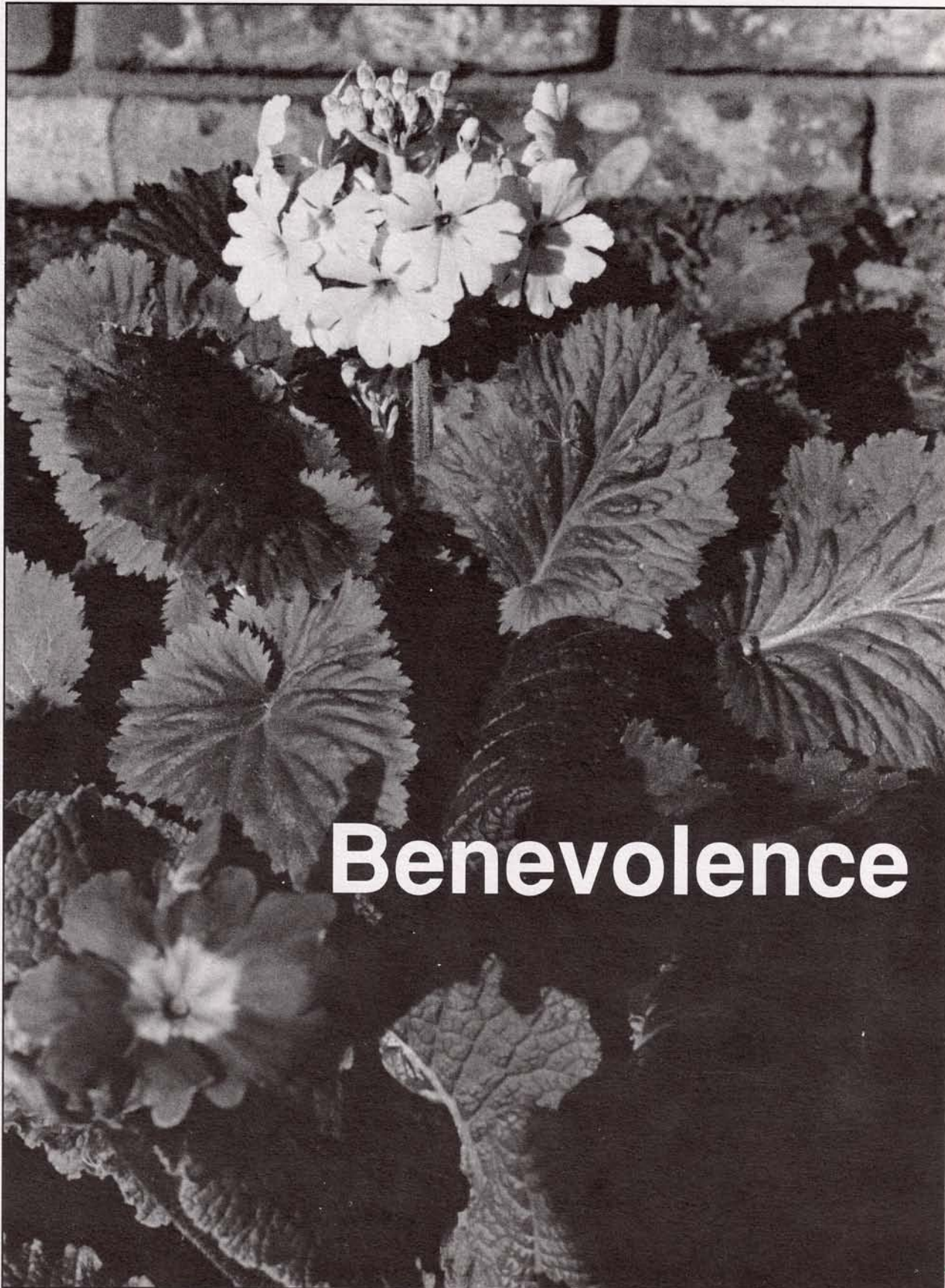


FOCUS

February 1989

FERN LODGE



Benevolence

As we begin the new year, we have much to be grateful for. Our new wing to Hillside House is built and soon to be occupied. Many human obstacles — both in purchasing land and in obtaining approval to build — were overcome to bring us this far. We have no doubt that Love will continue to provide for the details of furnishing and landscaping.

