



MINISTRY OVERVIEW



Encouraging Christians facing same-sex temptations with biblical clarity and supportive community

MAY 2020 - APRIL 2021

TFT's stated public benefit is "the advancement of the Christian faith, in particular (but not limited to) providing teaching based on the biblical principles in the Statement of Faith on issues around sexuality and by providing support for those who are struggling with such issues."

In practice, this means providing teaching within churches on issues related to same-sex attraction, as well as providing pastoral care and guidance to church leaders, individuals and families affected. The main activities undertaken for the public benefit include pastoral support and teaching at churches, colleges and other organisations.

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from TFT's Director

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1.0 - Introduction

The year 2020-21 was a challenging one for us all. Testimonies shared at our online conferences particularly highlighted how isolated many of our members who live alone have felt during the various lockdowns and restrictions.

In response, we convened online prayer meetings. We held celebrations at Christmas and Easter. As we all became more familiar with video calls, various members made themselves vulnerable by recording videos of how God had been working in their lives. As our team of staff and volunteers has grown in its ability to provide online ministry, we've offered more conferences this year than we've ever done before!

The hostile scrutiny that we've had from journalists over the last year has had its challenges. But I welcome the opportunity to explain the importance of our ministry and to show the high ethical standards that we follow. Indeed, the last year has shown how non-judgemental, biblically faithful support has been a lifeline to many.

We long to meet again in person. However, we intend to continue some online ministry in the future, as it allows us to include people living further away. This quote from one woman at our April 2021 "friendship" conference shows how encouraging an online event can be:

"There was a deep sense of openness and a willingness to share. It is great to realise that others know just how you feel and are willing to share their experiences. This gives us tools to aid us in times of struggle and draws us closer to the Lord."

Overall, I'm so impressed at how our staff, volunteers and members have stepped up and supported one another through this time. Barnabas Group leaders have taken their groups online and involved people who could not travel to in-person meetings. My thanks go to all those who have continued to support the ministry in giving and prayer during an uncertain year. The support has been vital to so many.

Stuart Parker
Director of TFT

"My spiritual, emotional and mental health has changed immeasurably for the better because of the approach of TFT. I no longer feel I have to fight myself all the time or keep a part of me distanced from God. Of course, I still have to deal with temptation, but that would be the case whatever my sexuality. TFT has supported me in living a life that is honouring to God." - John





2.0 - Ministry Overview

Ascend Magazine

We produced four more editions of Ascend magazine, featuring a range of TFT members writing articles, testimonies and reviews. In 2020-21, we tackled the themes of “sharing life with others”, “staying safe”, “not having biological children” and “the cost of discipleship”. Our recent membership overhaul has prompted some longstanding members to opt for the email version rather than the printed version, meaning we now post out around 900 copies to members and churches each quarter - a reduction of about 100. However, we’ve added another 400 recipients to the email version of Ascend, bringing the total to around 1300 electronic subscribers. This is the first time that the email version has been more popular than the printed version.

Speaking and Teaching

The Speaking & Teaching area of our ministry is the part that has been most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. As churches across the UK have had to cancel in-person meetings and navigate the move to online formats, the amount of speaking invitations we received dropped considerably. However, we were still able to teach in person at some Bible Colleges and undertook several external online speaking engagements.

In August 2020, our Head of Speaking & Teaching, Rob stepped down in order to pursue a call to ordained ministry. This, combined with the pause in our speaking calendar, gave us time to reflect on how we might run this part of our ministry in a more cost-effective way. In April 2021 we appointed Simon to the role of Speaking Team Manager. Where previously the staff team took on many speaking engagements, Simon’s remit will be to help develop our team of volunteer speakers, who will support this arm of our ministry and tailor content to their local context.

