

THE TACTICAL SYSTEM AS RADICAL INCARNATION					
Internalization of the Gospel: "I AM"		Tactical System: standing before dimensions of life's paradox			
		GLOBAL/ LOCAL	IRRATIONAL/ RATIONAL	CORPORATE/ SOLITARY	SPIRIT/ TACTICS
1	- 8	9 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 17
					19 - 21

1. This past year the classical hymn, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way", has begun to powerfully address me. It's been helpful to realize that there have been others in history like us, with similar struggles.

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace;
 Behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
 The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain;
 God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.

2. Our fathers were clear that there was something going on in life besides life itself and besides history; that somehow history was a constant struggle with destiny, with life, with death, with the unknown, with that which is not me. And I guess that's where you and I show up. In the midst of showing up in life as it is, you and I show up having to deal with particular chunks of life, having to deal with God the Father in the midst of life. We always have to be the ones who forge out the implications, the embodiment of deciding to stand before life, before God the father in an incredibly complex, terrifying and particular situation.

3. What I've had to struggle with as I've been thrashed by the scriptures, I mean thrashed by the scriptures, is the Gospel of John, and it also shows up in Matthew, Mark and Luke. It's the "I Am" passages. That's where you get it. There's no escape. That old thing we used last year is the Luke passage where he walks on stage and says "I'm it," and closes the book. He says a word or two about the implications of that for them and they start to throw him off the ridge. He gets it said in Luke.

4. I guess all that is to say is that, for me, the church has been renewed. And that's especially offensive for me. I've been singing around here: "The Church of God has been renewed. Hallelujah!" It has been renewed. Have you been to my church lately? Have you been in our metro? Or have you been in my home? How can you talk about it having been renewed?
5. I guess for me the only way to talk about that helpfully is to get some connection to that kind of paradoxical development, which is to say that grace is prevenient. Does that help? That is to say, that the Word is--and always was in history. It was before it was even possible for me to respond to it. It is not until I get that said to myself that I have even the possibility of making a new response to life. Until I get clear that I AM the Word I'm not trying to be asinine or cute. I'm not trying to be, though I could very well be that and start doing something other than seeing clearly that that's the only way that you ever come off, that that's the only way the Word ever comes off is by the incarnation of that Word. It never happens in any man's life save he has to come to terms with you and with that which you hold before you, that you embody, that encases you, that permeates your bones; I am the Word.
6. More offensive than that, I am the Church. I am the local church experiment. Try that one on for a minute. I guess what we've discovered more than anything else this quarter, for me, in a context of what John is saying here, is that we are one, in the wild diversity among us, we are one. Because in the midst of this experiment, man has decided to be the church, to be the one church, to be the revolutionary, the renewed church. To be the local church experiment. Isn't that offensive. When you've connected your theology with your life?
7. Where you are the church is in the local church experiment. I'd like to believe otherwise for a moment. In addition to all the great miracle stories coming from across the country, when you begin to look at all the hard, cold data in the midst of those stories, and begin to kind of blow the smoke aside; you and I see, in the midst of the stories, in the midst of the things that are happening, the story, the dance that is death, that is the unresurrected men and women in the midst of the resurrection, these resurrected men and women. You and I have eyes to see what we've never before had eyes to see. We can see how much that there really is in that local congregation, in the laity, in our own lives. At the same time, we see the radical leaps and jumps across the gaps of the gates of hell into new life and into the heavenly style. That is the style that is the revolutionary style. I am the church and, of course, in the midst of that, I am the world.
8. Whatever I mean, or whatever anybody in this time means by the world, I am it. I am the embodiment of the new social vehicle. Whatever the next thousand years is going to look like, you look at me and you see it being acted out in history. You look at me, no where else. Or if you want to look at what it is to be an authentic human being, look nowhere else. You and I must do that kind of radical snapping of our necks to make that internalization of the Gospel, of the incarnational Word. That is all that life is about, that the local church experiment is about. To have that kind of radical self-hood erupt in your life and cast you into the midst of civilization. And that, for me, is who we are. And it's in that context of the Gospel in and through the Body of Christ in the midst of this world that we can ever at all talk about the local church experiment and in the midst of that doing tertiary actualization, supplementary after supplementary after supplementary, in the context of the revolution.

