

Gene Marshall  
Style of Faith 3/13/72

...not what it's doing then but what it's going to be doing between now and then, or what it's operational emphasis is going to be over against that. I think maybe it would be helpful to back up and maybe take a little longer view in mind before we come back to those 20 years, for I've been struck as we've been facing these next 20 years that this turning point that we're trying to describe here is the turning point for a much larger period of time even than 20 years, and that very much larger time is impacting us as we try to think about it. One of the most crucial events that happened to me this quarter was ~~a~~ reading Richard Niebuhr's article "Toward a New Otherworldliness" and ~~why~~ that article was such an important event is ~~that~~ I want to ~~spend~~ spend just a few minutes on before we come back to this timeline. And it was this picture of history or how he related all of that issue of this world and that other world to history. It gave me kind of a three-level grasp after history. You've got this world on the bottom level, let's say, and then you've got the other world on the next level, and then up here you've got - use the word Christianity, or the issue of faith and unfaith. And made it very clear that the issue of Christianity, or the issue of other level - I meant world, didn't I - that the issue of faith or unfaith didn't have anything to do in the first instance with the condition that this world was in or the condition that our grasp after the other world was in, that both of these were temporal or historical in the sense of your participation in their experience, or man lives in temporality and man lives also in his participation in ~~time~~ eternity, and the way that a particular historical era participates in both of those or fails to participate in ~~either~~ one of them, is the situation in which you have to be a person of faith, or a person of unfaith. No, his picture of unfaith went something like this. When Christianity came on the scene both worlds were intact, both in the Hebraic form ~~and~~ of that and in the Greek form of that. And then there was a period of Christian history in which the temporal world had fallen out of tact, so to speak. And the problem of the world was the attempt to live only in the other world and not live in this world. And then we got the balance restored again for the next period of Christian

history, and then we have a period of Christian history today in which man has been attempting to live in this world without the other world. There's only been two periods in all of Christian history, he said, when man did not live in a time when humanness had grasped its ~~own~~ true duality, and that was in the middle ages here, I guess sometime after the fall of Rome and in our time, in which we have lost a grasp of the other world. Here they had lost the grasp of this world., at least as anything that was authentic. And then he went on to say that Christ brings healing to both worlds. That the job of the Christian faith is to heal this world, or renew this world and also to heal the other world. Reminds me a little of

Kazantzakis, washing out the abyss or something like that. Our job as the Christian church is to wash out the abyss, and to clean this world too. ~~xxxxxx~~ Or another way to put that same point, that this world and the other world have to do with the creation, or they have to do with the nature of man. Man, in his nature, participates in what we mean by both of these, and both of them must be intentionally recreated, or reappropriated, or re-related to by man in every era of his history. Another thing he reinforced is that this other world has to do with the whole problem of religion and religion is, so to speak, a matter of having to do with the way in which in this world you attempt to be present to the other. Christianity is not a religion, and it seems to me that we need to keep getting that said over and over in a variety of ways, that rediscovering the ~~xxxx~~ other world has nothing whatsoever to do with ~~xxxxxx~~ Christianity. Christianity is not a religion, Christianity has nothing to do with the other world. Man, if he's a man of faith, has to live his life, and his life is otherworldly, and he must live his otherworldly life. And his life is this worldly, and so he must live his thisworldly life. And Christianity has to do with ~~xxxxxx~~ with living the conditions of this world and the other world as they're given to you, and reconstructing those conditions as you're called on to reconstruct them. You might say Benedict here, who lived in this period. He woke up in a time when this world was in sad disrepair, was threatened with actual cultural doom, while people leave off for ecstatic experiences and in that context it really strikes a hard note that Benedict's hard thesis or rule

