

# THE WAY

JOHN 14:6

JANUARY EDITION 2025 **NNSW** SDA SCHOOLS

## REFLECTING ON YOUR 'WHY?'

Marty Benard

Editor

My son loved asking “why,” especially during road trips as he took in all the hustle and bustle of the road as a little boy. “Why is that truck so slow?” “Why does that trailer have more wheels than the other one?” “Why don’t you overtake, Dad?”

The “why” questions weren’t limited to road trips either. I can vividly recall my children asking some of the deeper “why” questions at the most random moments throughout the day. Sometimes, as a parent, you know the answers. Other times, you find yourself quickly Googling them, and at other times, you simply have to admit, “I don’t know.”

---

“As we begin the academic year in 2025, I want to encourage you to reflect on your “why.” You don’t need to have the answers to life’s idiosyncratic questions, but I encourage you to revisit your sense of purpose—your “why” in the context of the big picture of your vocation. Why has God placed you in the school? How might He use you to draw others to Him this year? What drives you? What gives you that sense of purpose? 🙏🙏”

---

2 Peter 1:10 reminds us to “make every effort to confirm your calling and election.” This verse encourages us to know whose we are—our identity in Christ—and to understand our purpose here as followers of Jesus.

Inspirational business leader Simon Sinek describes your “why” as the core of what inspires you—the fire or spark that drives you. What is that spark for you in the school environment?

For some, your “why” might be felt most when you mark exams or assessments and see a student’s significant improvement after applying themselves. For another, it might be a connection formed where you spoke life and hope into someone’s difficult situation. Perhaps it’s when you notice increased engagement from previously disengaged students. Maybe it’s when you see a sporting team begin to gel and achieve success. For others, it may be witnessing spiritual growth and commitment in a young person, reminding you of eternal priorities and your part in their journey. When we witness progress, it brings incredible fulfilment and reminds us of our calling. This calling strengthens us to endure the challenges of the journey.

Looking at Scripture, I’m reminded of people whose “why” gave them clarity and strength to live out their faith. To name just a few:

Moses knew he was called to deliver God’s people.

Nehemiah felt the call to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls and restore hope to his people.

Ezra knew his purpose was to lead the nation back to God and His Word.

Zechariah and Elizabeth knew they were to raise a young man who would prepare the way for the coming Messiah through John the Baptist.

And, of course, Jesus knew His “why”—to reveal God’s character, draw people to

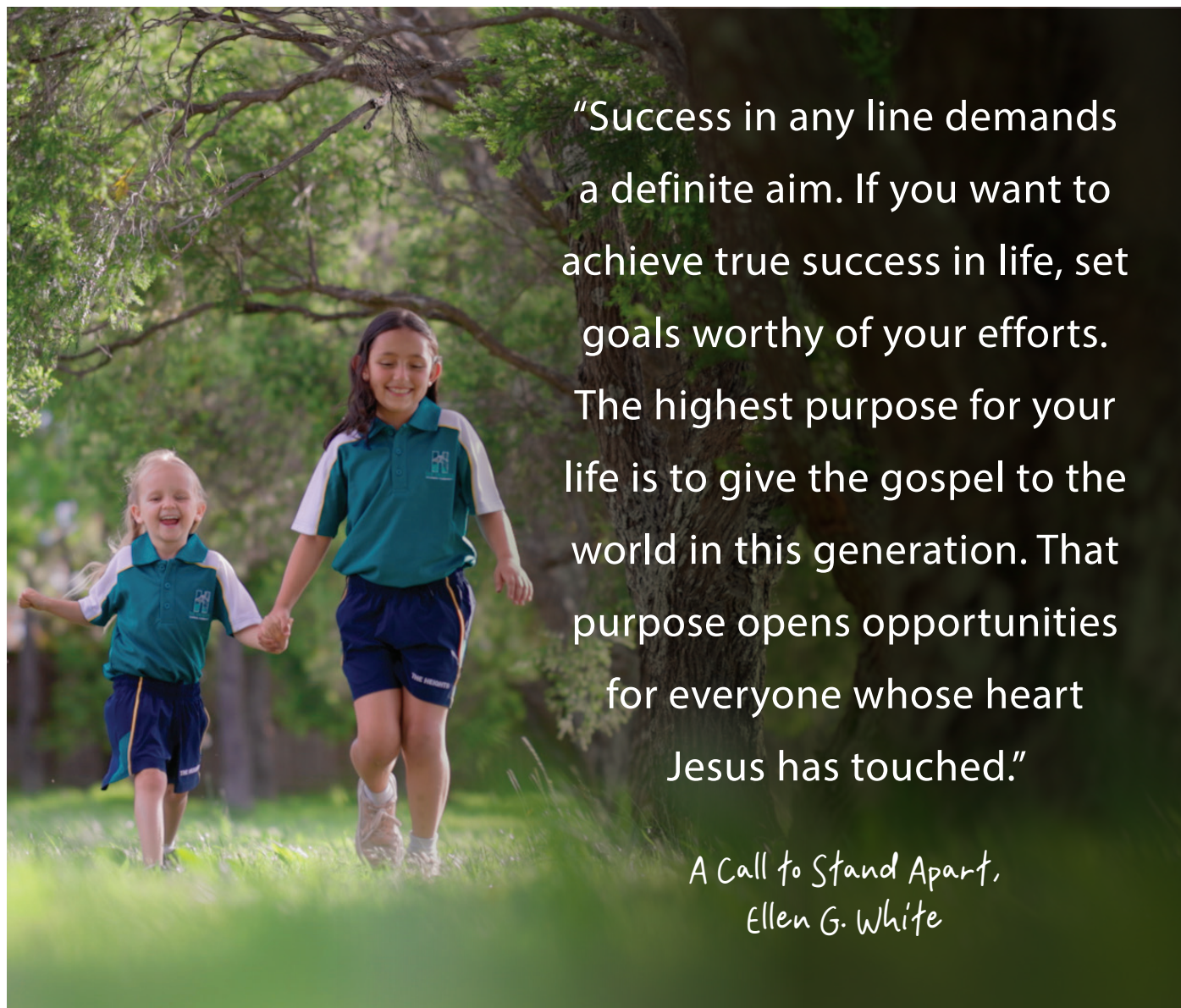


Himself, and ultimately lay down His life as the Lamb of God.

