

ALMOST  
HOME

---



# ALMOST HOME

---

A Call to Revival and Reformation

TED N. C. WILSON



Pacific Press® Publishing Association  
Nampa, Idaho  
Oshawa, Ontario, Canada  
[www.pacificpress.com](http://www.pacificpress.com)

Cover design by Steve Lanto  
Cover design resources from dreamstime.com  
Inside design by Michelle C. Petz

Copyright © 2012 by Pacific Press® Publishing Association  
Printed in the United States of America  
All rights reserved

The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of all facts and quotations as cited in this book.

In chapters 1–3, 5, 7, 8, unattributed Bible references are from the King James Version.

Unattributed Bible references in chapters 4 and 9–13 are taken from the New King James Version®.  
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Unattributed Bible references in chapter 6 are from J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*, 1962 edition, published by HarperCollins.

You can obtain additional copies of this book by calling toll-free 1-800-765-6955 or by visiting [www.adventistbookcenter.com](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Wilson, Ted N. C.

Almost home : a call to revival and reformation / Ted N.C. Wilson.

p. cm.

ISBN 13: 978-0-8163-3597-8 (pbk.)

ISBN 10: 0-8163-3597-4 (pbk.)

1. Christian life—Adventist authors. 2. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—Doctrines. I. Title.

BV4501.3.W5564 2012

248.4'86732—dc23

2012028434

---

# Contents

FOREWORD		7
PREFACE		9
CHAPTER 1	Virtual Reality	11
CHAPTER 2	Know the Word	19
CHAPTER 3	God's Magnificent Gift	31
CHAPTER 4	Our Only Hope	43
CHAPTER 5	Good News About the Judgment	57
CHAPTER 6	How God Defines Success	67
CHAPTER 7	Eliezer, Faithful Servant	75
CHAPTER 8	Bringing Health to the World	83
CHAPTER 9	Mission to the Cities	93
	Nuggets From <i>Evangelism</i> on Work for the Cities	108
CHAPTER 10	Remember Your Name!	109
CHAPTER 11	A New Reformation	123
CHAPTER 12	Faith on Fire!	131
CHAPTER 13	Go Forward!	143



---

# Foreword

**T**here are some books that you shouldn't be without—books that are a must for your library. *Almost Home* is one of those books. Elder Ted Wilson, the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, opens his heart about the issues that really matter in these critical times. These messages first appeared as sermons that Elder Wilson preached. In that form, they blessed tens of thousands of people around the world. Now they have been brought together in book form to inspire many more people.

Each chapter will speak to both your mind and your heart. Each will stimulate your thinking, and each will motivate you to recommit your life to the One who died for you and now lives for you. You will be inspired and challenged as you read these pages.

In the chapter titled “Know the Word,” Elder Wilson speaks earnestly to each church member, appealing to all of us to saturate our minds with the Word of God. He reminds us of Ellen White’s warning that “none but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.”<sup>1</sup> I am confident that as you read this chapter, you will feel convicted to place greater priority on your study of God’s Word.

In the chapter “Our Only Hope,” Elder Wilson presents the righteousness of Jesus as our only hope of salvation. He elevates the unmerited, undeserved grace of Christ in all of its matchless charms, but assures us that though it surpasses in value everything else in the

universe, God has made it fully available to each of us.

Elder Wilson's passion to see this lost world won for Christ rings clear in chapters such as "Mission to the Cities" and "Bringing Health to the World." There we can see that the millions who have never had an opportunity to hear God's last-day message are on his heart. He longs to inspire the seventeen million Seventh-day Adventists around the world to reach out in loving acts of kindness to their friends, neighbors, working associates, and families—acts that witness powerfully for Christ and His end-time church.

In the last two chapters of the book, "Faith on Fire!" and "Go Forward!" Elder Wilson urges Adventists everywhere to be ready for the return of our Lord. *Almost Home* is a decidedly Adventist book. Its underlying theme, Christ's soon return, seems to leap off every page. Every chapter aims to help the reader prepare for that day. As you peruse these pages, you will realize anew that Jesus' advent is the only answer to the problems that threaten to overwhelm all who live on this planet. You will find much encouragement in the biblical assurances that Christ has an end-time church that will triumph at last and that one day the glory of God will fill this wayward, troubled world.