had to do with adding to contemplation and prayer, study and work. Our monks not only contemplate and pray, they study and work, he said. That's interesting, because in one respect Benedict was a self-respecting ascetic who went temporal if you like. He put his contemplatives to hoeing potatoes and copying scripture. He began a reconstruction of the temporal ~~ground~~ <sup>realm</sup>. Now we're interestingly enough in exactly the opposite situation. I'll put you and me here opposite Benedict. We're in exactly the opposite situation. We have to begin as radically secular self-respectable secular men whose job is to rebuild the other world, or rebuild man's participation or grasp in the other world. Let me read to you the opening paragraph of this Richard Niebuhr article - it's a poem and it's a poem worthy of reading out loud even again. "Man lives in two worlds, and when he tries to make his home in one alone, something goes wrong with him. Our race, like that of the migratory birds, cannot live and perform all of its functions in one climate. but must undertake a periodic flight to another homeland. Not only Christianity but every wise understanding of man in his world and even primitive custom produced by trial and error recognize the duality of the human environment, and the need for seasonal journeys from this world to another. Oriental wisdom offers its own account of the here and the there and ~~etc~~ of the soul's transmigration. In the West Greek theory on the one hand and Hebraic vision on the other have given men the understanding of the two regions in which they must dwell as well as of the route which leads them from one to the other. In East and West religious institutions, more or less primitive, more or less guided by revelation and reason, remind men of another land to which they must journey in life and in death, and seek to direct their going out and their coming in of the soul"

Now isn't that a poem. "Now seek to direct the going out and the coming in of the soul" How you get some picture of two realms that allow you to relate all your fantastic experience to them. I would suggest that in the data we were getting out this morning (and because I was anticipating this afternoon I was thinking about that)

We were revealing that this world is not enough, that ~~3~~ every sensitive spirit in the world knows that you cannot disdain radical engagement in this world without the other world in relationship to which that engagement comes into being. Or put another way, RADICAL engagement in this world is in fact the presence of the other world. There's not passion that transcends the present state of things unless the eternal has broken into your life. I would suggest that when we're ~~xx~~ intrigued with socially engaged people, when we <sup>feel</sup> ~~feel~~ threatened by people who are able to be socially engaged, or feel intrigued by people who are able to be absurdly socially engaged we are threatened and intrigued because we see in them a ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ sense of the eternal. We see manifested in their absurd behavior, the other world. And there's no earthly reason for being a great cop. That is literally true. There is no earthly reason for being a great earthly anything, so the word of paradox here that Niebuhr spells out real carefully in this article, that where there is not radical commitment to the other world there is no radical commitment to this world either. and therefore the institutions and patterns of life here disintegrate. The temporal order is not enough, and the temporal order cannot be sustained save man is making his migrations into the eternal and back again. And you can't seek the eternal for the sake of the temporal, ~~xx~~ you have to seek it for its own sake as part of the nature of man, as the other half of humanness itself. Then the temporal can be renewed as part of the working dynamic of history. Now I'd suggest that this is going to give us a whole new way of looking and and interpreting history. We were talking the other day about China and ohboy how China has impacted people's imagination these days. And came up with this little spin that sort of rocked me, that if you had to live primarily in the temporal as your boundary, then China as having decided for corporateness over against the individualism of the United States, Europe and so forth, probably has made the wiser choice. But the weakness of both China and the USofA/Europe complex is that neither of them have an adequate recovery of the other world, both of them are going to be threatened with disintegration,

Because the boundary of their imagination is too limited to the temporality of man. And that little spin being an insight into the possible role of India in human history.

India for good or for ill, has throughout history been primarily dedicated to the other world. That's the gift of ~~it~~ its culture. Now it's in a state of awful decay, but the only hope of ~~the~~ India coming out of awful decay is a rediscovery of the other world, a new reappropriation of the other world, and therefore a new appropriation of its heritage or grandeur in that dimension. And if India was recovered in that dimension, it would, of course, be the salvation of China. China couldn't possibly avoid being infused with spirituality from India. Couldn't avoid it. As a matter of fact, that's what's happened throughout all of history, think about that. Buddhism went from India to China once before and brought depth to the Chinese culture at that time. So again, if India were to come off it would have the possibility of not only bringing depth to the whole world but bringing depth to that crucial dimension of China, and almost unavoidably.