9. We want to talk about the basic built-in values on which the tactical system or the actualizing process particularly are constructed or have at the center of them. These values have to be expressed in terms of polarities: global/ local, ~~irrational~~/rational, corporate, solitary, and spirit/tactics.

10. Some of you have been ~~geing~~ me around here lately, "Well, how's it going, Cramer?" You know, they're asking about life in general, but also, "What do you know?" That's kind of the other side of "How's it going?" How tangential our colleagues have become around a place like this, but what do I know? I know one thing, that is that I know a lot more than I'd like to know. How is it that you stand in that volcano that is yours alone, that has your name on it? You alone can look into the fiery furnace or the eruptions there and understand at all concretely what that is, and live. What do I know? What I know about doing tactics is that there's no accuracy to the value save you hold before you the fundamental life paradox in the various dimensions that are there. You and I have to play wildly to keep ourselves loose of the incredible perversions of liberalism or the kind of thing where you translate tactics into some kind of program and think if we just get the right kind of program going out there we'll have done something in the local church. Or some kind of cynicism in which we refuse to turn from the despair that we just love to be trapped in and hide behind and not finally decide to dance out there, to step beyond the gap of the unknown and be the Word in History that is always an event in any man's life.

11. GLOBAL/LOCAL

First, of all, you can only talk about global/local. These are not new but they get tucked down a little differently, a little more concretely in terms of the experiment. We always start with the global. However it is you get that said to yourself, you haven't a chance of making it more than five minutes if you even once pull out of that context. I mean, I don't want to make God and the globe synonymous, but it's there somehow pointing the things relative to you, that is, it is pointing beyond me to that which I stand before, the army of hosts of colleagues across the globe. But it's not simply that, it points to the fact that I AM the globe. How do I get that rehearsed to myself that I am the globe, I am the new church across the globe, I am the local church in Calcutta? I am just as much the local church in Calcutta, as I am the local church in Richfield, Washington, Houston, Texas, or wherever it is that I showed up in history. That is the fundamental value that permeates this entire system. That is what releases spirit when you shove it over against the local, I am just a local pastor or I am just a layman. That "I am just" part of that is only possible to pull out of there when you get clear that I am the global. To talk about the comprehensive is another way to talk about the global; that the only thing I am doing in Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Boston or Montreal, is creating the sign that is going to transform the imagination of every man who is alive on this planet. I am creating the signal that will be sent across this globe which will throw other men into radical shock at the point of their decision to crawl into their despair. It will deal with their tendency to just sit there and die of suffocation in their own slobbering and their own sickness--as you and I at times prefer to do--which is to commit suicide. Blasting that open with a concrete sign in the midst of this globe means that the church has been renewed. You want to see it? You walk over and look at this one, at the Lord's transformed community that I have been sent into as his revolutionary servant.

12. The global in the local. I am also the local pastor, I am the local layman. Nothing happens at that level save there is just one network of local churches. I

am clear about that. You have heard the story before. Our colleague Bishop Joshi over in Bombay or just a local pastor here, to him I am the global, I am the symbol of the global. The fact of the symbol of the global means that when you hear a story about Cleveland or Los Angeles, it blows your imagination just like when I find out that that local pastor in the midst of Bombay has raised up a sign, and that blows my imagination. It is the global-local dynamic that is built into the tactical system.

13. That is why you always start at the comprehensive. That is why you always start with asking what is happening in the midst of the twentieth-century, that I bump into every day in my parish and that I see in the midst of my global grid. What I am experiencing in the city, or the suburbs or exurban part of this planet, is just precisely the paralysis, the battle that everyone is facing. As Toffler says in Future Shock, no man escapes it. I know that. To use that image, I know that every man is almost to the point of collapse from the paralysis of seeing the future and its impingement upon him. Now, making it does not have to do with money but with the capacity to face the future and somehow deal internally with the shock that comes from that to move into the future. That is one set of values there. It always comes down in terms of my doing the gridding and doing the problematting, and doing the analysis of the spirit of my congregation, and so on. Every man has to do that discerning the contradictions in my situation that hold me before how this congregation is participating in the ongoing struggle of man in the twentieth century on the planet earth.

