

June Midweek Message series: “Lutheran Stories”

June 30th: *Status Confessionis* and present-day opportunities

Due to copyright rules, we will share the excerpts Pastor Ryan is referencing to our mailing list as a congregation-wide Bible study; however, we can't post those on our website. Here are the books and passages being used if you'd like to find your own copies:

Together By Grace: Introducing the Lutherans, edited by Kathryn A. Kleinhans, copyright 2016, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Minneapolis. Pages 167-170: “The Challenge to Be an Authentically Multicultural Church” by Albert Starr Jr.

Stories from Global Lutheranism: A Historical Timeline, by Martin J. Lohrmann, copyright 2021, Fortress Press (Lutheran Quarterly Books), Minneapolis. Pages 194-197: “June 1977: Lutheran World Federation Declares Apartheid a *Status Confessionis*.”

A *status confessionis* is a situation demanding public confession of faith, where speaking out or taking a stand is so central to the core of the gospel, that you are compelled to act. From the 1577 *Formula of Concord* (part of our Lutheran confessions): “We believe teach, and confess that in a time of persecution, with an unequivocal confession of the faith is demanded of us, we dare not yield to the opponents in such indifferent matters. As the Apostle wrote, ‘Stand firm in the freedom for which Christ has set us free, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery’...For in such a situation it is no longer indifferent matters that are at stake. The truth of the gospel and Christian freedom are at stake. The confirmation of open idolatry, as well as the protection of the weak in faith from offense, is at stake. In such matters we can make no concessions but must offer an unequivocal confession and suffer whatever God sends and permits the enemies of his Word to inflict on us.” *Status confessionis* has been applied to the nazification of Germany, to Apartheid, and has been proposed for other matters, such as hunger.

What would you say is a situation in the world today that is at the level of *status confessionis*?

Here is a Wikipedia link on Apartheid: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid>

For a partial list of Lutheran churches in other countries, and special “companion synod” relationships that ELCA synods have with them, check out this link: <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Global-Mission/How-We-Work/Companion-Synod-Relationships>

And ponder these questions:

When you hear “Lutheran” and “ethnicity,” what do you think of?

If each of us is created in the image of God (and we are); then doesn't it stand to reason that we will receive a fuller relationship with God in Christ by diversifying the collective image of God we interact

with and worship alongside? In what ways could we make our congregations more diverse (culturally, racially, socioeconomically, educationally, ethnically, and so many other ways)?

In our missions and outreach, do we see those we serve as recipients or companions? As needy or as resources to our own growth in faith and love?

I don't recall where I heard this: "God comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable." In what ways is the Holy Spirit afflicting/irritating/agitating you right now? What comfortable illusions are the Holy Spirit working to dis-illusion you away from?

In what ways do you see God calling the Lutheran Church around the world to reform in our sixth century?