Well, that may or may not be right in the particular, but that kind of spinning about this world and the other world relative to what's going on in history is why ~~when~~ reading this paper has just broken open for me something brand new in the way of organizing my observation. Still, how do you get a picture of these two realms to relate to. I'm going to come back to the next 20 years, but I think a little more time here might help us. I'm not really saying anything that you don't already know, but I think finding new ways to organize your mind is helpful even if these aren't finally the ones that remain. I was interested in Wes's image at dinner today of the center or the hurricane or the storm around about, and you think about the other world as that center, then that storm is round about, and beyond the storm in another kind of a quiet is this world. I was reading a science fiction short story the other day, about a family that was on a planet that had no animal life, and they kept eating the things that ~~it~~ were there, and the things they were eating wouldn't sustain animal life. They would only sustain plant life, and so the story ended up to be the story of how these three-member family turned into plants, and

the glory and the wonder and peace of turning into a tree. Well, I don't know if that story interested you or not, but it interested me. Well there's a sort of peace in this world out here too, where you just sort of turn into a tree, but the storm here in between is the storm of consciousness, it's the storm of spirit and spirituality is relationship between the other world and the tree and everything else that is in this world. Well, this helped me to get a new slope on Soren Kierkegaard's categories. He says that man is a relationship between the eternal and the temporal. Man is a relationship between the infinite and the finite. Man is the relationship between necessity and sheer freedom. But so understood you don't just have man, he says. Man is this relationship which is conscious of itself and which relates to itself. Or man is in that in his relationship which is conscious of being that relationship, and therefore can consciously, if you like, migrate back and forth between this world and the other. Now what it means to be man of faith by the Kierkegaardian <sup>being</sup> ~~existential~~ formula is to be willing to be this ~~xxx~~ who migrates back and forth between this world and the other, and what you mean by despair is unwilling to be this being which migrates back and forth between this world and the other, and therefore lives in the storm of consciousness that goes on in between. Another great image of Kierkegaard that has always had power for me beyond any way of describing it was where he says when you are willing to be this relationship which relates itself to itself, then you are grounded transparently in the power that constitutes the whole relationship, and that got something said to me which is the same thing as this whole thing here, that when I am talking about God I'm talking about that which created this world and the other world, and the possibility of migration between the two and the possibility of relating to the two, and therefore of relating to that which created this world and the other world, and suddenly that recovered the first verse of scripture in the Bible: in the beginning God created the otherworld and this world. You remember that verse of scripture. And he took

man up out of the dust of this world and blew into his being the breath of the other. And set him before himself as...anyway there is a lot of work you could do on this. But that got said to me ~~whatsoever~~ in a way that never got said before how utterly contentless Christian faith is, even whatever content you give the other world is not the content of Christian Faith. Christian faith has no content. It's that decision to <sup>be</sup> <sup>ed</sup> ground/transparently in that power that constitutes whatever in the hell content is constituted, either the content of the other world, or the content of this world, or the content of your spirituality in trying to relate to the two of them. All that content is just sheer humanness, and faith, being willingness to be related to that. Now that has deeply to do with analyzing where we are right now. Now let me draw quickly, the same picture drawn another way. The RS-1 course had to do with God Christ and the Holy Spirit. And all three of those categories are contentless. They had to do with this power here, they had to do the business of faith or unfaith. This world and the other world both have to do with content. They have to do with the creation. And if you want to put it this way, put this world over here in this triangle, and the other ~~in~~ world over here. This is the dynamic of consciousness. This whole thing has to do with consciousness. And we're working on our new course and our new 30 years, we're working over against our recovery of the faith. The other way you can put that is how do you embody ~~the dynamic of~~ being a man of ~~with~~ in the dynamics of consciousness, in the dynamics of living in this world, in the dynamics of living in the other world, and so we're deeply concerned in what the style of faith looks like. Now what the style of faith looks ~~like~~ when it takes on form in this world, what the style of faith looks like when it takes on form in the reappropriation of the ~~the~~ other world, and of course since all that we ~~mean~~ mean by the style of faith is being man as man really is willingly you're also talking about the style of humanness itself. Now as we've been struggling to get ahold of how it is that man is flaking out of being the person of faith in this particular moment, this little analysis of gnosticism and stoicism has been

