

**Volker Schunck**

**The Small Dresden Catechism**





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*in Jesus we see  
what happens  
when a human  
opens his heart for love  
God takes shape in him*

*a human  
is a human  
who loves*



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## **The Small Dresden Catechism**

**By Volker Schunck**

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## About me



I live in Dresden, Germany. First I was a merchant, then I studied theology for a few years. Through my engagement with Zen I became aware of the Christian mysticism. Meanwhile I go my own way. Faith is for me not only a world-view but a mode of being.

My Christian faith and my experiences in meditation influence my everyday life, in

which I try to be attentive. My books arise from this spirit too.

## **Preface**

During the reading of Luther's Catechisms and the Heidelberg Catechism I noticed how much seemed to me incomprehensible, and that although I have studied theology. Sure, my few pages cannot compare themselves with these gigantic works. And here the title "The Small Dresden Catechism", in dependence on Luther's "Small Catechism" with mention the point of origin like "The Heidelberg" maybe comes along a little bit cocky, but I have tried like them, to say the eternal message of God, who shows us in Christ his human face, into the presence. The texts arose over years. I' am always new astonished, how manyfold the linguistic possibilities are to describe the

content of the christian faith. I am like a painter who thinks "This is your last picture, there's nothing left to paint." So I think by myself "Now everything has been said, now you have well understood and described God and the Christian faith." But then new ideas and experiences come, and the seeking of words to say God appropriate in this time and into the world, begins anew.

# **Ten wisdoms for a felicitous life (insp. by the Ten Commandments)**

## **1. Wisdom**

I am God, emptiness and life. I love you. Therefore don't make nothing and nobody else to your god.

## **2. Wisdom**

Respect my name, for I am more than a word.

## **3. Wisdom**

Respect the holiday and take the time for me.

#### **4. Wisdom**

Respect your parents, also if they don't deserve it, for you are a part of them.

#### **5. Wisdom**

Kill nobody, for every human is your next.

#### **6. Wisdom**

Don't cheat, for the human who loves you, trusts you.

#### **7. Wisdom**

Don't steal from your next, for he is a human like you.

## **8. Wisdom**

Don't defame your next, for he is a human like you.

## **9. Wisdom**

Don't be envious of your next's property, for money and gold don't make you happy.

## **10. Wisdom**

Don't be envious of your next, for nothing what he possesses can give you inner fulfillment.

## **Credo**

### **God in Creation**

I believe in God, emptiness and life, who created us out of love.

One with the universe, he is not absorbed by it.

Who is free, because his spirit blows where he wants.

One with Christ, we see his fullness.

### ***What does that mean?***

God's emptiness is the space for the fullness of his always new arising love.

The greatness and depth of his love is frightening and fulfills us with awe. God is one with the universe, which he created and maintains. But God is not exhausted in the universe, and we cannot recognize God through creation. In the freedom of his spirit, he was one with Christ. We experience through Christ God's humanity. We need not to be afraid of God.

### **God in Christ**

I believe in Christ, God's real human, who frees us.

One with God, he was light in darkness.

Who was crucified, because darkness hates light.

One with God, he lives in his light.

***What does that mean?***

Christ was a real human in space and time. He was completely empty for the fullness of God's love. He frees us from ourselves, because he shows us how we can find fulfillment. Fulfilled personhood is only possible in the selfless Ego looseness. Christ frees us from the illusion that we can please God by keeping commandments and laws. The natural difference between the full love of God and the lack of love of humans is finally repealed in Christ. In his oneness with God, he brought light into the darkness of this world. But the fewest humans understood and understand Christ. They

take him as a troublemaker and out of place and beat him, who wants to save them from their unfulfilled human being out of the darkness, to the cross. "Why does God allow this?" we want ask. But God dies in his unity with Christ himself on the cross. When Christ cried on the cross: "My God, why has you forsaken me?" God didn't stand somewhere apathetic - numb - aside, but was himself crucified with Christ, the human.

God died with Christ there on the cross. In Christ the humanity of God is fulfilled until the bitter end, until into death. In Christ God gives himself powerless in the hands of his humans.

The power of God's love for human and creation is not fulfilled in God's

almightiness but in his powerlessness.. God himself overcomes the difference between himself and his creation in Christ, the human. This is so incomprehensible for us as darkness cannot comprehend light. The mind cannot fathom this mystery. What a miracle, when a human opens his heart for God's love! He gets a little inkling of God's love to us humans by feeling it on the very own body. God is not dead. And the human can live. Christ is risen by God in the dimension of his eternity.

### **God in Humans**

I believe in God, spirit and life, who comforts us.

One with God, we become real humans.

Who is in us, therefore we are light in darkness.

One with God, we live in his light.

### ***What does that mean?***

Like in Christ God lives by his Spirit in *the* humans who follow Christ. Or the other way around: humans in whom God lives, follow Christ. Like Christ, they experience God's love in so far as they open up to the love of God. Like the miracle of love between two people is hard to understand, it's hard to understand how it is that a human begins to believe in God. How many have accepted to be incapable to love, after a botched childhood, where they have experienced everything else but

love, and then it happens out of the blue: their numb heart starts to beat for another human, with all fear and new feelings that are associated with it. They were dead and have been awakened to life again by love.

So it is with a human who begins to believe in God. He experiences what it means to find his fulfillment as a human. God takes shape in him. The Christ-Way is not an easy way. Now we are like Christ - instead of him - light in the darkness of this world.

The more God transforms us, the more we realize how egoistic we are as humans, addicted to consumption and superficially look after number one, instead of realizing our unity with our next and God. But God comforts us and frees us from ourselves.

