



# Ministry Overview



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

**MAY 2022 - APRIL 2023**

---

*“True Freedom Trust will help your church grasp hold of the culturally sacred topic of sexuality. They will carefully unpack it and help you see it in light of the gospel, whilst always remaining grace-filled and compassionate. Their testimonies and stories help to ground all of it personally and demonstrate a compelling understanding for how we can trust in the Bible’s view on these matters to be good news.” – Chris*

# Index

1

## Introduction

*From TFT's Director*

2

## Ministry Overview

*2.1 - Resources*

*2.2 - Speaking and Teaching*

*2.3 - Pastoral Support*

*2.4 - Support groups*

*2.5 - Women's Work*

*2.6 - Conferences*

*2.7 - Outreach*

*2.8 - Online interactions*

*2.9 - Fundraising*

3

## Plans for 2023- 2024

4

## Governance

*4.1 - Membership*

*4.2 - Voluntary workers*

*4.3 - Staff*

*4.4 - Trustees*

*4.5 - Finance review*

## 1 - Introduction

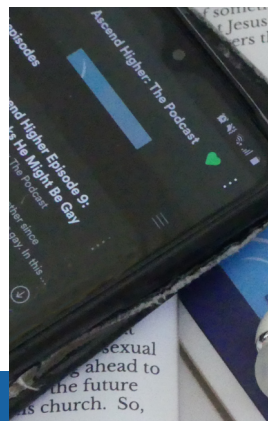
In 2022-23, True Freedom Trust (TFT) continued to encourage churches and individuals to maintain their confidence in the good teaching of the Bible, whilst providing care and support for those experiencing a range of feelings concerning their sexual attractions and gender. Several denominations were going through exercises of re-evaluating their understanding of biblical truth, and we have been busy teaching churches that the orthodox reading of scripture is compatible with being inclusive and caring.

In autumn 2022, we were thankful to have Julian Hardyman teach from the book of Song of Songs at our national residential conference. It was perhaps an unlikely Bible book to bring to a group of mainly single people. But Julian's emphasis on Jesus' love and desire for His people cultivated a renewed thirst for Jesus' intimate love in our lives.

While in-person gatherings remain unbeatable, as ways to connect and encourage people, we continue to provide online groups, conferences and trainings. These events make our ministry more accessible to those who otherwise would struggle to attend in-person gatherings, owing to cost, location or disability.

Despite the church facing many challenges in these times, there is much we can be thankful for. God has remained faithful in His provision for the work, despite a time of general financial and economic uncertainty. I am grateful for all the TFT members, volunteers, staff and trustees who stand firm on God's truth, despite personal cost and opposition. In doing so, their lives speak compellingly to a world built on values of self-sufficiency. Let us spur one another on to finish the race and keep the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

Stuart Parker, Director of TFT





## 2 - Ministry Overview

### *Resources*

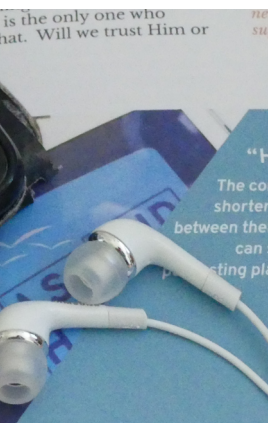
In 2022-23, we produced electronic and printed versions of Ascend as spring, summer, autumn and winter editions. The themes were “Online life”, “Keeping going”, “Facing revisionists” and “Single leaders”. We post out about 900 printed copies of Ascend free of charge each quarter and the number of people receiving the magazine by email has now swelled to around 1500.

Most of the articles, testimonies and reviews from Ascend get posted on our website, which extends the availability of this material to anyone with internet access.

Our podcast, Ascend Higher, grew in popularity over the year, with one edition going live at the launch of each Ascend magazine. Two episodes which were well received this year involved pairs of people (Jamie & Matt; Ruth &

Simon) talking about some of the challenges and encouragements that they face in their friendships.

Each year, we also produce our Recommended Resources pamphlet, which gets posted and emailed out with the winter edition of the Ascend magazine. This contains our latest recommendations for helpful reading and listening on topics of gender and sexuality.



## *Speaking and Teaching*

Our speaking work returned to near pre-pandemic levels during 2022/23. Our team delivered 55 talks across 36 speaking events. The events break down as follows:

- Churches: 23
- Bible Colleges: 3
- Internal Conferences: 5
- Other Christian events: 5

The speaking team, through this reporting period, comprised three members of staff and eight volunteers. These individuals represented a range of denominational backgrounds and come from different corners of the country. We continue to be grateful for all those who serve TFT in this way.

Each person on the team speaks from their own personal experience of walking with same-sex attraction, alongside the biblical teaching. We recognise how emotionally costly it is sharing so vulnerably in the places we visit, and pray God would continue giving the team all they need in order to serve UK and Irish churches in this way.