It is my hope that as you read this book, you will be drawn closer to the Christ who died for you, who is now in heaven interceding for you, and who will soon come so that where He is, you may be also.

Mark A. Finley  
Assistant to the President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

---

1. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press®, 1950), 593.



---

# Preface

**A**s we come closer to the very end of time and to Christ's return, we need to rely more and more on Him to supply our every need. We are dependent on Him for our salvation and for our everyday needs. The political, economic, societal, climatic, and ecumenical events around us indicate that He is coming soon. We are almost home! It is time for us to submit ourselves to the Lord and to join our fellow believers in pleading humbly for revival and reformation, recognizing that God has promised to pour out the latter rain of the Holy Spirit so that His work will be finished quickly.

It is our great privilege to dig deeply into our Bibles and to be revived by His Word. It is my fervent hope that, as God instructed in 2 Chronicles 7:14, each of us as members of God's remnant church will humble ourselves, pray earnestly, seek the presence of Christ through His Word, and turn from our own willful desires, allowing the Holy Spirit to control us instead. God wants to use each of us to proclaim by word and act the fullness of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14—Christ, His righteousness, His sanctuary service, His Sabbath, the true worship of God, and Christ's soon return.

What a privilege we have!—we whom God has called to make the greatest proclamation of all time, announcing to the whole world the conclusion of the great controversy between Christ and Satan with the complete assurance that Christ will be victorious. What a privilege to be united in Christ, to serve others in His name, and to share the precious

Seventh-day Adventist message of Bible truth! God is asking us to use every type of outreach possible to share His message with the world.

I invite you to participate in the Seventh-day Adventist Church's many modes of witnessing, including *The Great Controversy* distribution project, Mission to the Cities, medical missionary work, and all other forms of evangelistic outreach. Please help us carry the good news to the millions in the cities and the rural areas. We must witness about Christ in the cities through the methods outlined in the Spirit of Prophecy—the heaven-inspired, blessing-filled writings that God has provided to His church.

In reference to the great challenge of sharing Christ in the cities, Ellen G. White has told us, "There is no change in the messages that God has sent in the past. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed."<sup>1</sup> This is a great burden I have on my heart, and I ask all readers of this book to carry this burden as well. I have dedicated all the royalties from the sales of this book to the comprehensive urban evangelism activities of Mission to the Cities.

May this book draw you to a closer walk with the Lord by pointing you to the Bible, to the Spirit of Prophecy, and to the great task of giving the loud cry that has been entrusted to each of us as members of this great Advent movement.

Ted N. C. Wilson  
President  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

---

1. Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press®, 1963), 304.

# Virtual Reality

A generation ago, technological gadgets were mostly just conversation pieces. People didn't buy them because they were particularly useful; they got them for curiosity's sake or to show how far ahead of the crowd they were.

Now, however, technological gadgets have become virtual necessities. We expect the vehicles we drive to have backup cameras and the "books" we read to give us access to all virtual encyclopedias. And job-wise, we could hardly function, never mind compete, without our smart phones and tablets, which not only keep us in constant touch with everyone in our lives but also hold our to-do lists and appointment and address books.

Of course, our military forces use night-vision goggles and laser-guided missiles and pilotless drones that not only spy on and bomb the enemy, but also can out-fly—and shoot down—manned fighter planes. And those in the know report that in the near future, 50 percent of all tanks and other assault vehicles will be remotely controlled.

Then there's virtual reality. That's the use of technology (visual and auditory) to make people feel they're somewhere else doing something else—playing tennis, for instance. Or flying a plane or driving a race car or checking out a house plan by virtually walking through a house built on that plan. Virtual reality is used in computer games, military and aviation training, graphic design, life-experience simulation, spatial tours of almost anything, and much more.

Virtual reality—*almost real*, but not quite.

In these strange and uncertain times, we might ask whether technology has so shaped our view of the universe that we think of God as existing only as virtual reality. Do we create a virtual Jesus—one whom we can manipulate and craft to our own liking? One whom we can keep in a box and pull out only when we need him or want him?

