

Prenotandum: This report on a workshop on ‘The impact of new communication technologies on religions in West Africa’ at the Africa Centre at Bayreuth University on 8.10.2001 was published in *AASR-Newsletter* 15-16 (May/November) 2001: 16-17.

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The Impact of
NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
ON RELIGIONS IN WEST AFRICA

Following up on the Conference on European Traditions in the History of the Religions of Africa, a one-day workshop was held at Iwalewa House, the Africa Centre of Bayreuth University, on 8.10.2001 on ‘The Impact of the New Communication Technologies on Religions of West Africa’. Lectures were presented by Prof. Jacob Olupona (University of California at Davis) on ‘Current research on Nigerian Christianity in the United States’; by Prof. Musa Gaiya (University of Jos, Nigeria), on ‘Approaches and Emerging Themes in the History of Christianity in Nigeria’; by Dr. Afe Adogame (Bayreuth University), on ‘African (Christian) New Religious Movements and the Internet’; and by Prof. Andrew Walls (Edinburgh University), on ‘New Challenges in African Church History’.

The workshop was organised by the *Kulturwissenschaftliches Forschungskolleg* (Research Group in the Cultural Sciences) of the University of Bayreuth, and the Department of Religious Studies of Bayreuth University in the framework of their Research Programme *Lokales Handeln in Afrika im Kontext globaler Einflüsse* (‘Local [Modes of Inter-] Action in Africa in the Context of Global Influences’). It followed up on some of its earlier workshops, such as one on ‘Innovations and their Contextualisation in African Islamic Societies’, held on 9-10 February 2001 in Bayreuth; and ‘Pentecostalism and Globalisation’, held on 24-25 March 2001 in Bayreuth also. It focused on a theme which had been a recurrent subject of discussions in these earlier workshops, to wit the growing popularity of the new communication technologies, especially e-mail and internet, with the new religions of West Africa: neo-traditional, Christian, Muslim, and Oriental for external propaganda and internal control. It reflected on the effects the use of these

electronic means had on the belief systems of these new religions; on the opportunities the internet offered for research; and what problems emerged from studying these new religions through the internet.