Support Groups

Our support groups (Barnabas Groups) are primarily for helping those experiencing same-sex attraction, but they also welcome others who have a serious interest in the issue, such as family, ministers etc. Voluntary Workers lead the groups and they range in size from about four to twenty members. They typically meet monthly for biblically-based discussion, sharing and encouragement. Many of the groups meet socially too. We have groups in Belfast (two), Dublin, Edinburgh, Leeds, Preston, Manchester, Southampton, Guildford,



London (two), Essex, Wirral, Cambridge, Sheffield and Birmingham and an online group for members not within reach of these locations. During the year we started an online group for women and an online group for married men. Owing to COVID, the groups could not meet in person for most of the year, but almost all of them met using Zoom, or otherwise maintained contact by phone etc.

Conferences

Owing to COVID restrictions, we ran all of our conferences online rather than in-person. We had planned to take our “Honey from the Rock” conference to four UK cities but ended up cancelling this tour and running it online in February 2021. TFT members Nat and Donald were the speakers.

We substituted our usual biennial London conference with an online version called “Never Alone”, with Stuart P (TFT Director) and Stuart F (TFT member) as speakers. There was a strong demand for this conference and we ran it three times in May and June 2020. In April 2021, we ran the online women’s conference “In Pursuit of Biblical Friendship” with TFT member Jem as our speaker.

*“Talks were both excellent. Really easy to listen to, biblical, well applied. Top notch.”
- Never Alone attendee*

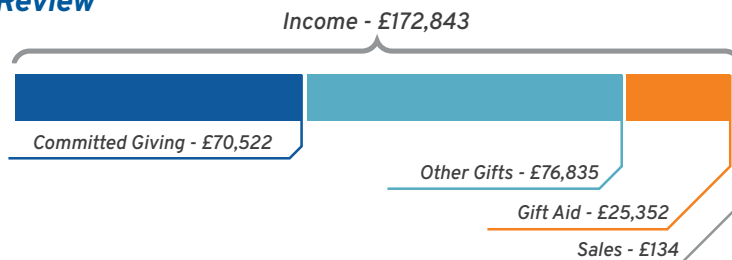
By having shorter talks and times in breakout groups, we found the online format to be very effective. It also had the benefit of being able to run a repeat at a later date.

“Thanks so much for the conference today - it’s hard to put into words how helpful I’ve found it and how blessed I’ve been.” - Honey From the Rock attendee

Our National Conference was called “The Intimacy Deficit”, with Ed Shaw from Living Out as our speaker. We were more ambitious with this and ran a longer meeting with interest-based breakout groups in the afternoon. We finished the day with some entertainment in the early evening.

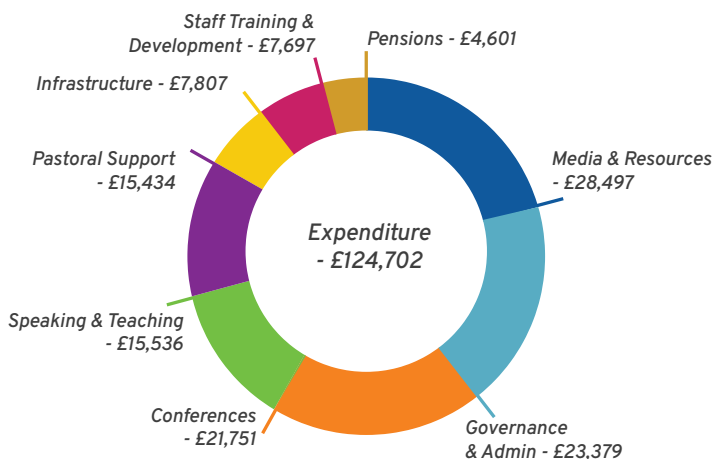


Financial Review



As a charity, we rely exclusively on donations from our supporters, and we are very grateful to the TFT members, churches and other organisations who have donated over the last year.

This year we are particularly grateful for the overwhelming support of our Back to Church campaign, to raise funds for the new role of Speaking Team Manager and training our team of volunteer speakers.



Thanks to this campaign, and a decrease in expenditure owing to COVID restrictions, we ended the year with a total surplus of £48,141. The money raised from the Back to Church campaign will be spent over the next 2 years.

