theme and called for a trip to The Carnival of Christmas' Creation. As transportation for the eighty members of The Emerging Generation presented a real contradiction, Iron Man decided that he and Miss Terie would lead the entire body to the Carnival by taking them on an adventurous trek to the site.

Now the Carnival of Christmas' Creation itself is located at the juncture of the four areas of the Other World. For one finds this strange carnival only by traveling to the point at which The Land of Mystery, The River of Consciousness, The Mountain of Care, and The Sea of Tranquility all come together.

So it was that with a style of nonchalant abandon, the Emerging Generation poured out the doors of Symbolic Centrum into the crisp December air.

Miss Terie led the procession as Iron Man brought up the rear. The group moved with great gusto down the city boulevard leaving behind a distinct trail of gloves and mittens, scarfs, boots, hats, diaper bags, broken toys, and half-eaten pieces of toast and jelly.

Passing beyond the boundaries of the city, the group soon approached The Crevice of Creepy Crawling Creatures. Now The Crevice of Creepy Crawling Creatures is located in The Land of Mystery and provides the gateway to The Carnival of Christmas' Creation.

All shuddered as they began to edge their way across the narrow path upon the rim of the crevice. Far below them could be seen the mighty flowing waters of The River of Consciousness. Suddenly the line drew to a complete halt and fear gripped the hearts of many. Iron Man shot his glance toward the head of the line where he saw Miss Terie wavering with

dizziness. Without hesitation, Iron Man began to push children aside as he tried to make his way to his quivering colleague. Yet his efforts were to no avail. For as the graceful form of Miss Terie swayed back and forth in a strange hypnotic sway, Iron Man was forced to helplessly watch as a catatonic Catapillar of Consuming Contingency crawled out of the crevice and shot its vicious poisonous fangs deep into the exposed tender flesh of Miss Terie's delicate left ankle. Collapsing on the spot, Miss Terie tumbled over the side of the rock wall of the crevice toward an unknown destination far below.

Yet as her battered body passed from sight, Iron Man perceived through his tear-filled eyes a hazy form ascending up the crevice wall. Indeed, soon Iron Man and the entire Emerging Generation were utterly entranced as they beheld the spectacle of The Dancers of Undaunted Daring moving agilely from the foot of The River of Consciousness up the walls of the crevice. In fact the stunning beautiful dancers leaped and twirled across and around and in and through the walls of the crevice in complete carefreeness. And in their arms could be seen the shaken, but alive form of Miss Terie.

In response to this courageous demonstration, one of the terrified ten year old girls, from her perch safe on the trail above, called out to the leader of The Dancers of Undaunted Daring; "How can you be so brave in such a dangerous situation?"

To this the leader merely replied, "Those who do truly fear The Great Mystery of The Other World no longer have any reason to be scared of any thing or any body in this world." With that the dancers cleared the top of the treacherous trail and continued to dance as they led the way across the trail to the foot of The Mountain of Care."

After hiking most of the day up the side of the mountain, the weary group reached the highly anticipated point on their journey. For before their open eyes and longing hearts spun the magnificent Merry-go-round of Miraculous Mission. With blaring sounds of 'When You Are Aware' permeating the air, one by one the Emerging Generation climbed onto the pulsating plastic ponies and proceeded to crusade around and around the circumference of the tantalizing toy.

Then suddenly, and to everyone's amazement, a mechanism broke apart in the middle of the merry-go-round's engine. Without warning, the ride began to revolve out of control. In a moment, all were sent in a wildly spinning whirl. As the acceleration increased, children began to be flung off of the frenzied machine and out into the blackness of the onsetting night air.

One by one the free-flying bodies came hurling down and, amazingly enough, landed not on The Mountain of Care but back at the entrance to The Land of Mystery where they had begun.

While darkness and tears set the initial mood, soon eyes began to focus upon the sparkling waters of the distant Sea of Tranquility. The sea perfectly reflected the moon's gentle beams.

To the amazement of all, a gigantic flying form arose off the top of the sea and began winging its way toward them. While still a great distance away, Iron Man recognized the creature to be the rare Moth of Mystery's Majesty. As the great moth soared overhead, Iron Man perceived it to be speaking directly to him as it whispered resolutely, "To die is to be born into life; to die is to live---and this is your gift and everyman's--the renewed birth which is the ever-present creation of Christmas." Iron Man looked around in astonishment and wondered if any of the others had heard the moth speak?

Whatever it was that had taken place, all now stood high atop the crevice and in a panorama of wonder beheld within a single gaze the four areas of The Other World. All experienced an unspeakable joy as they sensed that everything had become a gift.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

Relational Situation

Iron Man Journey # 30

IRON MEN HAVE NO USE FOR EXCUSE IN THIS WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The River of Consciousness. Iron Man's team at the religious house in the City of Constraining Circumstances had been assigned to 'dishes' all during the week. Thursday night at the house had been the occasion for a great feast in which all of the metro colleagues were invited in to participate. As 5 a.m. Friday morning dawned, Iron Man and the three other members of his team stood in dread contemplation of the stacks, and piles, and mountains of dirty, dried, and crusty dishes, pots, and pans which still remained before them--even after having washed all night!!