While continuing to support churches through the conversations taking place about human sexuality in their wider denominations, 2022/23 also saw an increase in the number of churches wanting input on matters of gender identity. We are mindful of the necessity to grow in wisdom and expertise in this field, as the church increasingly acknowledges a need to respond to the surrounding culture. We were also pleased to receive a handful of invites from churches in Wales, as it has been a number of years since we have been able to visit the nation.





## *Pastoral Support*

New requests for pastoral support at TFT come in at a rate of about ten per month, mostly via webform and occasionally by phone. The majority of our Voluntary Workers provide one-to-one support and advice for those struggling with same-sex attraction (SSA) and for their families, friends, ministers etc. We are also increasingly being contacted by parents who are asking for help to support their children with gender dysphoria.

Most of the help is given remotely by email, Zoom and phone, but also face to face depending on geographical location. Many of these contacts become TFT members, attend events or join a Barnabas Group.



## *Support Groups*

Our support groups (Barnabas Groups) are specifically to help those who have same-sex attraction and gender incongruence, but also welcome others who have a serious interest in the issue, such as ministers etc. As far as possible, a Barnabas Group leader will always meet a new applicant for his/her group.

The groups are led by experienced Voluntary Workers and group size ranges from about four to twenty members. They typically meet monthly for biblically based discussion, prayer and encouragement.

Many of the groups meet socially too. We have groups in Belfast (two groups), Dublin, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Guildford, London (two groups), Essex, Wirral, Cambridge, Sheffield and Birmingham. We have online groups for men, for women, for mixed gender, one for married men, one for parents of same-sex attracted children and one for couples. The online groups are for those who can't access a group in their area; many contain overseas members.



# WELCOME TO TFT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE!



## *Women's Work*

The women's work is flourishing with new contacts regularly becoming members and continued, heartfelt commitment to the work of TFT from existing members. Support groups grew in number, those participating in conferences increased and women recorded podcasts, wrote articles, book reviews and testimonies for the Ascend magazine and took part in leading seminars at conferences.

We held a day conference in February entitled "Belonging", with 40 in attendance, and Nat as our speaker. Two women gave their testimonies in January at a Zoominar, with questions from participants about their stories. We hold an annual weekend away in Wirral, where closer community develops through Bible study, meals together, doing fun activities and attending a Sunday church service.

During this reporting period, a third online Barnabas Group was set up for those unable to join a physical group near to them, as well as a couple's group, with the wives experiencing same-sex attraction. The couple's group is the first of its kind and a sanctuary for the 4 couples involved. They are studying "An Impossible Marriage" by Laurie and Matt Krieg, which is proving a real aid to discussion. We also have two book clubs which meet monthly online.

An overseas page was set up on our website to signpost those who come to TFT, mainly from Europe, to find support, as similar ministries abroad are unable to function due to government restrictions. Several members of Barnabas Groups are based overseas and attended the Women's and National Conference. There are 48 members in our private Facebook group, "Women of Light", and the majority of those are also connected to each other in WhatsApp groups.

A new Voluntary Worker joined the team of 12, and will support others from her home overseas. It was exciting to appoint our first VW, who lives in Europe. We recognise all the hard work undertaken by the VWs in pastoral care, speaking at events, leading support groups and providing accountability partnerships.



# STEADFAST 2022

*Theme: Remaining steadfast in God*

*Various Speaker*

*Roadshow 2022*

## *Conferences*

We held 4 local day conferences in Edinburgh, Belfast, Merseyside and London. The theme was “Remaining steadfast in God”, with teaching from three Psalms. The in-person conferences were very welcome and well attended, after only online conferences took place the year before due to Covid restrictions. We repeated the Steadfast conference online in November for those who were unable to attend in person.

Our residential National Conference, “Jesus, Lover of my Soul”, in October 2022 had Julian Hardyman as our speaker. About 100 delegates attended.

## Jesus, Lover of My Soul

### National Conference 2022

## *Outreach*

TFT is not a campaigning organisation. We see our niche as providing direct pastoral care to individuals who experience same-sex attraction or gender incongruence, who wish to live in accordance with historic Christian teaching. This means we don't particularly get involved in, or advertise, our ministry in the public sphere. We are grateful for the many other Christian organisations who feel that advancing the gospel message in those spaces is their particular calling.

Nonetheless, this presents a challenge. We want our services to be known to those who need us, but don't want to advertise via conventional means.

The outreach work at TFT seeks to raise the profile of our ministry so that those who would benefit from our support are able to find us. We do this in a number of ways. Over the last year, Simon Byrne, who leads our teaching and outreach work, has written two pieces for our friends at Affinity: Gospel Churches in Partnership, which have been included in their publications.

These publications reach a number of churches and other Christian organisations across the UK. We have also been exploring exhibiting at a number of Christian conferences that would be sympathetic towards TFT's doctrinal beliefs. Several members came forward at our 2022 National Conference and expressed their enthusiasm for TFT exhibiting at conferences right across the denominational spectrum. We expect our applications to start bearing fruit in Summer 2023. