

EDITORIAL

How Long Ago and Far Away BECOMES HERE AND NOW

BY BONNIE DWYER

When I read Stacey Schiff's biography of Cleopatra in 2010, the myths about the ancient monarch were more familiar to me than her actual history. I would not have been able to tell you when she lived, for instance. I knew more stories about Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal of her in the movies than of the actual woman. Thus, my particular fascination with the chapters in the Schiff book that included descriptions of the biblical Herod and brought her close to Bible times.

Not long after I completed the book, I attended a conference sponsored by the Association of Adventist Women at La Sierra University. A panel discussion on women in the Bible included a presentation by Kendra Haloviak on the Whore of Babylon in Revelation 17. To illustrate her remarks, Dr. Haloviak wrote various names on a whiteboard that were associated with the biblical character. The list sounded like it came straight out of the Cleopatra biography, so when

it came time for questions, I and another woman who had also just read the Schiff book, asked, could the author of Revelation have been referring to Cleopatra? The question intrigued Dr. Haloviak who took it upon herself to read the

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Schiff book and then many more books and articles. She turned her research into a paper for an academic, evangelical theological journal in the United Kingdom that was published in 2017. I am excited that in this issue we are able to share with you Dr. Haloviak Valentine's research. She always brings the Scripture

alive in new ways for me, and this article in our Bible section is no exception.

Likewise, it is an honor to be able to share the work of Carmen Lau, chair of the Adventist Forum Board. The Adventist stories about the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 had created questions for her about how church members could have participated in that event. While completing a



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program in peace studies at the University of Alabama, she decided to travel to Rwanda to listen to genocide survivors. Rather than writing an editorial for this issue, she has shared with us a report on her findings.

A more recent story from that same area that has intrigued me is what is taking place in the church in Burundi. The General Conference has repeatedly requested prayer for the church there but given few details about the situation. Godfrey Sang spoke to many church leaders in Burundi to write an amazing article for us. Drawing on the history of the country, the church, and these extensive interviews, he gives us the necessary context to be able to better understand the recent events.

Completing our collection of stories from Africa is a book review by Nancy Lecourt of Adu Worku's autobiography. Alumni of Pacific Union College will recognize Worku's name from the years that he served as the college librarian. His continued connection to the Ethiopian peo-

ple and culture may be a surprise. His story of giving back to the land of his birth inspired me.

For many of us, Africa is a faraway place and the stories that we know from there often come from long ago. We are pleased to welcome Godfrey Sang back to our pages to tell us another compelling story from Africa, along with others sharing their experiences and studies to bring to life some of the people and places of that vast continent.



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