A tense silence filled the atmosphere as the four colleagues each continued to battle interiorly with the decision to say "yes" to their given situation.

As the team began again to stack and wash the endless dishes, in walked the prior of the house. "What's going on here?" demanded the prior. "Why aren't these dishes finished?"

Iron Man and the rest of the team stared blankly at their prior until finally an intern on the team, the intellectual of the group, spoke up; "Now I know the situation one has on his hands is never the problem, but rather the relationship one decides to take to it---yet, in this case I find such a thought simply too offensive to possibly be true. Indeed, I cannot even think of a worse situation."

Angrily, the prior retorted, "Then think of this one you phrase-parroting Pipsqueak, tonight one-hundred and seventy-five galaxy colleagues will be here to take the "New Individual and New Society" course and if these dishes aren't finished a cataclysmic doom will be close at hand."

The impudent intern feverishly returned to his dishes as the prior left to complete last minute course preparations.

Then, as Iron Man stood over his hot sink of soapy water, a nauseating odor permeated the air. In minutes the entire kitchen stank with a stink that threatened to permanently ossify the olfactory nerves of all those present. Iron Man's dish washing team ran frantically about the room trying to discover the source of the putrid odor. In gasping coughs, Iron Man's voice finally pierced the air, "There, There they are! The grease traps are over-flowing."

Running quickly for triple-thick cardboard boxes, large tin cans, and plastic bags, the team prepared to take off the already loosened lids of the grease traps to empty them of their excessively burdened load.

As the first lid was raised, a bit of unguarded sarcasm could even be detected in Iron Man as he commented, "Obviously, the past sixteen Week II kitchen teams have all mysteriously forgotten to clean those delightful drains."

All eyes peered into the inky black scum, thickly laden as it was with spoiled spaghettios, soggy pretzels, molded toast, chunks of curdled milk, wads of week old oatmeal, rotten lettuce, browning bits of bologna, deteriorating chewing gum, cigarette butts, dead cockroaches, shreads of dish rags, slivers of steel wool, and a thousand other unidentifiable items all sprinkled and intermixed with an abundant source of used coffee grounds.

Iron Man continued scooping boxload after boxload of the grimy substance from the grease trap when finally it became all too apparent that the problem must lie beyond the confines of the religious house sewage system.

And indeed, the nature of the situation became clear as a special news bulletin rang out from the kitchen radio. "Attention! Attention! All residents of Constraining Circumstances and vicinity. A major crisis is now upon the area and all residents need to begin evacuation procedures. Massive quantities of Circumstantial Crud have recently entered the city's the sewage system and have finally clogged up passages at the point where it drains into the mighty flowing waters of The River of Consciousness." Indeed, sewers are now overflowing across the city and wherever the backed-up crud has exposure to the air, it is creating the deadly-

poisonous Stench of Stagnant Selfhood. Now we switch you to a special on-the-spot report from our studio on The River of Consciousness."

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Earlier this morning military officials flew from Washington to the clogged-up site on The River of Consciousness. They threw a Vial of Defenseless Vulnerability filled with the purifying Oil of Outpoured Originality into the water. This vial was the only one of its kind and contained all of the rare purifying Oil of Outpoured Originality that government laboratories have been able to produce in the past five years. No other source for this top-secret oil exists. It is generally agreed among high level scientists that this quantity of the powerful oil would easily dissolve all the crammed-up Circumstantial Crud as well as catalyze the cleansing of the dreadful Stench of Stagnant Selfhood in our air. Yet, an unfortunate omission was made as the vial was dropped into the water. It seems the executing engineers forgot to break the long neck of the vial which would have allowed the liquid to escape. Thus, instead of doing its job, the unbroken Vial of Defenseless Vulnerability now rests buried in Circumstantial Crud somewhere on the bottom of The River of Consciousness.

Immediately Iron Man raised up off his knees from working on the grease trap and dashed out of the kitchen. In moments he had his scuba-diving gear packed into the back of the house's yellow International van and was driving with haste toward The River of Consciousness.

Upon arrival at the scene, Iron Man walked directly up to the official in charge of the total operation. Iron Man then inquired, "What is being done to deal with this situation?"

The official smiled somewhat pridefully and replied, "Well, Iron Man, The President has just declared this portion of the region a disaster area and has sent word to Congress to prepare to release funds for aid to victims. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are now meeting in order to establish a new research center which will be capable of producing ten million gallons of the purifying Oil of Outpoured Originality over the next twenty years. And finally, the army is implimenting its newest evacuation strategy in the removal of all the residents from Constraining Circumstances."