During the year, 80% of total expenditure went on paying for the staff team to undertake and coordinate the core activities of pastoral care, and provision of online events throughout the year.

The graph above illustrates the various ministry areas where the team's resources were spent throughout the last year. We are incredibly thankful for our many pastoral support workers without whom our expenditure in this area would be much higher.



Online Content

The TFT website serves as the ‘shop window’ to our ministry and it contains everything an enquirer may want to know about who we are, what services we provide, and what beliefs and values we hold. Throughout 2020-21, we have been regularly uploading articles and resources in order to help both individuals and churches with their thinking as they wrestle with issues of faith, sexuality and identity.

One major fresh addition in the 2020-21 financial year was the introduction of Ascend Higher, a sister podcast to our Ascend magazine. In these podcasts, listeners can get to know the authors behind some of our resources and dig a little deeper into particular articles. Our website can play the podcast directly, or listeners can find it on major podcasting platforms. Early listening figures are encouraging, with our most popular episode being played/downloaded 142 times so far.

Members of our staff team continue to meet regularly to look at ways to keep our website feeling fresh, and improve our search engine optimisation, so that others can find our services. Pages on our website were viewed 671,230 times in the reporting period. Most of our views continue to come via search engines, though we also increased our following and click-throughs on social media.

Women’s Work

It delighted us to see an increase in the amount of work with women this year.

There are now 48 Women members on our private Facebook group, “Women of Light”. Because of COVID restrictions, there has been a greater connection with our European and overseas members via Zoom meetings. We held three Zoominars, which were online video meetings where two women gave their testimonies and then responded to questions about their stories. We also set up an online women’s Barnabas Group for those who weren’t able to join a physical group near to where they live. There are now two book clubs, which meet monthly online. As well as an annual conference, we held a day conference led by two members to replace our weekend away. We appointed three new female volunteers and had female speakers at two conferences. Women also wrote articles, reviews and testimonies for our Ascend magazine, recorded contributions on video and anchored and led at conferences and events.



3.0 - Plans for 2020-2021

Following the postponement of the Exiles conference in 2020, we are running this as an online conference in June 2021. This is the third time we have collaborated with Living Out to put on a joint conference.

In autumn 2021, we are planning to run our National Conference as a residential in-person event, provided that we can run it safely and in line with government guidance. Our speaker, Anne Witton, will look at how staying faithful to the biblical teaching on sexuality can make Christians a “Light to the World”.



Recent online women’s conferences have been a great success. As a result, the women’s conference has now become an annual fixture in the calendar, and we are expecting to run another one in spring 2022.

Our pastoral team of staff and volunteers will continue to provide pastoral care online and by phone. We are getting ready for Barnabas Groups and events to return to meeting in person once more. However, we also recognise that doing ministry online over the last year has been a wonderful opportunity for us to connect better with distant members.

With Rob leaving the staff team in August 2020, we have been without a member of staff dedicated to our speaking work, until Simon’s appointment in April 2021 as Speaking Team Manager. Simon will focus on rebuilding our speaking work, as churches once more consider inviting external speakers. His new role also involves increasing the training we provide to our speaking team, particularly in the growing area of online teaching.

We plan to develop and grow our series of online workshops for church leaders, which we piloted in April 2021, over the coming year. These interactive workshops help to equip church leaders with the skills and understanding to pastor, teach and witness around biblical sexuality. The target audience for these workshops is anyone in a position of leadership within churches. We look forward to churches bringing teams of small group leaders along to these workshops.

