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BY EVALDO VICENTE

*Kalie and Sean Todd are connected to Sandy Lake Academy in Bedford, N.S. Working as a teacher and chaplain, respectively, has brought joy and peace as they seek to share their passion for Christ with young people.*



Sean and Kalie Todd

**EDITOR:** *Tell us a bit about yourselves and your family.*

**SEAN TODD:** I was born in Australia but grew up in Canada. After high school I embarked on a year-long journey to reconnect with my roots. On that trip I met my now-wife, Kalie, at a campmeeting in New South Wales.

I earned credits for my theology undergrad from both Avondale College (now Avondale University, in Australia) and Burman University (Canada) as we moved back and forth, trying to decide who would give up their home country for the other. We ended up choosing Canada.

Four years ago I got my first call to pastoral ministry in the Maritimes, pastoring two small churches and serving as the chaplain for Sandy Lake Academy (Bedford, N.S.). My latest adventures are embarking on a master's degree (halfway through a Master of Arts in Pastoral

Ministry, or MAPM), and adding director of Camp Pugwash to my responsibilities.

**KALIE TODD:** I'm originally from a small town on Australia's east coast near Newcastle. I pursued my education degree at Avondale College but completed it at Burman University after moving to Canada to be with my husband, Sean.

We followed a call to Nova Scotia in February 2020 and have been involved in ministry ever since. My area of expertise is humanities, specifically history as my major and English language arts as my minor.

**EDITOR:** *Where did you guys meet?*

**SEAN AND KALIE:** We are a campmeeting couple. We met when we were 18 at the North New South Wales campmeeting in 2013. We moved back and forth between Canada and Australia for a few years before we were



married in 2016 and immigrated to Canada permanently.

**EDITOR:** *Kalie, can you tell us how you decided to become an educator?*

**KALIE:** When people ask me about my career plans, I feel a little self-conscious. As a student, I never really considered education as a part of my future. I initially planned to study environmental science and management, specializing in mine site rehabilitation after high school. However, I experienced some difficulties in my classes, and my dad suggested that teaching might be a better fit for me. Following his advice, I began looking into secondary education programs.

Despite my initial nervousness, I found the program at Avondale College to be fantastic, and the professors were very supportive. My first practicum gave me the confidence I needed, and I fell in love with teaching.

It's exciting to share my passion for a subject and connect with others about it. Problem solving and brainstorming are now a part of my daily routine, and it's a joy to see my students grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Many even leave taller than me!

Lastly, I particularly enjoy Adventist education because I'm able to immerse myself in God's ministry and share Him with my school community.

**EDITOR:** *Sean, had you always considered school chaplaincy, or is this an area of ministry you developed an interest in later?*

**SEAN:** My passion is youth ministry, and my dream has always been to become a youth pastor or school chaplain. I graduated with a degree in religious studies from Burman University and applied to various positions across Canada, believing that God had a plan for me.

I'm excited to share that I'm now serving in a role at Sandy Lake Academy, where I feel fulfilled in the way God is using me.

**EDITOR:** *Could you say the challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic are now in the past? Any lingering effects on the school environment, kids' learning, mental health (of both teachers and students), etc.?*

**KALIE:** No, we can't say that the challenges of school during COVID-19 are completely in the past.

Functionally, we are back to "normal"; students are no longer isolated; they're back to in-person learning and engaging in social activities within the school and their wider communities. We have encouraged meaningful living by promoting a healthy and active school environment through our daily habits, spiritual events, clubs, and trips. However, in speaking with our teachers

and staff at Sandy Lake Academy, we find that the anxiety level in both our staff and students is higher than before the pandemic. Students in younger grades are also experiencing gaps in their knowledge and skills which normally would have been developed earlier in their education.

**EDITOR:** *What has been the highlight of your teaching/chaplaincy career so far?*

**SEAN:** Two summers ago was the first time I had the privilege of performing a baptism in the lake behind the school. The student was (and still is) on fire for God, and the day couldn't have been nicer.

**KALIE:** A highlight of teaching for me is the practical lessons I can teach, particularly those in history. I love seeing the joy on my students' faces as they dig in simulated archeology sites or build cardboard suits of armour. Learning through play and creativity is fun at all grade levels.

**EDITOR:** *From a Seventh-day Christian education perspective, what words of encouragement would you have for parents and students?*

**SEAN:** Parents, someone is going to influence your kids. As a parent, you get to decide who that is. I can't speak for every Adventist teacher out there, but I can promise that the ones I know will impart a love for God to your children.

**KALIE:** For students, I think Jesus said it well when He called us to "let [our] light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16, NIV). Your school is what you make it. Be the light that shines for others in your classroom.

**EDITOR:** *Do you have a favourite Bible verse that you would like to share with us?*

**SEAN:** John 14:1-3 is an absolute winner. Since the pandemic, tensions have been high no matter where you go. So in this social climate, any verse that starts with "Let not your heart be troubled" is worth reading twice.

**KALIE:** Ministry can be stressful, so the verses that sustain me are Psalm 4:8 and Jeremiah 29:11. (While you're there, Jeremiah 20:12, 13, is also worth a read.) These soothing and encouraging verses help me remember to *be still and know that HE is God* (Psalm 46:10). ■

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