

## **Freedom to Praise**

Freedom to Praise  
Is David dancing before  
The ark of the covenant  
Without thinking about appearances

Freedom to praise  
Are the disciples at Pentecost  
Testifying boldly about  
The transformative power of Christ

Freedom to praise  
Is speaking about our experience of Christ  
As we experience it  
Rather than how someone says we should

Freedom to praise  
Means using our God-given mind  
And other miraculous gifts  
As Moses used his rod to part the Red Sea

Freedom to praise  
Means having the courage to receive in faith  
What we sometimes cannot see  
The always abundant and available grace of God

And in accepting God's grace  
We break our mental physical and spiritual chains  
We become new creatures in Christ  
Reborn not just for an emotional moment  
But free for life and free from fear  
With only the love of God and of each other  
To keep us firmly grounded in reality

Freedom to praise  
Through freedom in Christ

## **Servant Leadership and Freedom**

Christians like to quote  
The prophet Samuel's rebuke to King Saul  
That obedience is better than sacrifice  
Forgetting that obedience to perfect God  
Is different from obedience to imperfect leaders

Moses is said to have talked to God face to face  
But he still continued to have a problem with his temper  
Even God's anointed King David became corrupted by power  
And the apostle Paul likewise described how he himself  
Continued to struggle with his fleshly desires

Why do we expect our own leaders to be more perfect than they  
True unity is built not on conformity but on freedom and love  
With the honest expression of both agreement and differences  
Using the unique mind and spirit God gave each of us  
Which are not to be enslaved by any other person or thing

The good leader is a servant who knows his or her own limitations  
And encourages followers not to provide a mirror for vanity  
But to instead seek and express the truth in love  
As they each uniquely experience it  
So that God's purpose will be revealed in and realized through them

## **A Carpenter's Love**

We call him carpenter  
But to be truthful all we know  
Is that he worked with his hands  
A tekton in the original Greek

Since the houses in Nazareth and thereabouts  
Were primitive stone structures not made of wood  
More likely than not he was a wandering handyman  
A peasant without even a small piece of land  
In a country occupied by Roman soldiers

But instead of bitterness he felt compassion  
And instead of violent rebellion  
He preached love your enemies

When John baptized him in the river he saw a vision  
The Holy Spirit flew down on him like a dove  
And he heard God claim him as his beloved son

Now let's ask ourselves  
Would that be enough for me  
To accept being nailed to a tree

## **From Killer to Martyr**

Bright blades of grass and small red pebbles  
Become shade trees protecting ants from the blistering sun  
As Saul rides down Damascus road

The stern and studious look lining his face says  
He's as sure of his truth as we are of ours  
Killing disbelievers can't be murder if commissioned  
By high authorities here and in heaven

Suddenly like a supernova eclipsing the sun  
A new and higher truth blinds him and  
He falls from his horse and from his certainty

His riding companions see nothing  
Some visions are personal  
Was that a voice they heard or just the wind  
Maybe he has just fallen ill

For them tomorrow will be the same as yesterday  
But Saul is severed from his shadow and his past  
Becoming Paul the apostle of a new truth  
A truth for which he is willing to die rather than to kill