Somewhat unsatisfied, Iron Man continued to question, "Yes, yes, yes, but what is being done here---on this spot---what is being done to deal with this mess?"

"HmMMMM," pondered the official. I guess we're still waiting to move directly on that issue. Can't move too fast you know."

"Has anyone considered getting into the crud and breaking the vial?" asked Iron Man.

Both offended and shocked, the officials replied, "Of course not, who in this world would ever do such a repulsive thing as that?"

Without bothering to answer, Iron Man turned, ran to his van and donned his scuba-diving gear. In moments, he was wading off the bank of the river up to his knees in crud. A moment more and the form of Iron Man disappeared beneath the thick covering of Circumstantial Crud. As he immersed himself totally within the crud, Iron Man was even a bit suprised to find that the crud felt just like crud.

Struggling, vainly attempting to swim, slodging, twisting, turning, squirming and sliding, gradually Iron Man made his way deeper and deeper into the messy mass. While blind and deaf to all about, Iron Man's fumbling right hand finally latched onto the long brittle neck of an unbroken vial. With one mighty flick of his wrist the Vial of Defenseless Vulnerability shattered and spilled its contents of the purifying Oil of Outpoured Originality into the surroundings.

In a matter of moments Iron Man found himself to be swimming freely in the clear bubbling waters of The River of Consciousness.

Iron Man then climbed onto the bank and signaled for the cheering crowd to grow quiet. In indicative tones, Iron Man then spoke---revealing the secret that had enabled him to pull off his task---"Because Iron Men know their home is in The Other World, they are free to give up all excuses and to decide their relationship to each new situation just as its given to them in this world."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."
Iron Man: "Amen."
Community: "Amen."

The Land of Mystery

January 4, 1973

Total Exposure

Iron Man Journey # 31

IRON MEN ARE TOTALLY EXPOSED IN THIS WORLD

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Land of Mystery. His teeth chattered together furiously as the chilling night wind cut through Iron Man's flimsy monk's robe. The New York Religious House had assigned Iron Man to be a participant in the New Year's Odyssey construct. The Odyssey was intended to creatively bring into being the New Year of 1973.

As the last 3 hour sleep period ended, Iron Man overslept and did not have time to get dressed and still make it to Daily Office for the beginning. To save time, rather than putting on all his clothing underneath his monk's robe, Iron Man merely threw his robe over his body and was certain no one would notice that he wasn't wearing anything underneath.

After the 'passing of the peace,' the prior of the house walked to the middle of the worship hall and made a very special announcement: "As a part of this experimental New Year's Odyssey construct, we will be leaving immediately from here for a pilgrimage to Times Square. There we will participate in the great midnight celebration which dramatizes the coming into being of 1973."

Without even bothering to take time to get coats, the entire community treked out of the house and down the street towards Times Square. Most, however, seemed warm enough with their robe and thick layer of clothing; most, that is, with the exception of Iron Man. And so it was that Iron Man came to arrive in this chilling situation.

The great clock above Time Square held spellbound all who stood below watching the final moments of 1972 being ticked away. To Iron Man, the face of the clock seemed to be a great cosmic eye which could see absolutely everything.

Suddenly, as the last minute arrived, the crowd came alive with spontaneous corporate counting; and finally..... "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2,

1.....HAPPY NEW YEAR! HAPPY NEW YEAR!", the crowded mass of humanity chorused joyously. Streamers filled the air, whistles blew, voices sang, women shrieked, men roared with laughter, lights flashed, and chaos reigned. Iron Man noticed the group from the Odyssey being slowly scattered in the crowd. Before he could move on the situation, he felt himself to be savagely attacked from behind. In another moment, Iron Man was being smothered with kisses from some strange woman who had emerged out of the crowd. As the fanatical female released her grip, another rushed in to replace her. Gasping for breath amid shouts of "HAPPY NEW YEAR" and long sloppy kisses from one strange woman after another, Iron Man struggled to re-establish his intentional problemless stance. Before such composure could be firmly grasped, however, Iron Man found himself to be standing in the middle of a great flowing sea of pulsating, unrestrained, and noncontexted female ontology. The burden of it all was too great to bear as Iron Man's eyes became lost in attempting to gaze through the swaying forest of slender feminine arms reaching toward him. Being fully surrounded, Iron Man plumbed the depth of his critical intelligence to discover a possible escape route. In so doing, it became very clear that only one possible path remained open. Indeed, he must duck down to the ground between attackers and attempt to crawl under the cover of thousands of jumping, dancing, stomping, and hopping feet and legs. As one pair of arms loosened their grip and another began to move in, Iron Man dropped instantly to his knees. Successfully deceiving his many would be friends, Iron Man crouched on his knees in the chaotic confusion of the night's spectacle and plotted his next maneuver. Choosing his course, Iron Man began to crawl. He only moved about a foot when he came to a sudden halt. Someone was standing on the 'chastity knot' of the rope belt which dangled from the waist of his monk's robe. Quickly untying the rope, Iron Man left his rope belt lying on the pavement beneath the heavy foot.