When I think about my own “why,” I see names and faces—students, parents, and staff members I’ve journeyed with and witnessed spiritual transformation. Admittedly, in the work of developing hearts, minds, and character, we don’t always see the results of our efforts. I think that’s why I enjoy mowing the lawn—it provides instant results and a sense of satisfaction. But when we are blessed to see evidence

of changed lives, I catch a glimpse of the joy and purpose that come from witnessing others live out their faith. Those moments fill my heart, bolster my purpose, and renew my energy as I’m reminded of why Christ called me to serve in Adventist Education.

What about you? What is your “why”? I pray that God will continue to reveal your purpose as we serve Him together this year.



“Success in any line demands a definite aim. If you want to achieve true success in life, set goals worthy of your efforts. The highest purpose for your life is to give the gospel to the world in this generation. That purpose opens opportunities for everyone whose heart Jesus has touched.”

*A Call to Stand Apart,  
Ellen G. White*

## SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

The NNSW Education Company has created both a Facebook and Instagram account to capture the stories happening around our wonderful schools. We see the exciting things taking place and would love to have a central location where these stories are shared.



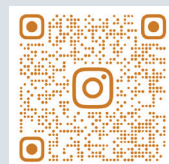
Facebook page:



*Adventist Education North New South Wales*



Instagram page:



*@adventisteducationnsw*

# MISSIONAL NEWS

## Cambodia Service Trip 2024: A Journey of Hope and Connection

Avondale School's recent service trip to Cambodia was an unforgettable experience that combined historical learning, community service, and cultural exchange. Students began by visiting the Killing Fields and S21, gaining a deeper understanding of Cambodia's history and the challenges it continues to face. This perspective set the tone for our service work, highlighting the importance of bringing hope and practical support to underprivileged communities.

Students engaged with Restore One projects, which empower small businesses to become sustainable. They honed their bargaining skills while purchasing supplies for Kompong Village, where our fundraising efforts funded three new amenities blocks for families. While local builders constructed the facilities, our students painted them with symbolic designs, joined by enthusiastic villagers. Children's laughter filled the air as they practiced their English and taught us Khmer – often with amusing results!

Our group also ran hygiene lessons for 100 public school students, teaching handwashing and dental care to help prevent disease. They led English and art classes in preschool, primary, and high school. They also organised an athletics carnival for over 200

energetic primary children. Despite language barriers, the joy of connection shone through in laughter, hugs, and high-fives.

At the high school, students varnished external walls, installed bamboo ceiling panels, and improved airflow by removing walls. A highlight was the final evening, where students cooked meals for five families, sharing laughs and sampling local delicacies.

The trip concluded in Siem Reap, where students visited several inspiring NGOs dedicated to transforming local communities through sustainable initiatives. Students fine-tuned their bargaining skills at local markets and visited the ancient temples of Angkor Wat and other archaeological sites provided a connection to Cambodia's rich cultural heritage.

Through moments of prayer, impromptu singing, and shared reflections, students forged deeper bonds with each other. These experiences increased their understanding of global challenges and inspired a renewed appreciation for the blessings in their own lives. Thank you for the generous support in making this incredible adventure a reality!

Virginia Hosken - Stage 6 Coordinator | Secondary Teacher



# STAFFING ANNOUNCEMENTS

## *Principal Appointment,*

### **MACQUARIE COLLEGE**

We wish to welcome Mr. Gary Marsters as Principal of Macquarie College commencing in Term 1, 2025. Currently serving as Associate Education Director for South Queensland, Gary brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to Christ-centred education to his new role.

Since mid-2022, Gary has been an active member of the South Queensland School Company Board of Directors, where he has overseen school compliance, accreditation processes, and policy development. He has also chaired the Leading Learning Committee, demonstrating a strong focus on educational leadership and innovation.

Gary's extensive career in education includes previously serving as Assistant Head of Secondary at Avondale School and as a teacher of Bible and Studies of Religion. Additionally, he has contributed to higher education as a Sessional Lecturer at Avondale University, teaching Curriculum Studies and postgraduate courses in school culture, climate, and faith engagement.

Born in Canterbury, New Zealand, Gary was raised in a Christian home grounded in Seventh-day Adventist values. As a product of Adventist Education, he is passionate about fostering both academic excellence and spiritual growth in students.



Gary is supported by his wife, Danii, and their two children, Caleb and Olivia, who are both studying Teaching at Avondale University. The Marsters family enjoys spending time together and actively participating in their church community.

Gary is thrilled to join the Macquarie College Community as the College's new Principal. He looks forward to working closely with the leadership at the North New South Wales Schools Company, the College's dedicated teachers and staff, and its wonderful families. His appointment marks the beginning of a new chapter for the College, and we extend our warmest welcome to Gary, wishing him God's blessings in his new role.

---

Do you have news for the monthly newsletter? We'd love to hear from you! Submit by the last Wednesday of each month.

## CONTACT US

**Editor: Marty Benard**

[marty.benard@nsw.adventist.edu.au](mailto:marty.benard@nsw.adventist.edu.au)