14. RATIONAL/IRRATIONAL

Secondly, it is rational, and it is spontaneous or irrational. It is explosive. But doing tactics is using your rationality which you have a gift for that no other part of this planet has. You use that to the finest degree in analyzing and discerning and getting your mind around and deciding where you need to move. At the same time, you know that when you plug in tertiaries into that local congregation, all you are out to do finally is just to cause explosions. It is like the electronic grid image. People keep saying, "What is going on in this congregation?" and they look around for something to happen and nothing happens. It is like a church up there in Portland, Maine where the pastor said, "Things are going on in this congregation, it's kind of rocking. The congregation looks around at this little group that is called the cadre and asks, 'What about this group? Why don't they do something? They just meet every Wednesday night for hours.' But all the while everything is just going on in that congregation, decorating and short courses, and song and contexts. 'But what about that group, Why don't they do something?'" It's the electronic grid. You push 12 buttons this week, and 12 next week and so on, and along with that go the supplementaries. People have no way to escape the bombardment of possibilities that hits them at every point in their congregational life. In my old programmatic days, we used to have one great big program a quarter and people could just say, "Look at what Cramer did." Or, "Look what we pulled off this quarter, one big event. We have really done something." Renewal is the little things; it is the tactics, not the events.

15. I don't know how you do accountability around your galaxy, but you often get in the process of bunching tertiaries on a particular event. You take several tertiaries and you say "Aha! There is an event." Then you get five, ten, twenty, even the whole tactic, all fall into one big event. Do you ask, "Did the event come off?" That is not the question. "Did people get turned on?" The guy that asked that question is going to be shot right in front of you. The only question you ask is: "Did he do Tertiaries 472, 376 and so on?" You understand that? Cramer with

all his big events. It seems he can go out and do anything, but what do you have with all his events when everybody goes away? If you haven't hit about 85% of their consciousness and done a total job of reformulating the interior life, then that event is just a lot of noise. Did you do tertiary 376? That is all I am interested in. Did you get that short course in? Did you get that decor on the wall? Did you get that song sung? Did you get that man talked to about what he needs to say? Did you get that man talked to about how to get that structure? That is what I want to know. Then, finally, they have been reprogrammed; they have been released to live in their world, in the Word. Now sure, it would be great once in a while at least to have a little bit of noise to make you think something is happening anyway. It is rational and at the same time irrational and explosive. It is when you intersect those two, when you intersect the irrational with utter rationality, twelve tertiaries a week and all the supplementaries in the midst of those, that you have authentic happening. That is when life comes into people, allowing them to live, not just get excited because they heard a little sermon or short course, but somehow their life has been changed, totally.

16. CORPORATE/SOLITARY

Tertiary actualization is corporate, but entirely solitary. That doesn't get it said, but let me talk a bit about this. This experiment with doing tactics is a corporate activity. One of the demons that flailed us severely in my galaxy experience was the demon of everybody doing something. You just kind of read off the list and said go off and do these. And you would get to the end of the sodality with a time line and nobody had any image of what anybody else was doing except that they had an assignment. That is fine, something is happening, but that is nothing unless you sit back and see all that is happening in that week corporately. Then you begin to connect your own self-consciousness, your own spirit passion, into that so that you stand and watch. You begin to care for what is going on, to feel the pulsation as shots of new life are given in there, then that tactic happens. And that is one of the struggles this quarter. You get so busy with systems tertiary objectives, tertiary inclusive objectives, and modified supplementaries, that by the time you get through you have no corporate sense of what you have decided to pull off that week, no sense of the drama that you are as a body. It is the galactic consciousness that finally allows you to live in the radical particularity of having to get out of the sack at 5:00 in the morning and get your short course done in time to go to work.