very very very helpful, and it has occurred to me now why it has been so helpful. What the stoic is is he's a reduction of living for this world, and what the gnostic is is he's a reduction of living for the other world, and Benedict he has his primary problem with gnosticism with a little stoicism thrown in. We're going to have our primary problem with stoicism, if you like, with a little gnosticism thrown in. It's really only the kooks as you and I run into them in our houses and academies who are thoroughgoing gnostics, and we always run into those gnostic kooks who have been in insane asylums and have tried to commit suicide three times and are thoroughgoing gnostics. But it's sort of like that is the kook dimension of our being, the gnostic dimension, and the really upstanding man of our time comes off on the stoic pole. So that's ~~the dimension~~ where our main battle is going to be. Let me just say a few words of reflection out of our struggles this quarter to try to sort of say what kind of reduction these two reductions are. Gnosticism and stoicism, I mean. Stoicism (this is a little chart made out of the data of our reflecting back over the quarter/ after we dealt with spirit movement beings across this nation) The stoic is clear that life has clear limits. This is his reduction~~im~~ of God, ~~because~~ God is reduced to harsh limits and life has harsh limits. He's clear that all demands are relative. He's very clear that / all demands are relative. Even approach him with any sense that there's something that has to be done period, and he thinks your're crazy. He's concerned with the fate and tragedy and the grander too of this world, and under the Christ pole here, how does he reduce it. One way he gets the word said is there ~~is~~ no truth. You have to watch real carefully someone who says there is no Messiah. Ninety percent of the time what they mean these days is another gospel than ours. Another way the y get this said is my life is okay. It's not my life is a shambles of sin but ~~maxima~~ despite that I'm received. No. Not that at all. It's my life is okay is the word. Or maybe it comes off as I can make it. I mean life is tough and harsh and stormy, but I can be an iron man. The anxieties down underneath this, mind you, and to talk

about these anxieties is also to illuminate them. There's a great anxiety about being shown up a fool. There's a great anxiety of inauthentic responses. There's a great anxiety of personal collapse too. So you find thoroughgoing stoics who come in with the philosophy of life that they can make it, who have collapsed 73 times giving their philosophy of life a slight trial and so they are looking for a word of possibility. And here under the holy spirit part let's put genteel (there must be a better way to spell genteel - that looks better, I started to put gentile up there and I realized...gentile endurance) Genteel endurance. Another way to talk about genteel endurance is that they don't like anger. A little like, you know, doesn't like horses. Doesn't like anger. Doesn't like absolute commitment of any sort, and absolute commitments is what you get angry over. I think this is a very profound kind of thing. We talked this noon about violence, and the guy who isn't willing to get violent about anything is the one I'm talking about here. There's sort of a sellout to peace, very sophisticated one, reconciliation, and love. Where love comes on very human terms. There must be some way to live that presupposes some kind of moral order here that presupposes peace and reconciliation and love. The very idea that life is put together violent is just <sup>almost</sup> beyond belief. That the way life is is a violent ~~xxx~~ dialogue between this world and the other world to start with and therefore violent dialogue between ~~everything~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ single human being on it. That is the way life is. That's harsh for the third rank stoic to grasp. Now the gnostic here, quickly, under God. It comes like missionless experience of the AWE. whoopee, sort of a let's get beyond the mundane, or another great image, let's / get ourselves an uncruddy jag. That somehow the experience of God, as John Baggett said it the other day, it's a triple orgasm of awe. It's being transported into something absolutely wonderful. The hate, in other words, of the whole idea that God is to be experienced in pencil sharpeners, mimeograph machines, and chalk dust, and boys and girls and cruddy things like that. Although there are certain dimensions of boys and girls that are awesome. Lucid insights