Some people don't want even a virtual Jesus. They don't want *any* kind of Jesus at all.

But Jesus is a real Person who wants to have a real relationship with us. God created human beings in His image (see Genesis 1:26). If we're like Him, then what we are tells us something of what He is. And since we're real rather than virtual beings, He must be too.

Yes, God is a real person who enjoyed coming "in the cool of the day" and talking with the man and woman He made (Genesis 3:8). And after Adam and Eve sinned, our real God spoke to the real devil and revealed the very real outcome of the conflict that was affecting everyone in the universe. He said, "I will put enmity between thee [the devil] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Here, as other scriptures make clear (see, e.g., Galatians 3:16), God was announcing that a real Christ would really become human and would eventually destroy the one who brought sin and death into what had been a perfect home, a perfect universe.

## "That I may dwell among them"

Even before His birth, Christ mingled with His people, speaking to the patriarchs, standing between the Israelites and their enemy, meeting Moses on Mount Sinai, and telling him, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them [the Israelites]" (Exodus 25:8).

So the children of Israel built a sanctuary where God met with His people. However, although the sanctuary was made of real linen and wood and bronze and gold, it was, in a sense, virtual reality. It was a representation of the real sanctuary, which is in heaven. Ellen White said, "That sanctuary, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great

original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy.”<sup>1</sup>

The book of Hebrews calls the heavenly sanctuary “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:2). The heavenly and earthly sanctuaries both pictured a real God, in His love, demonstrating how He intended to save us. They pointed to Christ, the Lamb who died for us—who died in our place. They pointed to Christ, the High Priest mediating for His people; to Christ, who conquered sin—which shows the ultimate glory of the sanctuary services. As Ellen White put it, because of the sanctuary, people’s “minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.”<sup>2</sup>

The sanctuary was pointing to the real Jesus, who would live a real life and conquer real sin by dying. He wouldn’t die on a sanitized cross, a virtual cross, a graphically retouched cross. No, He would die on a real, rough instrument of torture in real agony that He could bear only by depending on the strength of His heavenly Father. This very real Jesus rose from His stony grave and ascended to a real heaven to serve as a real High Priest in the real heavenly sanctuary.

There’s nothing virtual about the salvation God worked out for us. It’s all real—real love, real mercy, and a real sacrifice! Can you imagine the horror of Adam and Eve back in Eden as they cut the throat of a perfect lamb so they could have forgiveness (Leviticus 5:5, 6)? No virtual reality there. They were dealing with real stuff—stuff that pointed to the real death of Jesus for you and me. Paul tells us that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Real soldiers with real weapons really shed Christ’s blood. He paid the ultimate sacrifice to conquer sin so we could have eternal life.

Christ not only became the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, but when He returned to heaven He also began to act as our Mediator and High Priest. Look at Hebrews 9:24. There Paul says, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” So there is a real Christ appearing before God right now for you and me.

How is it that He has the right to represent us before God? Paul

said that Christ came “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (verses 26–28). Ellen White tells us: “Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety.”<sup>3</sup>

And God developed this plan for our salvation before He created the world. Can’t you hear the hush in the galactic war room in heaven as the plan was unveiled? The Supreme Authority spoke with unwavering commitment: “We will provide salvation for every person who is willing to submit his or her life to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

What an incredible God we serve!

This incredible God has commissioned us to use the Internet and every other means possible to tell everyone we can that God wants everyone who has faith, who trusts Him, to live with Him forever, and He has done all that’s necessary to make that possible. God has asked us to present the reality of Jesus, of salvation from sin and death, of Jesus’ soon coming, and to invite people to choose to serve Him.

## God’s covenant with us

To those who humbly commit themselves to God, He says, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, . . . I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17, quoting Jeremiah 31:33, 34). And in verses 19–23, Paul tells us that Jesus’ blood was shed for us so we may have “boldness to enter into the holiest”; and because there is now a High Priest serving the house of God (which includes us), we should “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” Paul says that since we can have faith in a real God who has provided salvation for us, we are to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).”

