

TO: The president and the faculty

FROM: Willis E. Elliott

4 Feb 70

Bill Webster credited this

with saving NYTS Seminary
from extinction.

On this my 52nd birthday, I deeply regret having to write to you this painful personal note--painful to me and to you, personal in that my wife is the only person who before you knew even so much as my intention to write it.

On the recent faculty retreat, I strongly and repeatedly urged that the faculty resign en bloc in order to give dying NYTS a chance for continued life as a degree-granting institution. By straw vote, we did achieve unanimity on willingness to resign. But we set up no process looking toward en masse resignation, and the days for effective action are fast wasting away, nor have any of the factors persuasive toward our unanimity changed.

These factors, as I pressed them at the retreat, are:

1...The trustees will not consider eroding the value of our one property, the building, in order to continue the present faculty payroll: their conclusion, formal or informal, in which I concur, is that they would be unfaithful to the legal essence of their role if they were to mortgage the building to the limit in the sure prospect of losing it within two years, when they have the option of liquidation with a view to in perpetuity support for a restructured NYTS.

2...The president, and again I concur, sees tenure as an insuperable obstacle to the continuance of NYTS as a degree-granting institution--insuperable, but obviously removable by the tenured faculty, of whom I am one.

3...We the faculty at the retreat were unanimous in the desire that NYTS continue as a degree-granting institution, and know that this would be virtually impossible in the event of the trustees' dismissal of even one tenured faculty member: the life/death of this degree-granting institution lies in the hands of each one of us tenured faculty.

4...Every faculty member must die qua faculty member to NYTS: by retirement, resignation, or dismissal. In the present situation, not to resign would be both our deaths and the death of our school as a degree-granting institution. But our resignation might function as crucifixion-toward-resurrection.

Because I look toward that resurrection, and refuse to be party to the virtual murder of NYTS as a degree-granting institution, I have removed my block from the tenure wall: I have submitted my resignation without visible prospect of being rehired: nothing has been said or written to me indicating that I might possibly have a future employee relationship with NYTS. When you receive this, you may already have done the same. We have no process for en masse resignation, but I hope and pray that the trustees before the 19th will have our en bloc resignations.

Nothing of the above qualifies my full and hearty participation in our total community's effort to shape up a viable vision for the future of NYTS as a servant of our Lord in the world.