~~xxxxxxx~~ is what the word is all about, something ~~xx~~ like that, or the Christ word, or some reduction of the Christ word always comes as some off-cult experience, anyway something in that direction. And here in the reduction of the holy spirit sort of a superman untouchability, nobody can get to me. And you know we're really most interested in the style dimension of this, so that you believe that after you've been saved you'll never again feel despair, ~~xxxx~~ is the gospel message they try to put out here. Or there's no more agony of decisions. Your decisions are sort of made automatically now. Or your guilt is gone. Or your tension is gone. You're in a state of grace in which there's no more tension, no more guilt, no more agony and no more despair. Just sort of automatic living. Now we were doing a little spin conversation on the Garden of Gethsemane when this thing really got clear. I noticed there were several stoics in the room. They were absolutely certain that Jesus in the Garden was not feeling real agony. Or that the agony that he was feeling in the garden was his unfaith. That his being desperately depressed before the decision he had to make was some kind of unchastity, something wrong with that man that he was desperately depressed. AND to get it said to those people that that was life, that that was the authentic life, to come upon yourself as desperately depressed, and that what it meant to be a man of faith was just to stay awake through the Garden of Gethsemane and agonize your agony. To agonize your agony on through to the decision. That's what it meant to be a man of faith. Well, that's a little bit too cnddy, a little bit too mundane, a little bit too un-occult. It's getting too far into the grime of history. Well, something like this is beginning to get a way of feeling after the way people are feeling after these things in our particular moment in history. Underneath some of these things seem to be the same questions. I thought I'd ask the question what's underneath this, and this, and this and they are the same questions. What is the way life really is? That's the question underneath the question. Usually they ask the question in a way that rings false. Show me the way, I want to know the way. But they've really foggad up what you've

already shown them. But underneath, thier unwillingness to know is the question what is the way life really is. If you're going to live life the way life really is then what is the way life really is? Or this is the best question we came up with: How can I not miss the dance that life really is? How can I not miss the dance that life really is? Life as it is is a dance, and what's that's saying - how can I not miss the dance that life really is-is ~~xxxxxxx~~ working over the sort of false dance that the stoic is trying to bring off. I mean, he really wants to dance but he doesn't think there is going to be any dance and therefore the way you dance to life is to not let yourself be deceived by any false dance. The gnostic here is always trying to whomp up a dance and thosewhomped up dances, those boisterous dances are a good illustration of this concern here. Underneath this guy is saying ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ life will never dance, that it's not supposed to dance, anybody is dancing there's something wrong with them. You remember the story of Lucy when the dog comes dancing across the stage and she says STOP DANCING. That sort of is a stoic response to it. You're not supposed to be dancing. This is a stoic time. But over here, the gnostic is always finding some way ~~to~~ to dance. He's jumping up into the second story somewhere to make a dance out of life where there is no ~~life~~ dance or the phony dance. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ A good question, how can I not miss the dance that life really is, and this "not miss" that's a powerful image, one of the passages in Saint John have really been powerful ones where the disciples say "where is the way? Where is the way?" He says "Someone's going to prepare you" and Peter leans over and says "Ask him who it is" and so John leans over and says "Who is it?" You know, this kind of anxiety going all the way through the gospels "What am I going to miss? What am I going to miss?" And then the third one here, what is the true demand on my life? All three of these, that's the last thing you want to know. What is the true demand? What is the authentic demand that, upon my life? Now faith is a forseeing of these questions head on. It's plowing in to getting really clear on this world, getting clear on the other ~~with~~ world, getting