We are addressing this *Focus* to a subject that lies at the heart of the healing mission of Christian Science nursing: benevolence. One definition of *benevolence* is “a generous gift.” In the case of Christian Science nursing, it is a gift that often brings with it the added gift of healing. In our metaphysical work this past year, the Board probed the spiritual dimension of such ideas as giving, gratitude, home, harvest, completeness, and benevolence.

In our study, we found that Mrs. Eddy associated benevolence and philanthropy with unselfed spiritual love — a love that embraces all mankind. For example, she says in *Miscellaneous Writings* (50:27-3): “The human affections need to be changed from self to benevolence and love for God and man; changed to having but *one* God and loving Him supremely, and helping our brother man. This change of heart is essential to Christianity, and will have its effect physically as well as spiritually, healing disease.” Also of special inspiration to us have been our Leader’s comments in *Miscellany* about philanthropy that are on the opposite page.

Thanks to the devoted work of our Development Committee, we are now speaking more frequently and to a wider audience in our newsletters, and we are receiving donations from a greater base of supporters. We are particularly grateful for the opportunity this gives us to share our thoughts on Christian Science nursing with more of you in the field.

As we work to see that, “Supply is the proof of Love’s demand that Love give evidence of its own outpouring” (*C.S. Journal*, 12/78 p.718), we look forward to continued unfoldment in our expression of nursing at Fern Lodge. We also look forward to sharing that unfoldment with you.

Lovingly,

Board of Directors,

Betty Ames, Piedmont; Ray Bishop, Walnut Creek;
Mary Farnum, Walnut Creek; Judyth Prono, Livermore;
Robert Williams, San Francisco; Hazel Wilson, Hayward; Wilbur Wood, Oakland

18457 Madison Avenue • Castro Valley, California 94546-1699 • (415) 886-2448

A Non-Profit Nursing Facility for Christian Scientists Accredited by The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts.

Love Notes

A practitioner's letter read, "Just a word of gratitude for what you are doing for the cause of Christian Science in the community. I am thinking of an individual who needed Christian Science nursing whose son, who was not a Christian Science student, called me for information. He had tried everything in his locality and nothing was available. They had very little funds. He called Fern Lodge and although you were full, you took her. What an impression this made on this son! He saw Christian Science love in a tangible way, and he has never forgotten it, nor have I! She was healed. Thank you all for your perseverance and love."

A patient wrote to her practitioner and shared with us, "Believe me this place is a shining example of Christian Science for the world to know about. I have experienced much, but never such a high, expanded thought as found here. There is no limitation here."

In a loving tribute to Baron and Baroness de Hirsch, philanthropists of her time, Mary Baker Eddy includes some wonderful insights into the nature and blessings of giving. Just listen to what our dear Leader says about philanthropy, what it is and what it does:

Philanthropy is loving, ameliorative, revolutionary; it wakens lofty desires, new possibilities, achievements, and energies; it lays the axe at the root of the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit; it touches thought to spiritual issues, systematizes action, and insures success; it starts the wheels of right reason, revelation, justice, and mercy; it unselfs men and pushes on the ages.

Miscellany 287:19-2



Benevolence: Why and How Much?

Since our beginnings in 1950, Fern Lodge has been dedicated to nursing care without regard to how long this care is needed or how much it costs. About 70% of our applicants require financial assistance.

Facts about Medi-Cal

A major source of financial assistance is the Medi-Cal welfare program run by the State of California. This program is open to anyone who needs nursing care but has very limited financial resources. To qualify for Medi-Cal funds, an individual must have less than \$2,000 in assets. The State will then supplement what the patient is able to pay up to \$55 per day. Since the cost of care at Fern Lodge is about \$110 per day, the result is a shortfall of some \$1,600 per month for every patient receiving Medi-Cal assistance. We presently rely on donations from the field to make up this shortfall.

With up to 70% of our patients requiring Medi-Cal support, we must now grant as much as \$27,000 each month in benevolence. The growing magnitude of this shortfall led us to establish the Benevolence Endowment Fund several years ago. Our goal of raising \$2 million for this Fund was set with the intent that the interest it can then earn will substantially offset the Medi-Cal shortfall. While we will still rely on donations too, monthly income from the Fund will enable us to maintain our open admission policy.