4.0 - Structure, Governance and Management

Voluntary Workers

Most of our volunteers function as pastoral support workers, providing one-to-one support and advice for those struggling with same-sex attractions and for their pastors, families etc. This may be face-to-face where practical, although for most of 2020-21 it has had to be done remotely, using Zoom, phone and email. Additional requests for pastoral support came in at a rate of about a dozen per month. There was a huge variety in terms of outcomes, but many of these people became TFT members, attended events or joined a Barnabas Group. During the year, we had about forty volunteers on our register: a few stepped down from service and we were delighted to make three new appointments. A small team of volunteers specialised in support to parents with same-sex attracted children, while others focused on men, women, married strugglers, or spouses of strugglers. We organised the volunteers into teams, each led by a support volunteer who reviewed their teams twice yearly, ensuring that they still agree fully with the Basis of Belief, the Confidentiality Policy and the Safeguarding Policy. We ran four half-day training sessions between June 2020 and March 2021 using Zoom, where we trained volunteers in safeguarding, transgender, mental health and the updated approach to TFT membership.

Membership

Members are entitled to join our Barnabas Groups, take part in online support groups and attend conferences. Previously, membership was lifelong and open to all who agreed with our Basis of Belief and our Code of Confidentiality. At the end of 2020, we had 1665 individual members, but we had experienced minimal contact with many of them over recent years. We therefore decided to review our membership, in order to strengthen our sense of unity and commitment, with the expectation that some members would not renew. It also gave an opportunity for members to update contact details, renew consent for holding personal



data (to comply with GDPR regulations) and reaffirm their agreement to the Basis of Belief and the Code of Confidentiality. Membership now lasts for five years, after which we will once again invite members to renew by reaffirming their consent and agreement. We are progressively working through renewal invitations as each member reaches the five years of membership.

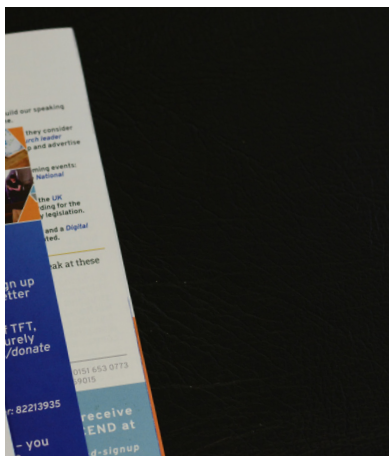
In order to enhance security and encourage commitment to membership, in January 2021 we implemented a more rigorous system for becoming a member. Applicants are now invited to complete a short application form, show proof of identity, explain their Christian faith and church involvement, and take part in an online workshop so that TFT staff may get to know them a little and ensure that they understand the workings of TFT and its membership system.

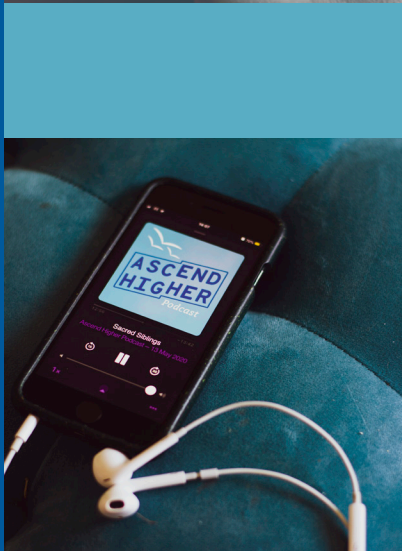
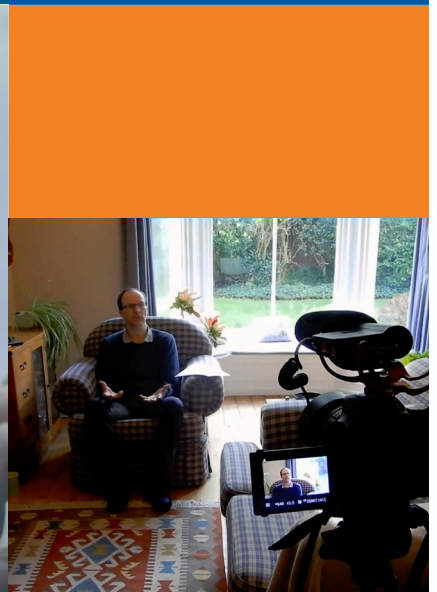
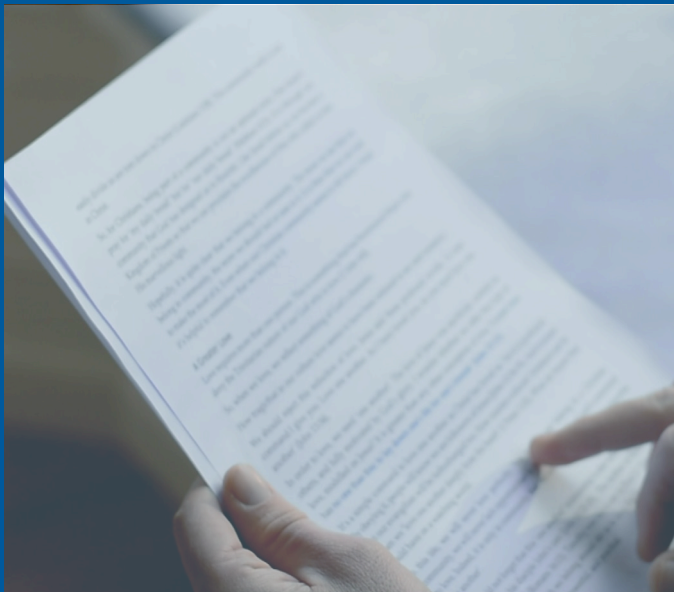
Trustees

