

### **A Wake up call!**

*“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember therefore what you have received and heard; obey it and repent.” Rev. 3:1-3.*

I recently had a visit from Dennis Wrigley (Director of the Maranatha Community) and some of his team members. They have been involved in reconciliation ministry in Ireland for many years, working for and seeing God’s healing, many times over, between Catholic and Protestant. Since the last election here, they have had a deep sense of the Holy Spirit saying to them “If you want to see a real healing, then the wounds need to be opened up.” They mentioned that this seems to have been so contrary to their previous approach to their ministry of healing and reconciliation, yet it is so much in keeping with my own thoughts and the title of my book – “Heal Not Lightly”. God speaks in such terms to Israel – *“They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying ‘Peace, Peace’, when there is no peace.”* (Jeremiah 8:11. RSV)

In medical terms, if an infected wound heals over without the underlying infection being dealt with, it may be necessary to surgically reopen the wound to remove the encapsulated pocket of infection, dead cells etc., and then leave the wound open to heal from the bottom up. It may also require daily cleaning and dressing along with a course of antibiotics. A slower process, but one that ensures a proper healing!

While we may be in the midst of a peace process in the political realm, the reality is that in these islands, we are far from peace in the spiritual sense of knowing God’s peace, wholeness, shalom. Ministries like Maranatha Community are one of many alerting the church and nation to the need for a radical move of the Holy Spirit. They are currently in the process of organizing a UK & Ireland Tour called “Ignite”, for June through to November this year. They have also produced a document entitled “**A Wake Up Call**”, which we have used to pray out of in our Community prayers. With their permission I want to quote from it here:

### **A Wake Up Call**

We are asleep and in danger of dying in our sleep.

***God is calling us to wake up!***

Our hearts are cold -

***God is wanting to bring the warmth of His love into our being.***

We are half lovers -

***God is wanting us to be consumed with passion for His Kingdom.***

We are half givers -

***God has given all for us and is wanting us to withhold nothing from Him.***

We are half believers -

***God is wanting to hear our 'Yes'.***

We are blind to the reality of dying churches and a dying culture -

***God is wanting to open our eyes.***

We are deaf to His words and to the cry of the needy -  
*God is wanting to unstop our ears.*

We are dumb in the face of injustice, idolatry and denial of life -  
*God is wanting to anoint our lips and end our deafening silence.*

We are soiled with the ways of the world -  
*God is wanting to pour His cleansing waters over us.*

We are in darkness -  
*God is wanting His light to shine on us, in us and through us.*

We look inward, consumed with self -  
*God is calling us to lookout, meeting Him in others.*

We look down in depression and despair -  
*God is calling us to lookup and be overwhelmed with His Glory.*

We look back, captives of the past -  
*God is calling us to look forward with hope and expectation.*

We are embracing a culture of death, decay and hopelessness -  
*God is calling us to newness and life.*

We are separated from each other in our selfish individualism -  
*God is calling us to come together as one.*

We are tired and often despondent -  
*God is coming to make all things new.*

We are cast down and defeated -  
*God is coming to raise us up.*

We are surrounded by lies and deceit -  
*God is wanting us to embrace His Truth.*

Our roots are dry and there is little life within us -  
*God is wanting to water our roots to bring blossom and fruit.*

We consume poison, damaging us in body, mind and spirit -  
*God is inviting us to receive the Bread of Life.*

**God is calling His people to rise up now as the living Body of Christ. We are called to proclaim and live the radical gospel. Together our prayer must be for the fire of God's Spirit to blaze across the land.**

How applicable to us today is this interplay of words mentioned above by the angel speaking to the Church of Sardis – “*You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*” Strange – dead, yet alive! And yet also - “*about to die*”. So true – so subtly true – we can have the Holy Spirit in us at salvation, we can be spiritually alive and yet not know the anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit in so many areas of our lives – deadness! Praise God, even at such a low point, personally or as in this situation in Sardis, collectively – we can strengthen what is left incomplete and near to death. We can look back at the wonderful things we have received and heard from God and respond to His calling, His grace to return through obedience and repentance. The implication is that once again we can know revival, know God's life, vibrancy, vitality, relevancy, power, authority, anointing – to be the Church through which He can minister His healing, saving presence into the wounded places in our lives, society and history.

While we may rejoice over what has been happening in the political front here, let us not settle for that. Many people have said, regarding the reestablishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly, that a foundation has been laid, but much more needs to happen in our society where sectarianism is alive and well. We need to pray for those in political leadership, not forgetting that they are not the primary agent for changing the spiritual climate. Awake, arise Church – this is your hour!!

*Harry Smith.*

“The peoples of the earth have all been created with the purpose of worshipping God uniquely and contributing unique service to other peoples. These diverse gifts bring power to serve or to dominate, to wound or to heal, and God judges or blesses each people group according to their moral state as He works His redemptive purposes in the seasons of human history. *“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”* (Ps. 33:11. NIV)

Source: John Dawson. Healing Americas Wounds. Pg. 121.