Endowment Goals

Our longer-range goals are becoming more clear as we seek the funds needed for this Endowment. It would benefit patients if we could eliminate reliance on the State welfare funds entirely. Medi-Cal's requirements include the need for Christian Science practitioners to report regularly to the government the nature of the physical difficulty their patients are dealing with. Rather than contributing to healing, this tends to reinforce the conviction that these people are ill. Also, the Medi-Cal requirement that a person have less than \$2,000 while he or she is at the facility presents challenges. We frequently see the difficulty faced by those who have come to us with funds to live on. Once they have spent these funds on nursing care they face the prospect of re-establishing a home without the financial means to do so. Sometimes it may seem easier to continue to receive nursing at the facility. The question comes, "where can I go with no money if I am healed?"

meeting the needs of Christian Scientists who require nursing care, or to an individual's ability to pay for such care. Financial assistance to stay at Fern Lodge.

We Have A Vision

Still another facet of benevolence is now apparent to us. Christian Science nurses and practitioners generally agree that in most cases the best place for patients to be while they pray for healing is in their own homes. Facilities have an important role to play in giving Christian Science nursing for those who need a retreat from home responsibilities or whose home atmosphere is not supportive of Christian Science healing. But it is plain that coming to any institution, however harmonious it may be, presents a new set of challenges to many individuals.

One difficulty facing Christian Scientists who could be served by in-home nursing is the cost of such care. Although in many cases this cost would be significantly less than the charges at a nursing facility, no benevolence funds are now available to pay for on-going home care. Many people come to nursing facilities simply because they cannot afford or find in-home Christian Science nursing. Benevolence funds which would be available to assist those with nursing needs regardless of where these needs are met would allow many Christian Scientists to remain in the atmosphere they find most loving and healing, their own homes. At the same time, the availability of funds to pay for private duty nursing care will help ensure that there are regular opportunities for Christian Science nurses to offer their services in people's homes.

The Next Step

We feel this vision for a more broadly defined benevolence fund is worth pursuing. We plan to explore its possibilities with others in the field. Making Christian Science nursing care more widely available will support Christian Scientists in need, help maintain the dignity and defense of our Cause, and stand as a "city set on an hill," that will show the works of Christian Science to all mankind, and thereby glorify God.

If you have any comments, suggestions or other ideas about establishing a benevolence fund for Christian Science nursing that would be independent of nursing facilities, please contact Fern Lodge's Administrator, George Strong, at (415) 886-2448.



More Love Notes

A practitioner wrote, "Thank you all at Fern Lodge for the loving, unselfed care given there. I am so grateful that we have in our movement a place where a dedicated Christian Scientist can be cared for, even when her monetary resources are gone."

Accompanying payment of a patient's bill was this note: "I should have called this the 'loving' benevolence instead of the 'bill.' Our eternal gratitude to the loving staff — what a blessing to be there."

A donation came to us with this message: "It is joyous to learn of your abundant love for mankind. Many will be expecting and watching your progress."

The Development Committee is made up of three Fern Lodge staff and five to seven volunteers. We devote prayer, time, hard work, and enthusiasm to meet the financial goals of providing benevolent nursing care at Fern Lodge.

We meet Thursday mornings for two hours and lunch. We share our previous week's activities, evaluate projects, consider new approaches, plan them, accept new assignments and then go off to pray some more and do some more.

Interested people with special talents are invited to these meetings to hear our plans and goals and share their expertise with us. We always welcome new members and advisors. Our newest member joined us in December and hasn't missed a meeting since.

Here is an overview of our projects and accomplishments since the committee began in the last quarter of 1987.

- 1) Five Outreach Meetings were held. First a Kick-off in Castro Valley, followed by travels to Walnut Creek, Carmel, San Francisco, and Marin to explain more clearly the uniqueness of Fern Lodge in the Christian Science nursing field. More can be done in communities we have not yet visited.
- 2) Six-minute cassette tapes were sent to 98 branch churches in northern California describing Fern Lodge's special challenge and asking them to be regular contributors. We are happy to report that the number of churches giving regularly jumped from twelve to twenty-six.

In January we sent a letter to these branch churches thanking them and asking for their continued support. And we invited other branch churches to please consider us in their budgets for this year.

