

John G. Lake's Healing Well

Sickness and tragedy helped set the direction of the Pentecostal pioneer's unique ministry.

John G. Lake was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1870. The times were tough. Lake watched eight family members die and was sickly himself—suffering from rheumatism. At 16, he gave his heart to Christ and joined the Methodist Church, later deciding to become a minister.

He heard about the healing teachings of John Alexander Dowie and soon made the trip to Chicago to find out if he could be healed. He was. Lake's legs were miraculously healed, and he soon determined that he did not want to see anyone else close to him suffer and die.

Yet Lake was surrounded by infirmities. He had an invalid brother and one sister with breast cancer and another with intense bleeding. God healed each one of them, and Lake was immediately hooked on God's wonderful healing power.

After spending eight years in the ministry, he became dissatisfied and believed that God had more for him.

"I had an intense longing for an intimacy and consciousness of God," he said. "There was such a hunger for God that I prayed, 'God, if You will baptize me in the Holy Spirit, and give me the power of God, nothing shall be permitted to stand before me, and a hundredfold obedience!'"

God answered the prayer. "I knelt in prayer and reconsecration to God; an anointing of the Spirit came upon me. Waves of His glory passed through my being, and I was lifted into a new realm of God's presence and power."

Soon after he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Lake's work entered a new dimension of effectiveness.

"I could lay hands on any man, or woman, and tell what organ

was diseased," he said. "I tested [the gift]. I went into hospitals where physicians could not diagnose a case, touched a patient, and instantly I knew the organ that was diseased, its extent, condition and location."

Lake, his wife, Jennie, and their seven children went to South Africa in 1908 where he established Zion Christian Church and Apostolic Faith Mission. In spite of his enormous success in Africa, his wife died within the first year of his ministry.

Lake, however, pushed on. As people arrived for crusade meetings they would often fall over in the doorway as the evangelist would greet them. At one point during his ministry, dump trucks would line up to collect crutches, wheelchairs and stretchers.

When Lake left Africa in 1912, he returned to the United States where he established several churches, continued to support the work in Africa and launched the Healing Rooms ministry in Spokane, Washington. During the last six years of his life, there were as many as 100,000 healings reported through the Spokane ministry. Even though he died in 1935, Lake's unapologetic belief and faith in God's healing power lives on today.