

## Questions for Further Reflection – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Helvetic Confession

1. Were you baptized as an infant or as an adult? If you were baptized as an infant, what stories did your parents tell you about that day? If you were baptized as an adult, what do you remember about that day? Do you tend to think about baptism more as a sign of personal salvation or entrance into the covenant family of God? Why do you think you lean one way or the other? Do you lean more towards the argument that we should baptize infants or that baptism is only for professing and believing adults?
2. Think about Luther's view of worship (anything not prohibited by Scripture is acceptable) versus Zwingli's (only things specifically commanded are acceptable). *Theoretically*, which makes the most sense to you? *In practice*, which makes the most sense to you? Be completely honest – are there things in the worship service or in the sanctuary that enhance your experience of worship and awareness of the presence of God? Again, being honest – do these things enhance or distract from your focus on God through the Scripture and sermon? In other words, are there things you look forward to and appreciate *more* than the exposition of God's Word?
3. Pastor Tim said one of the consequences of Zwingli preaching solely the Word of God was that people began to be interested in reading and studying God's Word for themselves. Today we have a nation of Christians who are functionally Biblically illiterate who sort of take the accessibility of the Bible for granted. Why do you think that is? Why do you think that hearing the Word proclaimed in worship hasn't led to more direct engagement with the Scriptures themselves outside of worship? Or do you disagree that this is the case? If so, why? If worship doesn't inspire you, personally, to read and study the Bible more, why do you think this is the case?
4. Read Chapter 29 on marriage and family. To what extent is this chapter still relevant/helpful today? To what extent is it not?
5. Do you see the church as more of a voluntary community of believing adults, or a community of people God calls to be in covenant relationship with himself and others? Have you ever really thought about the difference before? What are the ramifications of each? If the choice a false dichotomy? In other words, does it have to be either/or, or is there a way it can be both/and, with both views existing side by side?
6. What does it mean to affirm *both* testaments of the Bible as the Word of God? What is the upside of focusing primarily on the New Testament? What are some of the dangers? Our society today tends to give equal weight to all religious expressions. Some in Christianity have internalized that to say that all interpretations of Scripture are equally valid. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Helvetic Confession refutes this idea, saying that not all interpretations of Scripture are true. How do we in the Reformed Tradition/Presbyterian Church make room for exploring different interpretations of Scripture? Historically, how have we determined which interpretations are true and valid and which are not? How have you seen that played out in the life of the congregations of which you have been a part?

