STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR REVEREND DR. ALBERT WINN, PARISH ASSOCIATE

In 1953 I moved with my family to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to teach Bible at Stillman College, the only college for African-Americans operated by the Southern Presbyterian Church. We went out of the conviction, shared by my wife, that racism was a major problem in the nation and in our church. The invitation to teach at Stillman offered an opportunity to do something tangible about it.

We knew we would be cordially received by the president and the faculty at Stillman. I had previously been down to teach at summer conferences and felt they were already my friends. We were not sure about the people out in town. But they, too, were cordial and welcoming. Stillman was an established part of the community, had been there since 1876, and had always had white presidents and whites and blacks teaching on the faculty. Since my Sundays were free I was invited to preach all over that part of Alabama. Our two older children were accepted without incident in grades 1 and 2 of the neighborhood school- it was segregated of course. Ladies from the First Presbyterian Church came to invite us to become members there. We chose to join a relatively new church in town called Covenant. I got busy with my teaching, learning more each day about the disadvantages of growing up in homes where the only books were the Bible and the Sears catalogue and attending schools where the whole library could be packed in the trunk of a car and marveling at the bright minds I found there in spite of that.

All that began to change with the Supreme Court decision in the *Brown* case, outlawing segregation in the schools. The South began to arm itself for a program of massive resistance. The Ku Klux Klan came out of the closet and assumed an active role in Tuscaloosa. On the edge of town, along with the welcome signs of Rotary, Kiwanis, and so on, was a sign of a robed Klansman with the words: "The Ku Klux Klan welcomes you to Tuscaloosa." The White Citizens Council (we called it the up-town Klan) was organized. It didn't put up a welcome sign, but it began to withhold credit, to foreclose mortgages, to increase taxes on any white citizens who seemed to be soft on segregation. My invitations to preach in white churches stopped. An existing invitation to preach at the First Presbyterian Church in Selma was not withdrawn. The man who issued it was a perfect gentleman and took us to dinner afterward, but in front of the church one of the deacons was passing out mimeographed fliers urging people to go back home and not to come in and listen to a man who taught n_____ all week.

A really dangerous time came when a black student named Arthurine Lucy tried to register for admission to the University of Alabama, also in Tuscaloosa on the other side of town. The students rioted. The police, many of whom were Klansmen, stood with folded arms, making no effort to maintain order. The motels filled up with people from all the hate groups in the U.S. There was no protection from lawlessness in Tuscaloosa. My wife and I looked at our four little children and wondered where we could turn for help if we needed it. No one in the city administration would help. The governor of Alabama would certainly be of no help. Maybe we could call on the F.B.I. I didn't know then what I learned later, that the F.B.I. was headed by a confirmed racist. I began to read the Psalms with new eyes. They are filled with pleas to God for protection from enemies. I began to seek the faith of the psalmists.

Stillman, with its mixed faculty, was bound to be a target. The day came when the Klan staged a huge rally in the Tuscaloosa City Park. Someone from the police called Dr. Hay, the Stillman president, to warn him that the Klan was planning a procession right through the Stillman campus. It couldn't have come at a worse time. Our annual alumni dinner was

scheduled for that evening. The college dining hall was right on the route the Klan would take through the campus. It was blistering hot, no air conditioning. Through the open windows the Klansmen would see white people and black people eating together – the most heinous crime imaginable to a segregationist. Dr. Hay rushed downtown and brought shades. "We'll all cook," I told him. Then I remembered a World War II story: how the Norwegians prevented Hitler from landing his troops on their airfields. They parked cars on all the runways. I suggested that we ask everyone to park right in the road that the Klan would have to take, so the procession would not be able to get through and pass by the dining hall. We decided to do that. The time for the dinner arrived. We parked the road solid and sat down to eat. The Klan did not come. When the meal was over the Klan was still not in sight. We went to the cars and all went home.

They mystery was solved when we read our newspaper the next morning. The Grand Dragon who organized the rally had made the mistake of taking along a young, under-age woman. Her father, down in southern Alabama, had sworn out a warrant for the Grand Dragon. Officers arrived at the rally and arrested him. The rally broke up in confusion.

I told Dr. Hay that, instead of buying shades or parking up the road, he and I should have read the story of how Elisha's servant panicked when the Syrian army surrounded the city of Dothan, where he and his master were. Elisha prayed that the Lord would open his servant's eyes. When his eyes were opened he saw horses and chariots of fire protecting Dothan from all danger (2 Kings 6:11-17).

Those horses and chariots of fire protected Stillman all through the dangerous years of the civil rights struggle until it emerged and became the strong institution that it is today.