Meeting a wall of legs as he tried to move forward, Iron Man gave up and began to crawl out of the mess backwards. But moving backwards without a belt presented special problems. For as he crawled out backwards in a tight squeeze between two bodies, Iron Man's robe flipped up over his head. Iron Man was profoundly embarrassed as he hoped desperately that no one would notice his condition since he was wearing nothing under his robe. But such neglect was not to be Iron Man's good

fortune as a curious voice above him questioned, "Oh mee-oh-my; what in this world could this be". Iron Man gasped as a hand closed around a portion of his robe and then jerked. Off flew his robe and Iron Man began backing up through the crowd at an incredible speed. Iron Man could not believe his situation; for here he was---stripped absolutely naked---nude in the middle of Times Square!!!!

In a flash Iron Man stood up in order to find out where he was and to see if there were any possible place to hide. Immediately his eyes fell upon a nearby subway entrance. Yet, wild screams, shrieks, and shrill cries filled the air as Iron Man's standing figure came to the attention of many of those around him. In a fright-filled rage Iron Man began bounding through the crowd toward the subway entrance. In a final dash he disappeared down the steps into the subway tunnel. Once in the tunnel, Iron Man's eyes flashed around the walls to find a place to hide. In an area a short distance before the ticket window, a quick glance revealed a closed door with a sign on it which read: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION--KEEP OUT! While the ticket sales lady had her back turned, Iron Man reached the door, flung it open, and moved quickly into the strange chamber on the other side. It only took a moment for Iron Man to realize that he was standing in a huge drainage pipe of the New York Sewers. Running down the center of the bottom of the pipe was the Grimy Gutter of Gushing Guilt. Through this grimy gutter thousands of tons of sewage flowed every day. Not wishing to spend anymore time breathing the rancid and stagnant air of the sewer tunnel, Iron Man turned to leave. But Iron Man's heart sank and his left nostril collapsed in a seizure as he gripped the door knob and it would not turn. The door to the sewer had locked behind him! In spite of the severity of this new predicament, Iron Man nonetheless felt relieved at having found a hiding place. He was certain he could get back to street level merely by climbing through a manhole.

As he stood deep in thought pondering his next move, a monstrous hairy Rat of Rational Reduction came scurrying along the ledge above the gutter and stopped by Iron Man. In a scratchy high pitched voice the rat began to persuade Iron Man which direction he should take. "Iron Man. Oh, exposed Iron Man. How humiliated you must be. But do not worry, I have a model that will get you out of here in a jiffy. It is all very simple; very straightforward. Why I have lived in these sewers the best part of my life and am perfectly acquainted with all their logical patterns. Just follow me and you will soon be dressed and out of here."

Iron Man was so pleased to have found such an easy solution to his dilemma that he hesitated not a second and began running after the rat down the slippery ledge. In his haste, however, Iron Man neglected to consider that his physical maneuverability in the confines of the sewer tunnel was somewhat less than the rat's. The monstrous hairy Rat of Rational Reduction made it look so easy as he scurried through the endless passageways, but Iron Man's naive imitation did not fare so well. Soon he found himself sliding in an uncontrollable skid. A moment more and Iron Man was up to his neck in the middle of the grimy Gutter of Gushing Guilt. Iron Man felt as though he were swimming in an enigmatic liquid sea with its wellspring being a giant grinding garbage disposal for the entire New York City.

Unexpectedly, Iron Man now felt a strange tickling sensation on the back of his neck. As he dog-paddled around, he encountered a huge hunk of Fungus of Futile Fantasy. The tantalizing scent arising off the fungus filled Iron Man's nostrils and catalyzed a strange vision in his mind. He could see himself sitting comfortably by the grimy Gutter of Gushing Guilt and liesurely gathering his meals as they floated by. Indeed, he could invision himself living the rest of his days in this world within the sewers of New York City--the most perfect hiding place ever discovered. Yet Iron Man's ecastatic trance came to an abrupt end as his ears were filled with echos of toilets flushing throughout the tunnel.

Crawling out of the gutter, Iron Man could see above him the light of an open manhole. Staring in awe at the reflected moonlight, Iron Man struggled with the contradiction of having nothing to wear. Yet in the midst of this struggle a Spider of Sentimental Speculation miraculously settled on his shoulder. Whispering softly into Iron Man's ear, the spider began its spin. "Iron Man. Iron Man. Oh, exposed Iron Man. How humiliated you must be. But do not worry for I will weave you a beautiful silvery silk garmet which you can wear out of this hole."

