

Fifth Sunday of Easter

*We are the rock?*

Matthew 16:13-20

Caesarea Philippi...

- another world compared to Galilee
- religion was everywhere
- conveyed Roman power & divinity

Jesus chose this setting for the final exam:

**But who do you say that I am?**

Peter got it right in v. 16:

*You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.*

Jesus affirmed Peter, for *how* he got it right:

*For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,  
but my Father in heaven.*

v. 17

Jesus' affirmation continues: v. 18

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock  
I will build my church, and the gates of Hades  
will not prevail against it.*

What did Jesus mean?

Multiple word plays:

Peter in Greek: *Petros* (male)

Rock in Greek: *Petra* (feminine)

Peter in Aramaic: Kephass (Cephas)

Rock in Aramaic: Kephass

*Who or what is “this rock?”*

*Catholic:* Peter

Pope

*Who or what is “this rock?”*

*Catholic: Peter*

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*Protestant: Peter’s understanding Doctrine*

*Who or what is “this rock?”*

*Catholic: Peter*

Pope

*Protestant: Peter’s understanding* Doctrine

*Anabaptist: Peter’s confession--  
transformed lives* Faith Community



Jesus builds his Church  
on the foundation of lives, like Peter,  
transformed by publicly confessing  
*Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.*

Authority and Leadership are distinct concepts,  
but many use them interchangeably (in error).

Peter played a **leadership** role among the  
disciples, but he was not the **authority**.

Authority:

the right or power to control,  
or make decisions

Leadership:

guiding, encouraging, motivating and  
equipping a group of people to work  
together to accomplish a common vision.

Anabaptists: Congregation decides vision.

Pastors lead congregation into the vision.

Pastors granted *authority to lead*,  
not authority to determine vision.

Some other Christian Traditions:

Pastors determine vision and lead  
congregation into the vision.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation

Luther reduced gap (a little) between clergy/laity with “priesthood of all believers”

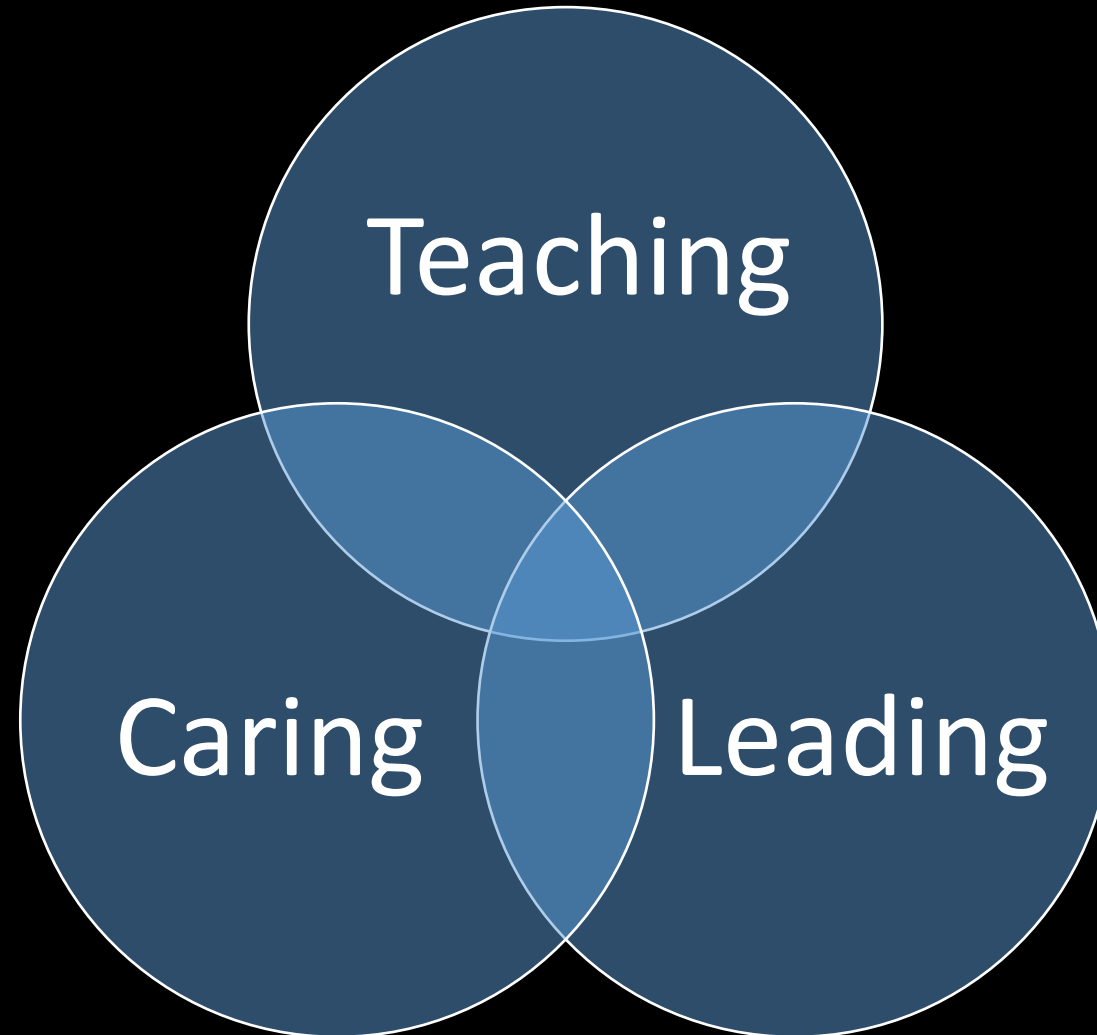
Anabaptists eliminated the gap: we are a community of priests, while continuing to value role of leadership as one among many equal spiritual gifts.

Mennonites Today:

We say “no gap between clergy & laity”,

but our practice indicates significant gap,  
resulting in confusion and conflicts.

Pastors EQUIP believers by:



Authority residing in the Faith Community,  
is the most difficult of the three interpretations!

- why our relationships need to be loving/deep
- trusting each other is essential
- Jesus said: “Make Disciples, not Decisions.”

Seeing the Pastoral role as **leadership**, helps a  
congregation make decisions more efficiently.



## MCN Vision Statement

Goal #1: Growing in discipleship: transformed when we publicly confess Jesus as Messiah

Goal #2: Growing in relationships with each other, essential for authority in faith community.

Goal #3: Relationships beyond MCN: Jesus builds his church, as his transformed disciples enter into the lives of others.