

RIVENDELL INSTITUTE

a place of light and truth to reach the world from the heart of Yale University

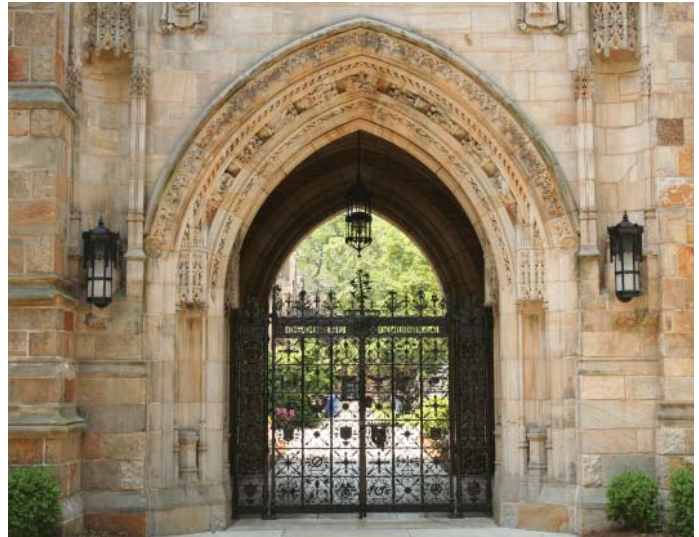
May 2008

Dear Friend of Rivendell,

Nearly twenty years ago we began to dream about creating a new work that would restore the voice of vital Christian faith to academia. From those early ruminations came a vision and a plan. In 1995 we founded the Rivendell Institute at one of the most prominent academic institutions in the world, Yale. For thirteen years now we have pursued our mission *to bring Christ and His gospel to bear on all the life and labors of the university*. Our enduring commitment to engage and equip Yale students and faculty has seen great progress over this time. Through public lectures, symposia, seminars, forums, training projects, personal mentoring and academic scholarship, we have seen the Lord open doors for gospel influence at Yale, and beyond Yale. We feel poised to see increasing fruit from all of these labors. But we also feel that we lack one thing central to our vision and long-term mission effectiveness. This special report tells of that need, and our journey so far to see it met.

The Need: A Place to Call Our Own

Several years ago we presented Rivendell's vision to one of our Yale faculty supporters, and he offered this advice: "If you hope to have a lasting influence at Yale you need a place. However motivated or misconstrued, without a place of your own you will appear marginal." Having worked at Yale and in the Ivy League for over twenty years we recognized this professor's insight. Moreover, the core of our vision involves vacating the margins to bring a vital Christian witness *back within* the university. Accordingly, we have longed to establish our **physical presence** here—"a place of light and truth" that would serve as both a **base** of operations and a **bridge** of influence for our gospel mission within Yale.



As years passed we felt this need acutely. Our 'office' consisted of cardboard boxes filled with manila folders and laptops with electronic files. We could barely manage to manage! Even more crucially, no space of our own meant **restrictions on both the number and quality of our activities and events**. Finding space for our programs presented a constant challenge, as we stood in line at the registrar's office each semester to secure rooms for every event and activity, whether large or small. Furthermore, the only atmosphere we could provide for a key element in our mission strategy—**hospitality**—was a classroom setting.

THE RIVENDELL INSTITUTE

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The Launch: ‘Exceedingly abundantly’

Believing that the time had come to step out in faith we launched a capital campaign in Spring, 2006. Not long after beginning this new initiative we were greeted by **a stunning development**. A property had come onto the market—a classic, three-story Victorian home just one block from the western edge of campus. When we made our interest known to the owner, she told us, “I want to see someone in our house whom we like and trust. **I want to sell it to you.**”

Was this the Lord’s provision, an ‘exceedingly abundant’ supply far in advance of our own timetable and beyond our expectations? Time was of the essence and our funds were nowhere near the purchase cost, but **so unique and timely was the opportunity that it seemed clearly from Him**. On the advice of many counselors, we made an agreement with the owner that included a deadline and a deposit. If we could not raise the \$575,000 to buy the property by July 1, we would lose it, along with our deposit. The agreement signed, we fell to our knees . . . and then jumped to our feet, confident that if this was from the Lord He would provide.