In moments, feeling a magic net spun all around him, Iron Man crawled out of the manhole onto a street not far from the religious house. Suddenly laughter filled the air as a group of New Year's party goers walking on the sidewalk saw Iron Man's transparent dress. Suddenly realizing the deception of his silvery silk garmet, Iron Man began running frantically for the religious house. Upon reaching the front door, Iron Man pounded

vigorously on the locked barrier. Such a disturbance was created, all of the Odyssey participants gathered at the door to see who this impassioned visitor of the middle of the night might be. Iron Man blushed all over as the door was opened.

From the back of the room, the house prior's pharisaical wife tossed Iron Man a spare monk's robe. As he put it on, she spoke indignantly, "Iron Man. Iron Man. Oh, exposed Iron Man. How humiliated you must be."

Quickly transcending his initial embarrassment, Iron Man replied to the entire group. "Don't be fooled too easily dear colleagues. For Iron Men know that in this world there is no place to hide who and what they are. Indeed, the sleepless eye of the undying mystery sees us and knows us in every moment of our lives. So rather than foolishly pretending that we can find someplace to hide, Iron Men decide to live their lives as those who are always totally exposed in this world. Iron Men understand the deep secret that their lives are already truly hidden, even from their own understanding, in the ever present mystery of The Other World."

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his Father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN CREATE OUT OF NOTHING

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Sea of Tranquility. An initial brainstorm by the PSU on the symbolic life of the Miami Religious House revealed a need of abysmal proportions. For the high altar of the house's Great Hall lay nearly barren; only moldy bread, stagnant wine, melted candle wax, and piles of incense ashes covered its surface. Yet these minor glitches were of little significance alongside the imaginal catastrophe that occurred due to the absence of even a single mystery figure.

Wrestling the issue through to the bottom, the PSU finally consensed that what was needed was an artform of an indigenous quality. Indeed, the recommendation of the PSU was that the material of the mystery figure be nothing other than a huge hunk of the dazzling and colorful Coral of Ceaseless Creativity.

Now this precious coral is not a commodity to be easily acquired. In fact, its location in only one spot on the planet accounts for its scarcity and immense value. For the dazzling and colorful Coral of Ceaseless Creativity grows only on a small reef in The Sea of Tranquility which lies beneath the surface of the waters just beyond The Atoll of Anticipation.

Countless legends and stories surround the existence of this reef and The Coral of Ceaseless Creativity. Among the fishermen of the region, it is told that teeming schools of brightly arrayed fish dart in and out among the twisted branches of coral. Exotic tropical seafoods may be found in abundance across the reef. As well, more spectacular finds of sunken pirate ships with innumerable treasure chests of gold and silver and precious stones of emerald, and ruby, and jade are scattered throughout. While probably nothing more than wild rumor and fanciful speculation, there exists a popular legend told by the crusty old fishermen who venture into the lonely sea again and again. For among them, the stories abound concerning the inhabitation of the reef by many of the enchanting and enticing Mermaids of Manifest Motivity.

While of course such stories could not be true in this world, the fishermen hold fevently to their reality.

In order to insure that this significant mission came off according to the model created by the PSU, the prior of the house made special assignments for the task. Assigned to bring back a huge hunk of the dazzling and colorful Coral of Ceaseless Creativity was the team of Lucidity Man, Emotionality Man, and the prior of the task force, Iron Man.

As the three team members stood on the pier before the magnificent sailboat which would carry them on their voyage, Iron Man set the context. "Gentlemen, we have been honored by our colleagues, the Global Order, and the entire historic church to have received this significant assignment. We are about to embark on the greatest adventure of our lives so let us prepare our minds and hearts and spirits for this glorious journey. And let us pray unceasingly for the courage to remain obedient and steadfast to our assigned task. My dear colleagues in the 20th Century resurgence of humanness, let us now go forth to embrace our common destiny."

With that, Iron Man shouldered his duffle bag and boarded the sail-laden galleon. Behind him followed Lucidity Man who could be heard grumbling to himself his reply to Iron Man's context. "What a bunch of seahorse excrement! Iron Man's only telling himself stories about what will undoubtedly be just another crummy Order assignment."

And last on the pier was Emotionality Man, but still unmoving. Emotionality Man merely stood there---his mouth gaping and his wide eyes staring in wonderment at the huge spreading sails on the ship before him. Emotionality Man had been completely overcome by Iron Man's charismatic context and thus he now stood immobilized---entrapped in the wonder of his own imagination. However, he hurriedly gathered his gear as Lucidity Man flung a soggy cigar butt at him. Fumbling all over the place, he began to pull his things on board.

The wind was with the adventuresome voyagers for the first three days as finally they sighted The Atoll of Anticipation. In a couple of hours, they had passed beyond the fabled atoll and knew the coral reef they sought must be near.

