

STEPHEN ELLIS  
GERRIE TER HAAR

# Worlds of Power

Religious Thought and Political  
Practice in Africa

HURST & COMPANY, LONDON

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> v
Introduction	1
<i>Why we wrote this book</i>	3
<i>Themes</i>	7
<i>Chapters</i>	
1. Ideas	11
<i>El Negro and other stories</i>	11
<i>Defining religion</i>	13
<i>A study of ideas</i>	16
<i>A dynamic model of religion in Africa</i>	21
<i>Causation</i>	24
2. Words	27
<i>Pavement radio</i>	28
<i>News and media</i>	30
<i>Rumours and facts</i>	33
<i>Rumour and religion</i>	39
3. Spirits	49
<i>Evangelist Mukendi's visit to the underworld</i>	49
<i>The spirit world</i>	51
<i>Communication with the spirit world</i>	56
<i>The politics of possession</i>	60
<i>The pathology of the spirit world</i>	63
<i>Spirits and politicians</i>	66
4. Secrets	70
<i>Secrecy in politics</i>	72
<i>Secret societies</i>	75
<i>Arcane power and political intelligence</i>	84
<i>Governing spiritual power</i>	87

5. Power	90
<i>Spirits and the ambivalence of power</i>	92
<i>Power and institutions</i>	99
<i>Religion and democracy</i>	102
<i>Religious literature as political comment</i>	110
6. Wealth	114
<i>Money, credit and wealth</i>	115
<i>People and wealth in Africa</i>	118
<i>Bargaining with the spirit world</i>	123
<i>Regulating money</i>	128
<i>Wild economies</i>	132
7. Morality	141
<i>Law, justice and morality</i>	142
<i>The concept of witchcraft</i>	149
<i>Political morality</i>	154
<i>Morality and the state</i>	158
8. Transformations	163
<i>Aspects of personal and social change</i>	165
<i>States and the management of change</i>	168
<i>Religion and the management of change</i>	172
9. Histories	177
<i>Locating religious revival</i>	178
<i>Reconnecting the past</i>	182
<i>A new historical age</i>	187
<i>Knowledge universal and local</i>	192
<i>Notes</i>	197
<i>Bibliography</i>	229
<i>Index</i>	255