During 2020-21, one Trustee retired, and one new trustee was appointed. The Trustees going into 2021-22 are Iain Baker, Donald Dewar (Chair), Graham Baker, Naomi Skull, Robert Walsh, Anne Witton and Laura Oliver. They met three times this year via Zoom because of COVID restrictions.

Staff

During the year, two members of staff left the team to pursue other ministry opportunities, with others increasing their hours/responsibilities. The staff team going into 2021-22 includes Stuart Parker (Director), Simon Byrne (Operations & Outreach), Paul Bach (Pastoral & Events Co-Ordinator), Ruth Daly (Women's Worker) and Harry Warrell (Digital Media Engineer).





True Freedom Trust (TFT) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation (CIO), governed by constitution dated 29/10/2014, registered in England and Wales with the Charity Commission. Charity number: 1159015

Receipts and Payments Accounts for the period 01/05/20 to 30/04/21

Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last Year Total funds to the nearest £
Receipts			
Total Donations	£172,453	£172,453	£116,407
Sales and fees	£390	£390	£14,278
Total receipts	£172,843	£172,843	£130,685
Payments			
Expenses	£2,123	£2,123	£12,750
Media & Resources	£3,825	£3,825	£4,330
Salaries & Nat. Insurance	£100,709	£100,709	£117,530
Office Rent & Utilities	£3,603	£3,603	£3,603
Post	£2,855	£2,855	£1,999
Phone & Internet	£946	£946	£704
Office Equipment	£1,084	£1,084	£1,841
Admin Fees	£3,120	£3,120	£2,201
Miscellaneous expenses	£0	£0	£0
Conferences & Meetings	£1,473	£1,473	£12,547
Pensions	£4,601	£4,601	£2,900
Total Payments	£124,339	£124,339	£160,405
Net of receipts/payments	£48,504	£48,504	-£29,720
<i>Cash funds last year end</i>	<i>£38,417</i>	<i>£38,417</i>	
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	<i>£86,921</i>	<i>£86,921</i>	


Statement of assets & liabilities at the end of the period

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £
Cash funds	
Bank	£86,156
PayPal	£719
Cash	£47
Total	£86,922

No other assets or liabilities

Signed by the Treasurer

Date:


18th January 2022



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
True Freedom Trust

On accounts for the year
ended

30th April 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1159015

Set out on pages

1 and 2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2021**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

While the charity's gross income does not exceed £250,000, I am a qualified member of Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA).

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

21/01/2022

Name:

Stuart Hull

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

CIPFA Membership Number 00103466

Address:	CIPFA Head Office
	77 Mansell Street
	London, E1 8AN

Section B	Disclosure
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

There are no items that need to be disclosed from my Independent Examination