Yet in the midst of their mounting missional excitement, the wind that

were carrying them forward suddenly died down to nothing. In moments the great white sails sagged limply as their food of flowing air disappeared. A strange and eerie calm covered the sea and permeated the very being of the three unsuspecting voyagers on this tranquil sea. Waves stopped. All sounds ended. Nothing moved. Everything was quiet. Absolutely motionless on the vast unmoving sea, all stared into the apparent state of suspended animation which existed all about them. With no wind to propel them, they were entrapped in the calm. The hot and heavy moist air lay over the entire sea and seemed to smother all signs of life. Hot, sweaty, and weary the three crewmen blankly gazed at one another; and then waited. And they waited.....and waitedand waitedand waitedand waitedand waited. For forty days and forty nights they waited atop the unchanging liquid eternity.

Iron Man stood by the railing of the side of the ship in contemplation of the massive beds of seaweed which lay directly beneath the surface of the water and over which they had now been floating for forty days and nights. Hunger gripped at his entrails and his parched mouth thirsted as never before. Iron Man's state of deprivation was shared by his two colleagues who lay stretched out in the shadow of the cabin. Yet as he allowed his mind to dive and probe deep into the slimy Seaweed of Sanctified Silence, Iron Man was suddenly seized by an incredible vision of possibility. Occurring simultaneously with this vision came the understanding of what the contradiction for this long long period of aridity had been. Indeed, welling up from the recesses of his consciousness, Iron Man identified their tormentor as the rare meteorological phenomenon occurring only on The Sea of Tranquility and known as The Doldrums of Despairing Despondency.

Iron Man knew that only by acting upon and moving toward the vision which now filled his head could he and his colleagues transcend their despairing state.

In a power-filled voice that reverberated across the silent deeps, Iron Man called out: "Praise The Lord, Christ Is Risen!"

Community: "He Is Risen Indeed."

Iron Man: "Amen"

Community: "Amen."

As his two colleagues staggered in hesitating steps toward him, Iron Man thrust his hand into the sea and jerked out a fistful of the seaweed. In

a voice fraught with meaning and life, Iron Man spoke as he held the slimy dripping vegetation to the sky in a gesture of calling forth blessings from God. "With this given matter,' said Iron Man, 'from this common stuff of life; upon this shall we build our new life together. And through this we will affirm the great gift of life that is ours to embrace in this situation."

Being Friday evening, Iron Man then moved to the blackboard and began laying out a Week II PSU construct on "Seaweed Appropriation." Iron Man included a list of assigned tasks to the members of the PSU unit for the more particular areas of research. Lastly Iron Man wrote on the board the form of their final product. This product was to be a document laying out the 'historical development,' 'present functions,' 'major contradictions,' and 'movemental implications' of seaweed.

Transparently unexcited by Iron Man's imaginal boardwork, Lucidity Man responded, "Iron Man. Iron Man. Oh inventive Iron Man. You can't fool me---because I see exactly what's going on. You are just making all this up---sheer fabrication. And moreover, you are simply manipulating us and there is no reason why we really have to do all of this."

With a probing glance, Iron Man turned to Lucidity Man and said, "You see much of what is given to be in this world, but one thing you must not forget, the relationship is your own." And at that the Seaweed PSU began.

Most of the next 44 hours were spent by each of the colleagues in straining and sifting handful after handful after handful of seaweed in order to familiarize themselves with it. The entire Week II, Lucidity Man could be heard repeating to himself, "Green, green, green, green, green" And Emotionality Man's observation was equally profound as from his corner of the ship flowed forth "Slimy, slimy, slimy, slimy, slimy"

Yet after the last report at the closing plenary was presented, Iron Man stood up to give a gestalting statement of their work. The ship surrounding the Great Deck was decored in draping strands of seaweed and dark green symbols of The Great Turn. In this profound setting, Iron Man began his stirring summation. Each word exploded with power and the passion he displayed allowed the situation to burst with meaning. As Iron Man articulated the final significant implications and meaningful relationships of the PSU, Lucidity Man could contain himself no longer and burst out;

"Iron Man. Iron Man. Oh inventive Iron Man! You can't fool me--- because I see exactly what's going on. You are just brainwashing us so that we will decide our lives are significant. And as for all of your passion and excitement---it's nothing more than a role---only an act."

With a probing glance, Iron Man turned to Lucidity Man and said, "You see much of what is given to be in this world, but one thing you must not forget, the relationship is your own."

No sooner had Iron Man finished speaking than the wind picked up for the first time in 40 days and nights. As the movement of air became more violent, the sails filled and the ship sliced ahead through the sea. Yet suddenly a crashing sound was heard and in moments the ship was being ripped apart by a coral reef which lay hidden just beneath the surface by a veil of the slimy Seaweed of Sanctified Silence. Lucidity Man and Emotionality Man were both flung into the deep waters surrounding the hidden reef and soon disappeared beneath the waves as the slimy seaweed entangled them in its grasp.

