

August 26, 2016     **Mixing Missional Metaphors**     Milepost 118

For most Christians, church is like a filling station that does most of its business on Sunday morning. With tanks near empty, we select our favorite *stop and go* store, fill our tank and grab some juice and crackers. At the *Anabaptist Stop A Little Longer And Go* store, we refuel in community, eating in together rather than carrying out. We note absent members and deliver fuel to their homes, and always have extra fuel on board for a stranded motorist we may encounter.

The filling station model tends to create us and them categories. Budget for us is called operations; budget for them is missions. We invite *them* to come Sunday morning, and expect *them* to understand the refueling concept. As skilled mechanics, we do our own repairs and preventative maintenance in the privacy of our own garage. We can get by with five or six pit stops a month (worship & small group). Special programs are started for those who show up needing repairs.

Missional Christians see the church as a hospital, and themselves simultaneously as medical professionals *and* patients. All are in various stages of healing and recovery from sin. We're not embarrassed to ask others for help with preventative maintenance and repairs. Healing and hope flow 24/7. We are all *wounded healers*: because we acknowledge our own brokenness and are on a healing journey, we can effectively bring healing to others.

The (atypical) hospital metaphor minimizes us and them categories. Nothing is just for us: missional potential is seen in every aspect of congregational life. It's not *our* church, it's Jesus' church. It's amazing to observe community develop in a hospital intensive care lounge when diverse strangers begin caring for each other because they all have a loved one fighting for life nearby.

Can both dynamics co-exist? If a grocery store can have a filling station, why can't a hospital?

-Gary Martin

#### **Looking Ahead:**

Aug. 28 9:30 a.m. Examining Ourselves, 1 John 1:1-2:6, Pastor Brian

Sept. 4 9:30 a.m. Sermon: Wilma Bailey

Sept. 11 11:00 a.m. Congregational Dialogue #4: Mission Statement

Gary's projected in town schedule: Aug. 28-29; Sept. 11-14; 18-19