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A Full Experience

BY VIKRAM PANCHAL

It was 8:30 a.m., July 23! The General Conference pages from Andrews University navigated their way through the Georgia World Dome to our reporting destination—Building E. It was there we were assigned our responsibilities for the next ten days. As we parted ways, I walked through the hallways circling the Dome to find myself approaching the main platform where I had been called to serve. Amazed by the sheer size of the stage and stadium, I looked around pondering what the next few days had in store.

On Thursday, June 24, I was given the opportunity to meet with Mark Finley. I first heard him speak in Australia, in 2006, during a Spirit-filled rally for evangelism. At that time, because I was recently baptized, his title of “GC vice president for evangelism” did not ring any bells. Four years later at the 59th General Conference Session for the Seventh-day Adventist World Church, I nervously held onto a printed time card designed to let Mark know he had 15 ... 10 ... 5 minutes left to close his message!

On Wednesday, June 30, an unforgettable experience came about when I was asked to say the prayer of invocation for the World Church during the morning devotional. This was a blessing from God as it also happened to be my birthday. A couple of time slots had opened up in the schedule the previous day that needed to be filled. Later that day, a surprise birthday party was organized by the pages, disguised as a meeting to pull me away from work.

As the final Friday came around we were surprised to see a large painting with Nathan Greene, the artist, standing beside it. As we stood back and watched the unveiling, the bright colors of the rainbow encircling Jesus and the angels immediately captured our attention as well as that of the photographers gathered to catch



Donald May

the first glimpse of the new painting. Little did we know that moments later we would be carting the painting on a small roller down to Nathan’s art gallery. It was a 20-minute walk along a sometimes dimly-lit passageway with camera flashbulbs illuminating our pathway. Needless to say, we had to be extra careful!

An unforgettable experience took place on the final Sabbath when 70,000 Adventists gathered together to hear an inspiring sermon by Ted N.C. Wilson, newly-elected president of the World Church. Truly this gathering was a world church representing every nation, tribe, tongue and people! The thought flashed into my mind of what it would be like to one day stand on the Sea of Glass in Heaven and rejoice with the multitude of the redeemed. It was with that lingering thought that I made my way back to Andrews with the lyrics of the song performed by the Andrews University Singers gently playing in the recesses of my mind, “Even so Lord, come quickly. This is my fervent prayer. For I caught a glimpse of glory and I’m longing to be there.”¹

Vikram Panchal is a graduate student studying at the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. He is originally from the bustling city of Mumbai, India. Vikram hopes to become a local church pastor and trainer.

1. Huntsinger, David. “I Have Fixed My Mind (On Another Time).” Church Choral Series. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. 2009.