Iron Man fell straight through the hull as the ship cracked open underneath him. Yet rather than sinking with the fragmented ship, Iron Man found himself standing in ankle-deep water atop a huge hunk of the dazzling and colorful Coral of Ceaseless Creativity. As the wind died down, the sea again became calm and Iron Man contemplated the endless and unchanging horizon which surrounded him on all sides. In silent awe he watched as the objectless sea and sky became one. Hopeful expectation filled his being---though he hoped for nothing and expected nothing.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed: "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."

IRON MEN HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO RUN

After Daily Office, Iron Man set out on his journey to The Land of Mystery. Once again, the Chicago Public Schools were celebrating their annual teacher's strike. The impact of this strike upon Symbolic Centrum was consistent with past years. Having both the school teachers of Base and the Emerging Generation back at home, the teachers were assigned to enable the care of the E.G. during the length of the strike. As well as caring for The Emerging Generation, a few teachers were also to be assigned out each day to join the picket lines at their respective schools. As the assignments for the first week of the strike were presented, Iron Man, one of the permeating school teachers, saw himself to be assigned Monday to a picket line.

Iron Man pushed open the heavy swinging front door and moved out into the morning. His plastic smile was immediately distorted into a twisted grimace as raging winds bearing sleet pelted the exposed flesh of his face. Finally the car full of permeators dropped Iron Man off in front of his school. In a frozen stupor Iron Man stood for a long time in unfeeling contemplation of the massive school building and the long picket line of shivering teachers which surrounded it. After several long moments, this state of contentless consciousness in Iron Man's burdened head was flooded with a stream of strange and discontinuous thoughts--- thoughts which Iron Man was surprised to hear his chaste and disciplined mind thinking. Ah, yes, for he could see all the possibilities stretched out before him; possibilities which enacted a strange mental gymnastics before his critical intelligence. For within the vision of the icy striking teachers, Iron Man could now see clearly that there was absolutely no reason for him to be here. Aside from the fact that there were already plenty of people to picket, there were no accountability structures to question his whereabouts should he mysteriously show up missing. Besides, the past quarter had been a rough and grueling endeavor and Iron Man could clearly see the rationale for a little discontinuity to counterbalance his inordinate self-expenditure on behalf of the globe. Indeed, what a marvelous day for a trip of discontinuity to Chicago's glorious downtown Loop.

Iron Man surprised even himself at how quickly he resolved any conflict of interests and found himself to be sitting on the subway train entering the downtown area.

Climbing a long set of stairs up to street-level, Iron Man was overcome by the plethora of glorious scenes and images which bombarded his consciousness upon emerging from the subterranean hole in the sidewalk: skyscrapers reaching into the clouds, flashing lights of all colors, lines of traffic rolling through the snow-laden streets, storefront signs luring unsuspecting consumers into their interior markets to be consumed themselves, as well as, the vast flowing throngs of people which moved along the crowded morning sidewalks.

In the midst of this explosion of images, Iron Man could strangely not seem to remember any of the initial plans or activities for which he had intended to use the morning. Yet his lack of immediate intentional resolution was soon made irrelevant as a relentless driving power gripped the threads of Iron Man's heart and mind and compelled him forward down the street and into a building filled with row after row after row of the most fascinating and challenging pin ball machines in the entire Midwest.

In raptured joy, Iron Man sunk his trembling fingers deep into his pockets and seized a nickle which he passionately thrust into the void of the eagerly awaiting coin slot. "KRRR - BAAM! KRRR - BAAM!" Iron Man shot each new ball, each devastating silvery sphere, into the maze of flippers and lights and holes and springs and coils and pictures and bounciness-bounciness-bounciness things and Iron Man's mind soared to heights unknown. Both the hours of the morning and Iron Man's supply of nickles passed rapidly away in a consuming fire of gleeful expenditure.

Suddenly, however, Iron Man's conscience was pierced through to its center by a sober and offensively-objective voice. "Wasted time, Iron Man---wasted time!"

"Wasted time,' what do you mean, 'wasted time,' retorted Iron Man. 'I really needed the discontinuity in order to keep me focussed on the mission.'" Yet even as Iron Man made his reply, an irksome uneasiness filled his being as the awe-ful voice came again.

"Wasted time, Iron Man---wasted time."

Iron Man turned to leave, stuffing eight pieces of bubble gum into his mouth as he made his way down the street.

Soon Iron Man approached a great theater covered with ornate works of art. An entrancing sign in bright orange and yellow letters over a red background made its invitation: "FANTASTIC FOLLIES OF SENSATIONAL SENSUALITY---- 10 flicks only \$1.00---- Unceasing Variety."

