

## Introducing the Nagel Institute

### Origin

In May of 2005, Calvin College approved a new institute to study Christianity in the global south and east. Doug and Lois Nagel, friends of the college, provided an endowment to underwrite basic operations. The college named Joel Carpenter, Calvin's provost and professor of history, to be the first director of the new institute. The Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity began its work in the early months of 2006 and publicly celebrated its opening on May 17, 2006.

### Purpose

The Nagel Institute aims to:

- **Promote** a deeper understanding of world Christianity.
- **Partner** with study centers to strengthen Christian intellectual movements in the global south and east.
- **Provoke** a reorientation of Christian thought in the North Atlantic region toward the concerns arising from world Christianity.



### Services

- **Consultation and coordination:** encourage and assist agencies to reorient their work toward world Christianity and its concerns.
- **News of the field:** provide fresh word of the ideas, projects and products emanating from the study of world Christianity.
- **Talks and publications:** post papers and lectures generated by Nagel Institute projects and programs, and others that are of interest to the field.
- **Information on other study centers:** maintain web pages and links for study centers worldwide.

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## **NAGEL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY**



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## Activities

The Nagel Institute will conduct projects and programs that will enable it to pursue our three main purposes. These activities, broadly described, are

- research,
- communications,
- networking, and
- providing scholarly resources.

The Nagel Institute's activities, we anticipate, will include mounting team research projects; hosting or providing other support for individual scholars; sponsoring public conferences and invitational seminars; enabling better access to information for research, teaching, and journalism; facilitating scholarly networking and communication; teaching and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, and producing publications. The Nagel Institute's purpose drives it to be collaborative and to seek equitable and effective partnerships with other centers for Christian thought and cultural engagement.

## Logo

The Institute's logo features an Adinkra symbol, from Ghana. Adinkras are stamped onto cloth, pottery and documents to add meaning as well as adornment. This symbol, Akoma Ntoaso, "the linked hearts," shows understanding, agreement, trust, and partnership. It is a most fitting emblem for the Institute, which aims to link Christian scholars worldwide.

## Projects

Currently the Nagel Institute is engaged in three projects, each in partnership with other agencies:

**Primal Religions.** With the Akrofi-Christaller Institute for Theology, Mission and Culture, located in Ghana, the Nagel Institute is conducting an inquiry into the relationship between Christianity and primal religions, such as the traditional faiths of Africans, Native Americans, South Asians, East Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

**African Christianity.** In partnership with the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship and

Hartford Seminary, the Nagel Institute is cosponsoring a video documentary that presents today's powerful African Christian movements and traditions. This project has major support from the John Templeton Foundation.

**Religion and Science in China.** The Nagel Institute has begun a partnership with the Society of Christian Philosophers to engage Chinese university scholars in the field of religion and science.

## Staff



**Joel Carpenter**, director of the Nagel Institute, is also professor of history at Calvin College. He served Calvin for a decade as its provost, and prior to that he was for seven years the director of religion grant making for the Pew Charitable Trusts. For a dozen

years prior to that work, Dr. Carpenter taught history at Calvin, Trinity and Wheaton Colleges. At Wheaton, he was also director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals.

A Calvin College graduate, Dr. Carpenter has a Ph.D. degree in history from the Johns Hopkins University. His most recent book, co-edited with Lamin Sanneh, is *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (Oxford, 2005).



**Donna Romanowski**, administrative assistant of the Nagel Institute, has worked for 15 years at Calvin College as the program coordinator of the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship. In that capacity she has administered several dozen

funded research and publishing projects and has played a major role in bringing a number of those projects to publication.

## Planning Team

The Nagel Institute owes its current shape and thrust to an accomplished team of planners and initial advisors at Calvin College:

**Daniel Bays**, professor of history and chair of the Asian studies program,

**Paul Freston**, professor and Byker Chair in sociology,

**Won Lee**, associate professor of religion,

**Joel Navarro**, associate professor of music, and

**Barbara Omolade**, dean of multicultural affairs

## Programs

As funds permit and plans unfold, the Nagel Institute intends to develop a regular set of programs. We anticipate sponsoring:

- **special courses and workshops** on aspects of world Christianity,
- **a Faculty Fellows program** for professors of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary,
- **Conferences and seminars** at Calvin College or at other study centers worldwide,
- **Lectures in World Christianity:** an annual series of occasional lecturers,
- **Calvin Research Fellowships** for Calvin professors who are conducting scholarly work on a relevant topics,
- **Student Assistantships:** provide one or two student assistantships to work alongside a Calvin faculty member or a visiting scholar, and
- **Faculty Exchanges:** assist Calvin College in developing relevant inter-university exchanges.

