

***Holy Play***  
***A South Carolina Lutheran Via de Cristo Publication***

*I met Bill Hightower on my pilgrim weekend February 25, 1996. He was the silent professor at my table. Bill has throughout his life sat silently at the back of the room quietly doing God's work seeking no applause. So it seemed fitting to pick his brain on some simple thought-provoking questions. Silent Professor? Very Fitting and Accurate!*

### **A Conversation with Bill Hightower**

*Bill, give us a little history of why you attended your first weekend and share with us what the weekend experience did to alter your life?* **My Sister-in-law made SC Women's #1 and I saw what a change it made in her life and I wanted some of what she had experienced on her weekend.**

**On my weekend I think I really began to understand what God's Grace was. Having been a Christian all my life, I don't think I really learned a lot, but what it did was move what I knew from my head to my heart.**

*People see Lucy as your support on many levels. How has she influenced your thinking over the years?* **Lucy has always been my very biggest supporter and a dependable sounding board. She has always supported me on those projects that we considered worthy. She has not only been my loving wife for the past 64 years, but also my very Best Friend.**

*Tell us about your volunteer work on the Secretariat and all your other leadership positions you have served within the Via de Cristo community.* **I'm not too sure about the leadership role, but I did serve 15 years on the Secretariat, with eight of those as Lay Director. Back in the earlier days of the movement there were not many of us, and so sometimes we had to double up.**

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*If there were not many from the community helping in those early days, how did you get everything done? We had to work many teams in a row and serve more years on the Secretariat than was good for the movement as there were too few who stepped up to take on the jobs.*

*Bill, you are revered as the man who takes care of all the community prayers. How did this come to you as a need? During my weekend back in 1992 one of the Spiritual Directors talked about the need for us to pray for each other, using James 5:13-16 (printed at the end) and other scriptures dealing with intercessory prayer. It had a profound effect on my prayer life and me. At this time PC's had become fairly common, and I had some experience since I worked with Naval Fire Control computers for years. I felt that, if the community had been as touched by intercessory prayer as I had been, then they might like to have a vehicle so that they could know about their Brothers and Sisters with problems. The Secretariat thought it was a good idea and gave their OK.*

*What are some of the challenges you have with being the center of all the prayer correspondence you have coming to you? After over 20 years I continue to be amazed to hear how God answers prayers. Sometimes it's not answered in ways that were asked for, but always in the better way.*

**The other side of the coin, so to speak, is that there have been times when it seems that people get tired of hearing so many “puny” prayers or prayers requests that are too wordy. This has resulted in some members of the community having their names removed from the Prayer Request list. I know that I can't be the judge so I send along all of the requests just as I get them, but I sure hate to see “the Baby thrown out with the bath water!!!”**

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*Can you give me an example of "puny" prayers? Puny was the only word I could think of that covered prayer request that asked the community to pray for “good weather for the Sunday School picnic or...requesting prayers for his daughter to do well on her final exam that she was to take the next morning or ...asking for prayer that the stock he just bought would make him a lot of money.”*

*What do you see as present and future challenges and growing opportunities for our community? If you ask me whether I think we will get back on track ... **You can bet that I do!** Having attended the National Assembly for the Lutheran Via de Cristo movement for many years, I began to notice that our decline in numbers of weekends and the lack of enthusiasm overall is not uncommon among Secretariats across the nation. I saw it happen in Minnesota where the decline turned around. They now have over 12,000 cursillistas and they have enough pilgrims that they have two weekends every other month.*

**I truly believe that our latest drive to “rekindle the fire” will be the spark that will grow into a roaring fire.**

*Bill, if you could wave a magic wand and pick three (3) things you believe would turn around the SC Lutheran via de Cristo movement, what would they be and why these three?*

- 1. PRAY...Have all the Cursillistas praying for God centered weekends.**
- 2. SPONSORSHIP...Have ‘all Cursillistas’ seeking and asking Christian friends to consider being pilgrims.**
- 3. WEEKEND ESSENTIALS...Base our SCVDC Weekends on Essentials and less on our likes and dislikes.**

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**These are the principals on which Cursillo was founded and is proven successful.**

**The Prayer of Faith: James 5: 13-16** Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective.

**Genuine wisdom: James 3: 13** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. *Bill Hightower, our brother in Christ, you have set the bar high where it should be and as an example for all of us. So we say to you and Lucy...*

*“ Well done, our good and faithful servants!”*

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