The coils of his brain grew numb as Iron Man sat through reel after reel---popping bubbles on his huge wad of gum and slapping the back of the chair in front of him in response to the more extraordinary scenes.

As Iron Man sat through the entire series for the third time, suddenly his conscience was pierced through to its center by a sober and offensively-objective voice. "Lost opportunity, Iron Man---lost opportunity!"

"Lost opportunity,' what do you mean, 'lost opportunity,' retorted Iron Man. "I really needed the imaginal explosion in order to keep my creativity aroused and on edge."

Yet even as he made his reply, an irksome uneasiness filled his being as the awe-ful voice came again. "Lost opportunity, Iron Man---lost opportunity."

Iron Man turned to leave and as he walked up the street he began thinking of all the things he would like to do if he had the time.

Iron Man walked and walked until finally he came to The John Hancock Building, a skyscraper towering high above the city. To get some perspective on his situation, Iron Man decided to take the elevator to the top and spend some time gazing over the city.

In that lofty perch, Iron Man was startled by how much of the city he could see. It looked as though it were nothing more than an intricate toy village which some imaginative child had put together. In a very real sense, it seemed to Iron Man that he could now see the entire world.

Understanding this, Iron Man fell into a trance-like state and began to explore the astounding visions which were now filling his head as he gazed upon this world. A profound awareness of all of his gifts and special abilities stretched out before his sight as Iron Man also reflected upon the powerful methods he had learned in the movement for dealing with this world. In the light of such realities, Iron Man was suddenly seized by ideas he had not experienced since childhood. He could see it all now. Perhaps he should become a professor and write books on educational methodology. From all he had learned as a movement pedagogue, Iron Man knew he could soon be rich. Or perhaps he should become a movie star. Being a first teacher with a boundless capacity for role playing and a voice that could sing ontologically, Iron Man was certain he could become a teenage idol in no time at all. Or perhaps he should enter politics. Hundreds of PSUs and assignment rationales had trained Iron Man well in the skills of manipulating the structural framework of society and its consensus-making process. It seemed to Iron Man that with proper resolve he could at least be President in a couple of years and probably even king---which would of course be an even more appropriate use of his talents.

But suddenly Iron Man's conscience was pierced through to its center by a sober and offensively-objective voice. "Impure thoughts, Iron Man---impure thoughts!"

"What do you mean, 'impure thoughts?'" retorted Iron Man. "I really need to think about all the other things I might be doing with my life for my own sake so that I can more self-consciously embrace that which I am actually assigned to do on behalf of others."

Yet even as he made his reply, an irksome uneasiness filled his being as the awe-ful voice came again. "Impure thoughts, Iron Man, impure thoughts."

Iron Man turned to leave. As he rode down the elevator, he stuck the earplug of his transistor radio into his ear and turned the knob up full volume. In moments his sensitized mind was being blissfully drugged with the sounds of a harsh, throbbing, rock beat.

Moving with the crowds of people, Iron Man plunged into an entrance to the subway. Reaching the bottom of the stairs, he was shocked to encounter The Last Fat Lady. Obviously in a despondent state, The Last

Fat Lady rushed up to Iron Man upon recognizing the famous movement first teacher. "OH, Iron Man, Iron Man," she pleaded. "Please please help me. I only have forty cents and need another nickle in order to get home to my six children who are there all alone. Please loan it to me so I can ride the subway in this freezing weather."

"What do you think I am," replied Iron Man indignantly, "some sort of sentimental bleeding heart liberal. You can just decide to live your life as one who showed up not having enough money for the CTA." With a demonic laugh, Iron Man pushed The Last Fat Lady aside and moved in line to buy his ticket home.

Suddenly, Iron Man's conscience was pierced through to its center by a sober and offensively-objective voice. "Mean actions, Iron Man---mean actions."

This time as the voice accused him Iron Man could offer no defense. He was humiliated beyond belief. Never before had he felt so small, wretched, and incomplete.

"I give up, I give up, I give up," cried Iron Man. "I don't know who you are but I cannot run from your voice anymore. You have me surrounded. I'm trapped! Just tell me who you are and then leave me alone."

"It is all very simple Iron Man. I am the Vexatious Voice of Omnipresent Otherness. But as for leaving you alone Iron Man, that I cannot do---because Iron Man---I am you."

As the train moved swiftly down the tracks Iron Man stared into the infinity outside his window and knew that, even if he rode the train forever, he could never escape the presence of the all-knowing voice.

The eyes of Iron Man then grew hard as he gazed intently into the deep mystery of life. He raised his hands toward the heavens in praise of his father God. And with a strong voice he proclaimed; "Iron Men Shall Build The Church."

Community: "We Shall Build It With Our Power."

Iron Man: "Amen."

Community: "Amen."