PASTORING A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE

Leading God's People
Without Losing God's Heart

Pastor Dr. Emmanuel Mukisa, D.D.



Published by WOT Publishing

Copyright © 2025 by Pastor Dr. Emmanuel Mukisa. All rights reserved.

Second Edition

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations used in articles or reviews.

Published by WOT Publishing

www.wotpublishing.com

Cover Design: WOT Publishing

Interior Formatting: WOT Publishing

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) and New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible. Where alternate translations are used, they are noted accordingly.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

For inquiries, permissions, or bulk orders:

Email: books@wotmi.org

Web: www.wotpublishing.com

Tel: +256 742 302 566 / +256 786 821 888

Contents

Dedication 1
Preface 2
Chapter 1: Understanding Rebellion in God's People 4
Chapter 2: The Weight of a Pastor's Heart 8
Chapter 3: Recognising the Spiritual Roots 13
Chapter 4: Guarding Your Heart in the Midst of Resistance . 18
Chapter 5: Strategies for Shepherding the Resistant 23
Chapter 6: When to Weep, When to Warn 29
Conclusion: Loving Like the Chief Shepherd 35
Closing Prayer: A Prayer for the Weary Shepherd 38
Scripture Index 41
Prayer of Salvation 43
About the Author 44
About the Ministry 46
Other Books by Pastor Dr. Emmanuel Mukisa 48

Dedication

To the Chief Shepherd —
the One who leads even the wayward with unwavering love,
who pursues even the resistant with unrelenting grace,
and who strengthens the weary shepherds entrusted with His flock.

And to every pastor, every leader, every faithful soul
who has laboured through tears, endured silent betrayals,
and continued to love without applause —
this is for you.

May you find strength for the journey,
wisdom for the labour,
and the deep assurance that the Chief Shepherd sees —
and He will reward.

Preface

Ministry is glorious — but it is also costly.
Among the many hidden costs of true pastoral work is the heartache of leading those who resist the very love sent to save them.

Every pastor, if faithful long enough, will encounter rebellion — not because they have failed, but because broken humanity often rejects the hand that seeks to heal it.
This pain is not new. It was felt by Moses in the wilderness, by Jeremiah in his lamentations, and by Jesus as He wept over Jerusalem.

This book was born from a conviction — a desire to strengthen weary shepherds who have silently carried the ache of rejection, resistance, and rebellion.
It is not written to glorify the hardship, but to shine light on the path through it: a path paved with Scripture, saturated with the Spirit's wisdom, and anchored in the heart of the Chief Shepherd.

Here you will not find complaints — you will find counsel.
You will not find despair — you will find strategy.

You will not find bitterness — you will find the sustaining love of Christ.

If you are a pastor or a leader who has ever wondered, "How do I continue leading when their hearts are hard?" — this book is for you.
May these pages remind you that you are not alone, you are not unseen, and you are not without help.

The Chief Shepherd is near.
He knows.
He strengthens.
And He rewards.

Press on.

— *Pastor Emma Mukisa*

CHAPTER

1

Understanding Rebellion in God's People

Rebellion among the people of God is not a new wound in the heart of leadership — it is an ancient pain.
It is a thread that runs through Scripture, from the wilderness wanderings to the early Church.
And every true pastor, if faithful long enough, will at some point taste the bitter ache of leading those who resist, reject, or rebel against divine instruction.

Moses, the great lawgiver, faced a stiff-necked people who murmured, doubted, disobeyed, and at times longed to return to Egypt (Numbers 14:1–4).
Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was sent to a nation who refused to listen, hardened their hearts, and persecuted the very voice God had raised for their salvation (Jeremiah 7:25–26).
Jesus Himself, the Word made flesh, came to His own, and His own received Him not (John 1:11).

The Scriptures do not hide this reality:
To pastor is to lead not only the willing, but the reluctant.
To shepherd is to bear with the weak, the wavering, and sometimes, the outright resistant.

The Hebrew word for rebellion used often in the Old Testament is **"מְרִי" (meri)** — meaning *defiance, disobedience,*

stubbornness.
It is not just an outward act; it is a posture of the heart.

In the Greek, the New Testament uses the word **"ἀνομία" (anomia)** — *lawlessness, refusal to be governed* (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:7: *"the mystery of lawlessness is already at work"*).
Behind every rebellious act is a deeper resistance to divine order and spiritual authority.

Understanding this is critical for every pastor.
You must know: **you are not just dealing with human moods; you are confronting spiritual realities.**

Biblical Patterns of Rebellion:

- **In the wilderness: Despite God's visible miracles — the pillar of cloud and fire, manna from heaven — the Israelites rebelled again and again (Exodus 16:2–3, Numbers 14:11).**
- **Under the prophets: God said through Ezekiel, "I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me." (Ezekiel 2:3).**
- **Against Christ Himself: Though Jesus spoke the very words of eternal life, many said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (John 6:60) — and many walked away.**

Pastoring a rebellious people is not a sign that you are failing. It is often the mark that you are standing where God stands — calling hearts out of stubbornness into surrender.

Key Understanding for Pastors:

- **You are not alone in your frustration.** Even the greatest were resisted.
- **The people's rebellion is not always about you. It is often about their heart posture before God.**
- **Your assignment is not dependent on their applause.** It is dependent on your obedience.

God did not measure Moses' success by Israel's behaviour — He measured it by Moses' obedience.

When you feel the sting of rejection, the weariness of resistance, or the loneliness of leadership — remember: you stand in a long line of shepherds who bore the heart of God in the midst of a stiff-necked generation.

You are not strange. You are not abandoned. You are not alone.

You are pastoring a rebellious people — but you are pastoring them under the watchful eye and unwavering strength of the Chief Shepherd Himself.