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### I Heard the Angels Say: 'There Is Hope!'

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# I Heard the Angels Say: 'There Is Hope!'

Have you ever heard of Victory Jones? Well, I had not until a few years ago. Initially, I was unable to identify the person that Ellen White addressed in two documents in the early 1860s.



▲ Denis Kaiser

The person's actual name, according to census records and church records, was Victor Velos Jones (c. 1826-?). That she knew the proper spelling of his first name is evident from an earlier letter, and while the misspelling of a name would not be entirely unusual for her, in this case she most likely spelled his name intentionally "wrong" because throughout her testimony to him, she emphasized the possibility to gain the victory over *the* problem.

Right at the beginning of her personal remarks to him, Ellen White highlighted that she "heard" the angels say, "There is hope [for him]." In describing his circumstances and struggles, she showed remarkable insight and empathy. She characterized him as an upright and honest person, yet he was addicted to alcohol and tobacco. He loved his wife and son but his addiction perverted his reason, threw his family into poverty, and turned them miserable. Although he was convinced that Adventists had the truth, he was disappointed about the discrepancy between their profession and life. Ellen White urged him to not allow their lack of love and care to prevent him "from following [Jesus as] the only true unerring Pattern." Jesus pitied and loved him. She remarked that he would not be able to overcome in his own strength. He was to repent sincerely and seek earnestly for God who was waiting to impart His strength to him.

Not until the end of the testimony did she mention his actual name, when she encouraged him with the words, "Remember the sufferings of Jesus to save

you. Look at His sacrifice, and then in His strength make the sacrifice yourself, which will bring happiness to yourself and family and at last win for you *the victor's crown*. Can you, will you, do this? I beg, I plead, I entreat of you to heed this merciful message and reform. . . . My prayer is that you may *prove worthy of your name*." By walking with Jesus, he would be able to gain "the victor's crown" and thus prove worthy of his name—an intentional play on his first name. Her encouragement seemed to show fruition in his life. About six weeks later, the Monterey church voted to receive Victor again "into full fellowship." Unfortunately, this was not the end of the story, yet this snapshot is a powerful testimony of God's amazing grace in Adventist history for all those of us who are struggling.<sup>1</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup>Lt 1, 1861; Ms 2, 1863; Lt 9, 1857; *Records of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Monterey, Michigan [1860-1880]* (entries for Sept. 15, 1860, and March 3, 1861).

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