



EDITORIAL ■ *from the editor*

Better | BY BONNIE DWYER

To conclude his 2007 book, *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance*, Atul Gawande provides a short list of five things a person can do to become a positive deviant, someone who makes things better:

1. Ask an unscripted question
2. Don't complain
3. Count something
4. Write something
5. Change—look for the opportunity to change, be an early adopter

What a great list, I thought. Could it be adapted to making a better church, too? Hmmmm, maybe, then again, maybe not. Asking unscripted questions doesn't always go over well, particularly with people who feel they have all the right answers for life's persistent questions. Does that sound like I'm complaining, and violating the list before I even get started?

Well, in this issue of the journal, we feature people, ideas, and discussions meant to help make things better. We'll do our part. We kick things off with an interview with Ronald Numbers, someone who has been asking unscripted questions, and making people nervous as he did so, for quite sometime. Student blogger Eric Scott shares with us an ongoing discussion he and his father had about science. His biologist father understands the value of counting something. There is more science to consider in our section about stem cells, a topic that changes on a daily basis. If you have not kept up with

the latest advances in cell conversion techniques, we'll take you to a couple of the labs where research is taking place.

Loren Seibold reminds us how actions speak louder than words in his reflection on the Third Commandment.

As we reach these final days of the U.S. presidential campaign, we can acknowledge that discussion of race issues has been lively this year. Has the public discussion changed your view of racism? Have you asked yourself any unscripted questions about it? We have turned to graduate students to provide their thoughts, in hopes of helping us all change for the better.

Speaking of wanting to change things for the better, that is our desire for the legacy of Ellen White. To help us do so, Greg Schneider tells us about the experience of being in the *Red Books* play. That changed him. And David Thiele provides us with a new metaphorical way of thinking about Ellen White's writings. Perhaps with the perceptions of these writers, we all can change.

If you do find new ideas bubbling to the surface as you read this issue, please write something. Gawande concludes his book saying, "So find something new to try, something to change. Count how often you succeed and how often you fail. Write about it. Ask people what they think. See if you can keep the conversation going" (257). We agree and would add that writing something could be a short, snappy letter to the editor; one hundred words would be fine. We would love to hear from you. ■

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