



JAMES RAFFERTY
co-director

OBSTINATE PRAYER

The word *obstinate* has a bad rap. The dictionary definition is:

Refusing to give up or let go; persevering obstinately

Refusing to give up or let go. Persevering. Insistently repetitive or continuous.

Some of us are obstinate all the time. All of us are obstinate some of the time. It's possible to be obstinate in a good way. The Bible says:

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit" (James 5:17-18).

During a time of deep apostasy in Israel, Elijah obstinately refused to compromise his worship of God—a good thing and a positive way to be obstinate. He obstinately stood for right and endured with his people the three and a half years of famine.

God not only spoke through Elijah, God led him, fed him, and finally vindicated him before the entire nation at the showdown on Mount Carmel.

It was after the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed his sacrifice that Elijah manifested obstinate prayer.

SOME OF US ARE OBSTINATE ALL THE TIME. ALL OF US ARE OBSTINATE SOME OF THE TIME.

James describes Elijah's first prayer for no rain as "earnest." Then he simply says about the second prayer, "he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain." The actual account of Elijah's second prayer may not have been earnest, but it was definitely obstinate. The Old Testament gives a little more detail. Let's take a look:

"And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, 'Go

up now, look toward the sea.' So he went up and looked, and said, 'There is nothing.' And seven times he said, 'Go again.' Then it came to pass the seventh time that he said, 'There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!'" (1 Kings 18:42-44).

If you want to know what obstinate prayer looks like—that is it! Even though there was no sign of rain, Elijah refused to give up or let go. One time, two times, three times, four times, five times, six times and nothing! Yes, Elijah was perseveringly obstinate; insistently repetitive and continuous. He kept praying.

Elijah prayed once for fire—boom, there was fire. But he had to pray seven times for rain. You get the feeling from the text that Elijah was settled into his prayer spot—that he wasn't moving till his prayer was answered. His obstinate prayer for rain is a vital part of the 'Elijah message' that God wants to give to His church today. Amen.



DAVID ASSCHERICK
speaker

BOUNCING STUDENTS

A pastor. A physical therapist. A builder. An investment banker.

Since its inception, ARISE has attracted diverse groups of people, and this year's class was no different. Diversity is one of ARISE's greatest strengths, but also presents one of our greatest challenges. How so? Well, not only are the students diverse professionally, they are also quite so in other areas like age, life experience, academic inclination, personality, marital status, nationality and more. This being the case, each class takes on a character all its own, and you never really know what *kind* of class it's going to be.

We've never had a bad class; not one in 15! We have had some, how shall we say, *challenging* classes, but challenging and bad are not the same thing. For example, I have two children, Landon and Jabel.

Both are great kids, but one is more challenging than the other. Not worse, not bad, just challenging. As a parent, I wouldn't want it any other way. The challenging one keeps me on my parental toes and forces me to not be lazy or undiscerning in my decision making. To be clear, he's not trying to be challenging; he's just being, well, *him*. But *him* is also—you guessed it—challenging.

ARISE Australia 2015 was a great class.

And a challenging one.

It was, I'm pretty sure, our youngest class ever, statistically. Out

of 36 total, we had about a dozen 20 year olds or younger. Add to that, our oldest student was our youngest-ever, oldest student. (Did you follow that?) And you know what's *really* scary? He was my age! That means that after 15 years of doing this, alas, I'm getting older.

Youth brings with it energy, enthusiasm, passion and idealism,

THE WHOLE BODY

"The whole body is designed for action."

Ellen White
Education, p. 207

RIGHTLY TRAINED

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!"

Ellen White
Education, p. 271

BROUGHT INTO SERVICE

"The churches in different localities should feel that a solemn responsibility rests upon them to train youth and educate talent to engage in missionary work. When they see those in the church who give promise of making useful workers, but who are not able to support themselves in the school, they should assume the responsibility of sending them to one of our training schools. There is excellent ability in the churches that needs to be brought into service."

Ellen White
Child Guidance, p. 313



but also inexperience and sometimes immaturity. This class was high energy.

Here's a humorous example. Our chairs here at ARISE Australia are anything but comfortable. Hard. Plastic. Yellow. Ugly. Just how we

THIS CLASS HAD CHARACTER. . . . THEIR ENERGY, YOUTH, ZEAL AND PASSION IS JUST WHAT MANY OF OUR CHURCHES NEED!

like them (just kidding). This being the case, one health and posture-conscious student went out and bought one of those giant rubber yoga balls you can sit and stretch on. She replaced her chair with the ball, which was no problem.

Until she started bouncing up and down during class. Not a wild, crazy, out of control bounce, no, just a regular, almost relaxing, up and down and up and down. All class.

Before you knew it, the balls had multiplied! Everyone wanted in on the action. And the class would sometimes look like one of the games at the carnival where you have to hit the popping figurines to secure this ever-evasive prize. As a teacher, it was quite funny to see. The energy and restlessness of the class was on full display every time we stood up to teach.

And as soon as we had a break, most of the students would race outside to play handball for 10-15 minutes. Being a high energy person myself, I joined in—both on the bouncing yoga ball and in the handball games. What can I say? It's how I'm wired.

And, yes, I too was a *challenging* child. (Note: my parents used to always say to me that, "We hope you get a son just like yourself." It happened, and now I know what they mean, because I find myself

saying the same thing to my oldest! Isn't life just grand?)

This class had character. (And a lot of characters!) Their energy, youth, zeal and passion is just what many of our churches need! Yes, that passion must be channeled and tempered, like a mighty and tumbling river which, if managed and steered, can produce great power output with the help of in-river turbines or dams. *We need* the energy of youth to infuse and saturate our too-often lazy and, gulp, dead churches.

Someone has wisely said that, "Our youth are not the church of tomorrow; they are the church of today." To that I say a hearty, Amen!

Providing that energy needs guidance, wisdom, experience, training and encouragement is part of what ARISE is about!

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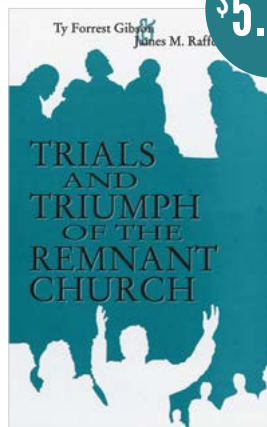
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