

"I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

*Isaac Newton*

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

[**Youthful:** Having the qualities that are typical of young people]

It was just a rock the little boy had picked up. Well, some would probably not even call it a rock. It was a piece of gravel. Just a tiny stone in the car park road surface. The little boy, who had not yet learnt to tell the difference, scooped it up as if it were gold. Who was I to advise him otherwise? Life would soon enough make him aware that what he held in his hand was of little value.

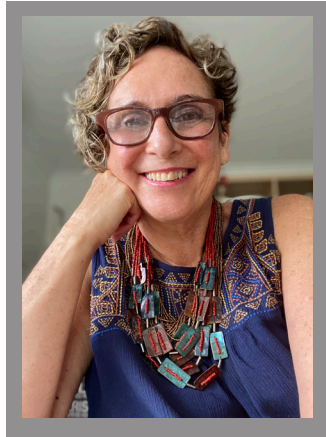
Soon enough he would learn to discriminate and judge. He would learn about the heartache of loss and that sometimes you must let go of the familiar to gain a deeper, richer perspective. He would reassess, compare, and question his own judgement. He would find disruption and liminal places when the old way of seeing no longer served him and all he could do was wait it out. Would he gather up enough courage to forge his own path with conviction? Maybe there he would learn that even the pebble in his shoe could be a guide if he took the time to acknowledge its presence.

Life would toss him about and reflect back to him his own fault lines and cracks, like a stone in a rock tumbler. It would take perseverance to discover what would help him stay grounded and sane. Would he keep searching for precious things? Would he recognise them if he found them? Would he learn to listen to the whisper in the night and the invitation in his heart? Would this refining over and over be worth it?

Hopefully, he would find in community a safe space. A place to have vulnerable conversations and dialogue, to explore, question and journey. A place where he would learn the lessons of stillness, and the importance of deep listening. A place where others would walk alongside him in the dark places, their pilgrimage always guiding towards flickers of light within his own heart. Hopefully, this journey would take him to larger and better questions, new ideas and deeper truths. Hopefully, this journey would help him become more and more the person whom he truly was. Hopefully along the way he would continue to be generous and open-hearted.

But for now, he gives me that precious bit of gravel as a gift and I place it in my handbag for safe keeping. It has value because it holds all these longings.

In the Scriptures we hardly ever see Jesus answering direct questions. Mostly instead of answers he gives more questions. He uses parables and metaphor to highlight deeper questions that go beneath surface value - questions that send people on a quest to the heart of things.



In this edition you may find, like me, you are left with questions that make you focus on the essentials. Are we that nurturing community? Do our weary hearts still hold enough passion and vitality to listen for new ways of being church alongside the next generation? Can we sift through our old dreams, hold space for God's vision and learn to ask the right questions?

Kassandra Unger shares her thoughts about what children need and gives us insights into how we can best meet these needs. She then shares an uplifting report about how she has been engaging with children in the past year.

Emma Ghazarian shares a vision of community that is a sanctuary for youth and children. A place that as we model 'the very foundations of our faith,' we become a tangible example of the kingdom and a healing place for parents and carers.

Michelle Comito and Shai Mikus give us an insight into their world working with vulnerable youth at Youth Resolutions. We gain not only a perspective of their passion but also how they are making a difference.

Kristie Woodward challenges us to find new paths ways to reach out to youth and she offers some insightful ways in which we can engage.

Ben Smith asks the question what price will we pay for our children. And urges us to consider who are our children.

Robert Thompson schools us in a few lessons that we need to remember in order to be a community that embraces even the smallest amongst us.

Finally Emma Ghazarian shares about Tuesday Church and the Online gathering place that has become their spiritual home.

In writing this editorial I pondered on these words of Isaac Newton. (Opposite page). I pray that we may find the questions that take us there, both young and old, to the great ocean of truth and the heart of Christ.

*Anne Bonnefin*

Editorial Team Member