

Editorial

Cry the beloved profession

“Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or a valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much.” (From *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton)

I really wanted to write an upbeat and positive piece for our Journal and yet I found myself reflecting instead on the lamentable state of our profession in the UK today, with my thoughts leading me to recall the title of a book written by Alan Paton, ‘*Cry, the beloved Country*’. I wondered whether Alan Paton looking at UK dentistry in 2015, would have written something like this:

“Cry, the beloved profession, for the (young) dentist that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love this profession too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly, nor stand too silent when admiring his work. Let him not be too moved when his patient sheds tears of joy, nor give too much of his heart to this profession. For there are those who will rob him of all if he gives too much.”

Now it would be easy, and in many cases justifiable, to point the finger and try to blame it all on the deplorable actions of an unfit regulator that is sowing fear and destroying the morale of our beloved profession. But we must also ask ourselves what role have we played or failed to play, that has got us to this state of affairs? Is it apathy, that well-known affliction of dentists that has finally caught up with us and culminated in this complete loss of

control of the regulation of our profession?

Some of the goings-on are so ridiculous that they should be laughable but for the catastrophic impact they are having on the lives of individuals and on the profession in general. Some of it you simply couldn’t make up, and yet they do...make it up that is. Of course there are those from whom the public genuinely needs protection, but it has also got to the point where the profession needs protection from its regulator.

One of the greatest frustrations and some might call it a gross injustice, is that from our perspective the GDC, unlike the dental professionals over whom it stands in judgement, seems to be answerable to its own regulator on paper only. While the PSA (Professional Standards Authority) in their 2014/15 report found that the GDC failed to meet eight of the Standards of Good Regulation there does not appear to have been any sanction. Does this mean the GDC is not accountable to anyone?

Change needs to happen and change needs to happen now. It’s time to borrow from that Churchill spirit and not settle for a paper-waving Chamberlain approach.

What will *you* do? I challenge all our readers to take a moment to step outside of our peaceful and rewarding world of aesthetic dentistry, go the GDC website and read a little about what is happening, in particular some of the heads of charge in some GDC cases. And when asked the question *What will you do?* I hope the answer will include – being the change we want to see, and being part of a bigger action to get the change we need.



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