So how do we connect with this God? How, in a world of virtual reality, do we find the real thing?

In a poem titled “Did Jesus Use a Modem at the Sermon on the Mount?” Ellis Bush considers the reality of Jesus and of what He’s done for us and the question of how we connect with Him. Near the end of his poem he asks, “Have the wonders of this modern age / Made you question what is true? / How a single man, in a simple time / Could offer life anew?” Then he gives his answer: “If in your life, the voice of God / Is sometimes hard to hear; . . . Then set aside your laptop . . . / And all the fancy gear, / Open your Bible, open your heart, / And let the Lord draw near.”<sup>4</sup>

There’s no virtual reality in the story of Jesus and what He’s done for our salvation. Jesus is real. His love for us is real. His life, death, and resurrection were real. His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary is real. And the mission He’s given us—that of sharing this wonderful story with others through both what we say and what we do—is real.

Let me tell you about someone who knows God is real. I was in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, a while ago. The Protestants and Catholics there live in an uneasy truce. I could feel the tension in the air, and the fully armed British soldiers on patrol and the fortresslike defenses around the police and military stations gave it substance. What I saw told me clearly that I was in a tough place.

At that time we had a number of active church members in Derry. They worshiped in a church built by Maranatha Volunteers in 1978. I met a wonderful saint named Anna in that church. She’d been an Adventist for about thirty years, having learned about and accepted the Advent message through Voice of Prophecy lessons. She believes in a real God and the real power of prayer.

Back in 1978, when the church was built, there were about thirty-five members in Derry. But over time, people have moved away, died, or become discouraged and stopped attending, and eventually, Anna was the only one left in the church. One could almost have called it a virtual church, but it was still real because Anna kept coming every Sabbath.

The Irish Mission wanted to close the church and sell the building. But Anna steadfastly opposed that, demanding that the Mission keep sending a preacher each Sabbath. She kept coming Sabbath after Sabbath, insisting that her atheistic husband drive her there though he protested

every kilometer of the way. And she kept praying that the Lord would send more people to the church—to the church and to the message she loved. But no one came.

Then one Sabbath, Anna prayed, “Lord, send at least one person to the church,” and the very next Sabbath, Mary showed up!

Mary was a native of Derry, but she had gone to Canada, where she met and married Ross. While living in Toronto, they became Adventists, and sometime after that they decided to move to Derry.

Mary got there a few weeks before Ross did, and when the Sabbath came, she decided she would go to church. She expected to find lots of people there, as had been the case in Toronto, but she found only one person—Anna. That may have disappointed Mary, but having a fellow worshiper thrilled Anna. God answered her prayer! Ross soon joined them, and several others have too, so about twelve people attend the church regularly—including Ann, Mary’s sister.

The few Adventists who live in Derry face a tough life every day now. But they know that God is real, and they’re looking forward to the fellowship they’ll have with Christ when He comes the second time. They’re anticipating a real Second Coming.

Not a hologram.

Not some kind of wide-screen TV wizardry.

Not virtual reality.

The real thing.

Soon we’ll see a small dark cloud about half the size of a man’s hand. It will grow larger and larger and brighter and brighter till it fills the whole sky. That “cloud” will be composed of billions of angels, with the very real Jesus Christ—the One who died for all of us—seated right in the center! All heaven has come to see in person the victory God has won. And 1 John 3:2 says, “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” This same Jesus who made us in His image—we will see Him as is He is: *REAL!*

Jesus has called us to tell others that He is real. He offers us the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to enable us to witness for Him. Let’s commit ourselves to sharing Him on the Internet, in our lives,



and every other way we can. He is our Lord and Creator. Our Redeemer and Mediator. Our Friend and our very real King.

He's not a fake. He's not a virtual person. He's real! And we're almost home.

- 
1. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press®, 1890), 357.
  2. *Ibid.*, 358.
  3. Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald®, 1958), 1:250.
  4. Ellis Bush Jr., *Did Jesus Use a Modem at the Sermon on the Mount? Inspirational Thoughts for the Information Age* (Mukilteo, WA: WinePress, 1997), 8.