Long story short: **the money did not come in. But God** (how we love that phrase!) had another plan.

A graduate of our ministry from years ago, and a close friend to many of us, caught wind of the opportunity to acquire this property. As June progressed he and his wife **surprised us by saying that they would buy it** and pay the expenses until we were able to buy it from them. In November of 2006 we moved in. **The Rivendell Institute now had an address**, 16 Lynwood Place, New Haven, just a stone’s throw away from Yale!

A Base and a Bridge

It is difficult to calculate the **profound difference a facility has made** in our mission effectiveness. Although 16 Lynwood Place stands in need of extensive renovations, what we can now do, and what we have been able to do just in the last 18 months is staggering. We now have a well-functioning business office (ably overseen by our administrator Megan), offices for other team members, and even off-street parking! Most significant are **enhanced programs**. The areas on the first floor have provided the space to run several ongoing seminars, a host of small and medium-sized group discussions and events, and of course an occasional party—all out of one location.

What had been a rather scattered and haphazard mode of operations has now become an increasingly coherent, effective professional work. Our presence at Yale is now physically evident. **We have a ‘base’ and a ‘bridge’**.

Reality Check: \$2 Million? Are You Crazy?

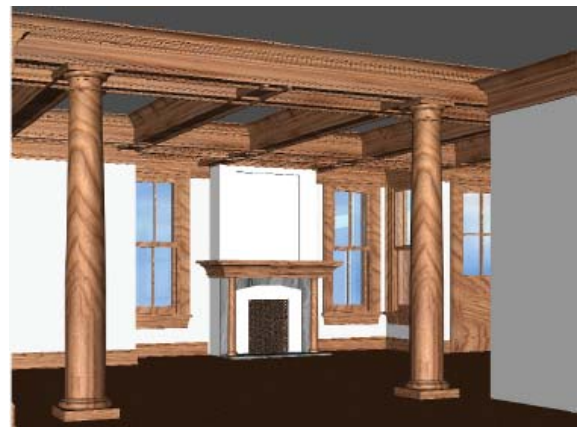
The **goal of raising approximately \$2 million** to buy and renovate our center and fund its use might cause some to think *we are crazy*. When we began we had not done a feasibility study, did not have a structured plan in place, and had only limited experience at raising such a large sum of money.

How does the Lord confirm a path and instill **the confidence that He will provide for all that we need in our journey**? For us it was three things: the conviction that our mission effectiveness required this move, the unique opportunity of 16 Lynwood Place, and the remarkable way that everyone rallied around us. If those we hold dear and who hold us dear had not stepped forward with their support and sacrificial giving we may well have stalled somewhere between ‘un-feasible’ and ‘early returns’.