clear on what a demon really looks like , getting clear on the real dance that life is and participating in it - and how to put on that kind of a style. It's obviously clear ~~xx~~ out of a whole series last quarter that obedience chart among the charts is the place where the spread in participating in life is most threatening. But the place where the fascination knows no bounds is here in meditation. And I've been trying to get ahold of just why that's true. I know this, that the struggle with Jesus over against Satan is just an intriguing struggle, and an intriguing kind of ~~xx~~ image. What does it mean to have a meditative council. What does it mean to have Jesus as the king of it? Of your meditative council. What does it mean to know who your enemy really is? And underneath that to work with ~~al~~ mankind as meditative friends, that all of mankind are judged and to whatever extent they participate in the hero they are things on your council. Or this judgement placed on their lives makes ~~you think about it with them~~ them think because it tells ~~them~~ where their guide is out to act or where their guide is out not to act, or this figure and their various wiles give you a way of <sup>interpreting</sup> ~~knowing~~ all of mankind and somehow getting real clear on what Jesus looks like and the picture, and what Satan looks like in the picture, allows you to participate in <sup>having</sup> all mankind ~~to have you~~ be your friend, all mankind be your guide in the living of unity, Deep fascination here. Obedience is just sheer terror. I think I'm going to end this spin by reading a little out of this article here on the Prophets. The Old Testament Prophets are a place where this business of radical obligation to God, ontological obligation transcends all moral obligations, breaks through, and that's where people are terrified about. If they could make obedience something small like doing what the spirit movement rule book says or something, they would be delighted. But it's that radical obedience, that radical ontological obedience that's the horrifying one. I'm going to read this little paragraph and then we'll go back and take a look at the next 20 years. I think it's only inside of some kind of an awareness of where ~~people are~~ human beings are doubling in the deepsof the spirit this

quarter and last quarter, working out of sensitivity that we can begin to sense after the future. Here it is, listen to this paragraph. "In their own personal life" that is in the prophets own personal life "they" experienced this power, terrifyingly as the radical overthrow of everything that had held good for them hitherto. An experience of which the accounts ~~of~~ of their calling are excellent testimony. There is not one of them that did not receive this new certainty of God in such a way that the whole ~~xxxxxx~~ previous pattern of his life, the thought and plans by which he had up to now regulated the world, was not left and replaced and replaced by a might divine imperative, obliging him to undertake something which hitherto he had not even considered a possibility. I think that's a very crucial line. That every way of operating that he had in the past had been smashed. That's how the prophets talked about that experience. And now he's lost in a situation where he's forced to do something ~~xxxx~~ which he has not ~~xxxxxx~~ even considered a possibility like building a new ~~xx~~ flat for the other world, or something. And the same revolutionary forces which they saw in their own lives they also realized were in the lives of their neighbor. This terrible divine power, driving with irresistable impetus the totally differently constituted reality of the empirical world and holding the empirical world out of its clasp, ~~the~~ predictions of the end of a nation of people, obviously willed by declarations of doom which in the first instance there was no reason given, all ~~xxxx~~ in the same dominating conviction that the present order is menaced at its very roots by the breaking in of a power hostile to it which means that the prophets can only conceive of the side of the divine reality that ~~xxxx~~ <sup>they</sup> be held as one that was driving onward in mighty events, aiming at the upheaval of all the different reality, encasing both ~~xxx~~ man and his world in their titanic suffocation, for these men all ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>descriptive</sup> phrases tried to imprison God in the here and the now and to declare his sovereignty over the world as ~~xxxx~~ static and inherently stable were bound to appear inadequate. For them it was a matter not of the place of

the eternal divine ordinance in the life of men and of nations but of a head on collision between the divine reality and the empirical world, the very world itself was being imperilled by a power completely independent of it and therefore unrestricted in its authority over it" That's the first paragraph of the article, and the article goes on, and you can just listen to phrases like that and get a feel of where the man of faith is experiencing his dread, is experiencing the threat, the whole idea of being in history over against the God of History, and that's really what we're talking about. YOU try to think at least about the next 20 years. What does it mean to be over against the head on collision that the mighty actor in history has prepared for us to be in, and to respond to. Maybe we might just start there with just puttin' down the three ways...