- 3) We went from two to four *Fern Lodge Focus* issues per year. We have since seen more frequent donations. Also efforts continue to increase our mailing list, which now stands at 4,500. Please let your friends know about our work and ask them to send us their addresses.
- 4) Clearway Foundation, a Christian Science foundation headquartered in Newport Beach, sent us \$2,000 two separate times, and we are very grateful.
- 5) Efforts to reach selected California foundations for grants from outside our movement bore no fruit although we sent out 116 letters to foundations that support health, aging and welfare projects.
- 6) \$19,500 was received from seven Associations of Christian Science Teachers in '88. We expect additional support as we meet members of other Associations and tell them of our service to the healing mission of Christian Science. One Association closing after 101 years has given its remaining funds to Fern Lodge, \$15,000. We are grateful!
- 7) We sponsored a talk on Christian Science nursing by Mrs. Jean Tainsh, CSB in First Church, Oakland that inspired those who attended with a fresh view of nursing.

8) Our Support Group in Rossmoor came to Fern Lodge for a luncheon, a tour of our new wing, and a short talk about our development program. The Berkeley Support Group held both a bridge luncheon and a Bible slide show. They charged admission and gave Fern Lodge the proceeds. Development Committee members spoke with both of these groups.

9) Alma Gardner is a teacher who is presently giving classes called "Pathways in the Bible" to groups in Castro Valley and Orinda. She is donating to us her fees for the whole year.

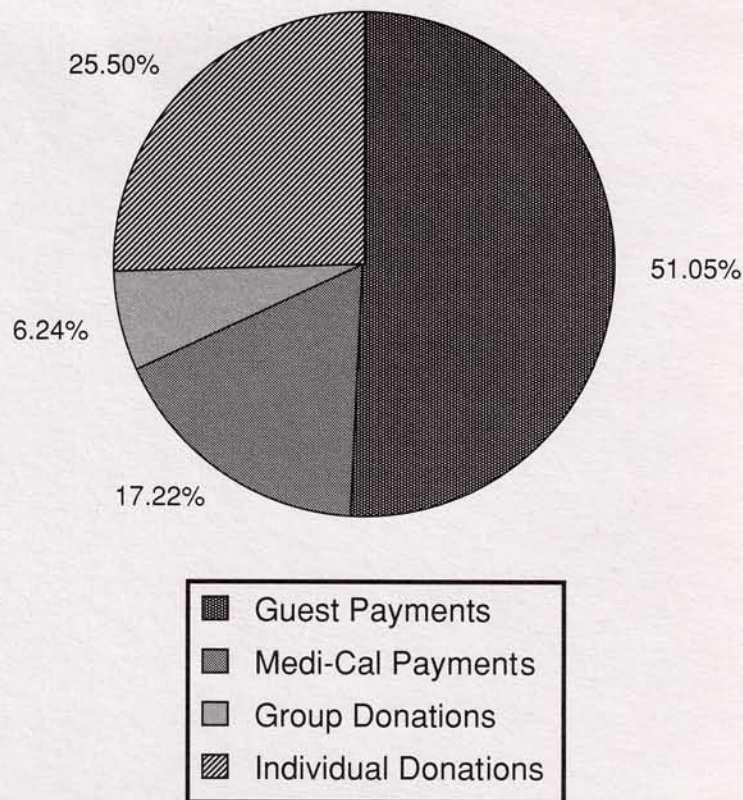
10) We have a new "Fern Lodge Giving" brochure which tells about trusts and bequests. This brochure explains some long range ways to support Fern Lodge financially and was mailed with our *Focus* last November.

We are happy to report that donations last year were double those received in 1987.

There is no hindrance to development. God derived qualities such as wisdom, steadfastness, courage, perseverance, patience and unselfed love multiply as we grow, as we develop.

Some of our future plans include:

- a) A short video tape to give a picture of Fern Lodge for those who cannot come to visit.
- b) A challenge grant for the Benevolence Endowment Fund. We'll tell you more about this soon.



Group Donations come from Churches, Students Associations, Institutions (Clearway Foundation), and Fern Lodge Support Groups

Save These Dates!!

The "Seamless Robe" a panel discussion of the range of Christian Science Nursing will be presented for the East Bay on Sunday March 19th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at First Church Walnut Creek.

The same presentation will be given in the Sacramento on June 10th at 1:00 p.m. at First Church Sacramento.