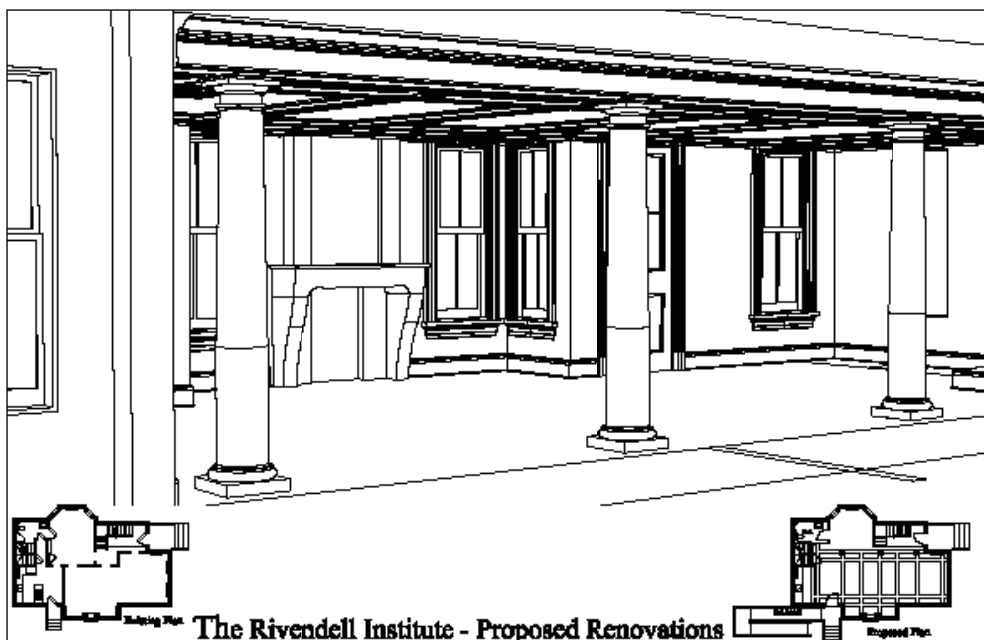
But the later returns have overwhelmed us with encouragement. In the last two years we have seen **nearly \$400,000 given or pledged** to our capital campaign. This is a long way from the \$2 million dollars we need, but **exponentially greater than we have ever seen** since we began Rivendell 13 years ago.

What Dreams May Come

The Center we dream of has a number of components, all ultimately aimed at **maximizing our strategic presence and impact at Yale**. Our architect has stressed the value of both creating a space that suits all of our present purposes and increasing the existing space to accommodate growth. After tending to numerous structural and infrastructural needs, what really excites us are all of the components of **a Center that will accommodate the manifold activities we imagine for Rivendell**. Among these are:



- A large, multi-purpose front room that serves as a space for seminars, forums, social gatherings and receptions
- Fully equipped offices to accommodate our business operations as well as work and study areas for Rivendell staff
- A dining room and kitchen for hosting receptions, dinner-parties with Yale students, faculty and university officials, and for all of our efforts to offer an atmosphere of hospitality



- A research library and reading room
- Conference rooms for small group studies, mentoring, and organizational meetings
- A garden and grounds for larger social events and receptions
- A finished basement with additional activities space

It is exciting to imagine the potential that all of these features represent. Through careful renovations and build up, our capacity to

serve the Yale community will significantly increase opportunities to engage and equip students and faculty effectively.

As we see **other Yale religious organizations pour literally tens of millions of dollars into their facilities** (the price tag for the recent renovation and build-up of one soared to \$75 million!), we believe that **\$2 million for our own ‘place of light and truth’ is well worth the investment.**

How You Can Continue to Help

Your ongoing commitment to us and to this project represents a vital element in the success of our campaign. Our most urgent need at the moment is to **raise the app. \$275,000 still needed to purchase 16 Lynwood Place** from our alumnus. We are praying and working to fulfill this need **by Christmas '08**. Our faith goal is then to raise the campaign total of **\$2 million within the next 24 months**, by Summer 2010, by which time we also hope to have begun renovations.



Here are three specific ways you can continue to help see the dream of a fully-renovated center for Rivendell fulfilled:

- **Prayer**—If God must provide then God must be asked! God delights to answer the prayers of His people, and we covet your prayers for our faith goals and for **other partners** to join us.
- **Personal Giving**—We are so grateful for the sacrifices you have made already, and ask only that you would consider how you may **continue to invest your resources over the next 24 months**. (We are able to receive non-cash gifts as well.) Any and all donations are much appreciated!
- **Prospective Donors**—One of our greatest challenges is to find and connect with new people who have the interest and the means to partner with us. Can you think of anyone else who may be excited to hear of our mission at Yale? Friends or colleagues? People at church or in organizations you belong to? People connected with charitable foundations?

It is a delight to rehearse this story with you again. Indeed, it strengthens my own faith just to retell how God has led us in this new path and already provided for us. Thank you for standing with us and for your ongoing partnership with us to see “*Christ and His gospel brought to bear on all the life and labors of the university.*”

With much gratitude,

David, for the Rivendell team

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