17. Solitary. I don't know if you have had yourself shoved a bit there recently. Oh, it is like you show up at a tactic meeting and you have all the tertiary actualization sheets filled in and you have your timeline all worked out and everybody is all ready to fire off. It is like, you could walk out the front door, climb in your car and drive around the block for 7 days and come back. It's like you never hit the ground. You built great models but didn't have time to actualize them. You didn't make it to the meeting, had a flat tire, couldn't get out of bed. I mean to tell you if you haven't experienced radical solitariness, I don't know what you have experienced. These tactics are precisely that kind of collision between those two poles of life. You see you haven't got a chance for one day doing the tactical system without your colleagues standing there to kick you with the Word, or pronounce the absolution. In one galaxy, one man began to wind down and got so he couldn't get out of bed. He decided that he wasn't going to come to a Week II galaxy council. But in the middle of the night everybody got together and went out there and the next morning when he was supposed to get out of bed, they were sitting around his table. "Let's sit down and talk. What's going on? Oh, you have the death wish, so have I. Would you like to pull a revolver out at this moment, pass it around the table and see how many would pull the trigger? Right?"

18. But that's not right. I care for you, not because you are something, but because you are a colleague of mine. I don't know what it is going to take, but finally, life is nowhere else but in the church. There is no life outside the Word of Jesus. There is no other life in this world, than the one you have; I mean your local congregation. That's right. And so it is the process of doing the tertiary that you have solitary tertiaries; you just have raw individual hunks of happening there. Every month. Bang, bang, bang, it is the old Gatling gun going on all night long. One shot after another, one tactic after another, sprayed across the congregation, across your parish, across your net. Radically solitary chunks of life and death. It is because of the tactical system that you can stand back and know why you are firing that thing and what direction you are aiming. It's the kind of model that's global, that's comprehensive, that's rational, that's corporate. That is, it helps you to see the beyond where you would like not to see, to somehow get the corporate wisdom about where it is you fire your life and enable your colleagues to do the job of transforming matter into spirit, of raising up men from the dead.

19. SPIRIT/TACTICS

Finally, it is spirit and tactics. I know something happens in my life and in history when I connect my memory, my life experiences, myselfhood and my creativity, to the web of human consciousness. That is all that is. You let that net drop down over your consciousness and you begin to see things break loose, you begin to see things that you never could see before. You have seen those big chandeliers in hotels that have little squares of glass on them. It is as if they are inverted. You walk into one and see all the comfort, all the authenticity, all the life that there is to see--to the bottom. But then you blink your eyes and you look again and it is a window into reality, into the greatness of humanness, into the greatness of the planet earth, into the greatness of the journey, into the incredible complexity, and richness of cruciformity. It is being the one who knows that he only has one thing to do and that is to die--and that is the painful burden of the particular situation that he has. That is what spirit is about. It is allowing you to reach into the deeps of your own life and pull out that cancerous root of cynicism, that chunk of despair that you like to live behind or in and be trapped by. It pulls out that chunk of romanticism, that chunk of spirit blindness that prohibits you from seeing out that side of your eye, or seeing that person's humanness or seeing that possibility. Just pull those roots out and expose those to the Word, to the burning, refining fire of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then you have the capacity to look into any man's eye and get the radical, life-giving no and yes said to his life.

20. That's what tactics are about. That is what it means to do the tactics. You have all of those little mirrors, or all those windows, to look into reality and to begin to move into those and to being to open one of those up and and all of sudden you have got a chunk of reality just opened out into life. It is then that you are called to shove into those arenas the life-giving breath of the Word. That is what your tactical system with the thousands of tertiaries and supplementaries is. It is pushing to the deeps of a man's life and allowing him to stand up and live in the midst of the world that he has been given and take the life that is his and explode it into history as a great human being.

21. Everyone of you has examples, and it would be mindblowing to hear just the concrete examples of men and women this last year who have made life decision, who have given up possible salary raises of five or ten thousand dollars to stay in the local church experiment, of men who have never spoken suddenly becoming conscious, making decisions, speaking in meetings, or in worship services, and deciding to live. Why? You don't know why, except that he showed up in some assignment structure

and decided to do the assignment. He showed up in a meeting and decided to open his mouth and speak. Tactics have to do with that kind of tension, incarnational dealing with all of life and with being that life. That comes out very concretely at the point of a decision not simply to put a tactic on a sheet of paper, but to take it and explode it with your life. When that short course gets done, when that image gets out, when that story gets told, it is a powerful story. But it is the decision to BE that explosion of tactics in history that changes history.

Donald Cramer