To be a Christian means to become to Christ and a life in God's light. We will never become perfect. We suffer setbacks, don't like some people, are selfish and hurt others by our self-righteousness. How long does it take to become Christ(ian)?  
Eternal...

## **Baptism**

One for all. But not “all for one”. Because I don’t talk about the three musketry by whom I heart the parole “one for all and all for one” for the first time. That is too good to be true and only fiction. In our real world it is totally different. Jesus has complied his part of the agreement. But even his disciples have let him down. What is true for Jesus, the archetype of the human, and his unique relationship with God, is also true for us.

Jesus, the archtype of the human?

Yes, because God find in him totally his fulfillment and can completely enfold himself in him for all humans. A human in whom God can totally be himself. In Jesus

Gott becomes one with the human. How this can be is a wonderful mystery for us. But is this really so surprising? Because God himself finally still remains in his goodness and love a mystery for us. That God means it this way with us, with us, who overreach and kill each other, who don't care about our next, God anyway, and that God nevertheless takes care of us and that he shows us his true face in Christ, that is the real surprise!

If we understand with “neck and crop”, if we are touched inwardly, because God has touched us, either it dawns on us by reading the bible or we experience by other humans “I am not alone”, God wants to enfold in me like in Christ, then everything is changing.

Today we talk a lot of consciousness. It is as if we have reached a new level of consciousness. This experience was called in the bible also as dying. The old human, who did not know God, has died. As dead as you can be. As dead as Christ. But as Christ was raised up by God from the dead again, so we also are made alive by God, when we begin to follow Christ.

That is the meaning of baptism: our old human, who did not know God, is "drowned" and a new human who lives in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is being raised. It's like a gain of knowledge in research. We cannot anymore go back behind the scientific knowledge that the earth revolves around the sun and believe that the earth is flat.

As in Christ, God lives in those who believe in him. That "all for one" becomes reality.

## **The Lord's Supper**

Mark 14:22-24:

*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.*

If we played as children, we turned around a dining table and sat inside. Then we imagined, we were sitting in a boat, which sails over the stormy sea.

Of course we knew that we were sitting in an upturned table, but from the moment we had decided “this table is a boat”, we were in a different reality. The table was a real boat in our imagination.

The last meal of Jesus has nothing of a children’s game. On the contrary: it is deadly serious. Jesus shows his disciples in a prophetic symbolic action, what will happen to his body. Like the bread, also his body will be broken. Like the wine, also his blood will be shed.

At this moment, the bread and wine become to the body and blood of Christ. They become real, at least in the imagination of Christ and also in the imagination of the disciples. Not in the

sense of the transsubstantiation doctrine, which means that bread and wine really change into body and blood of Christ. Since Jesus is sitting in flesh and blood in front of his disciples, the bread remains substantial bread, how the wine is not turned to blood.

But as we imagined as children that now the table should be a boat, so Jesus himself imagined and imagined to his disciples: now this bread shall be my body, now this wine shall be my blood. Look what will happen to them. Like this bread my body will be broken, like this wine my blood will be shed.

When we celebrate the “Last Supper” today, Jesus is as the Risen One in our

midst. Finally he hands out bread and wine, although obviously the pastor or the priest is doing that. But we do not only remember Jesus' last night with his disciples and his death, but we are sitting as disciples at the Last Supper table with Jesus and his disciples.

The differences consist only in the fact that Christ is present as the Risen One, and not as than present in the flesh, and we, as disciples, like all those who celebrated the Lord's Supper over the centuries after his death and resurrection, thereby testify and proclaim Jesus' death and resurrection.

We don't only remember the new covenant which Jesus constituted with his blood, but we take part as disciples, like

the disciples of Jesus at that time, in God's new covenant with the Humans, here and today.

Through Christ we are reconciled to God who accepts us in Christ and forgives us. We live in the new reality of faith in unity with Christ. We are one, both as individuals with Christ, and as Christians among each other.

Is there a more powerful visual expression of this unity as the idea of eating and drinking to absorb the body and blood of Christ in us?

Not only that bread and wine in the imagination as body and blood really become a part of our body and blood.

When lovers say: “I love you so much, I could eat you.” they express the longing, to come even closer, to become one, beyond the physical union.

In celebrating the Last Supper our real unity with Christ is expressed sensually and visibly. We don't only believe intellectually in Christ, but are one with Christ with “neck and crop”. We are like lovers.

**The Prayer (insp. by the Lord's  
Prayer, Mt. 6:9-13)**

Our Father, who you are in Christ!

You are holy.

Your Spirit may come in our hearts. Your  
will may happen as in Christ in us.

Satisfy our hunger with your bread.

Forgive us that we learn to forgive.

Lead us on light ways that we don't walk  
in darkness.

For you showed your eternal love and  
glory in Christ.

Amen

## **Blessed are... (insp. by the Beatitudes, Mt. 5:1-10)**

Blessed are those who have no material desires,

because they live in God's presence.

Blessed are those who are tired of themselves,

because they shall be freed from themselves.

Blessed are those who have a tender heart,

because power is not important for them.

Blessed are those who can jump over their  
own shadows,

because they know that they do not have a  
monopoly on the truth.

Blessed are those who lovingly help  
others,

because they will find love.

Blessed are those who have a childlike  
heart,

because God lives in them.

Blessed are those who do not insist on  
their opinion,

because they do not stay alone.

Blessed are those who swim against the  
stream according to God's will,

because they live in God's presence.

Blessed are those who are chased as they  
recognize God's face in every human,

because God's light enlightens their way.

## **Blessing**

God lay the sky under your feet

so that your problems are like clouds

God fill your heart with sun

so that darkness becomes light

God anoint your hands

so that they become gentle

God bless you

so that you find your fulfillment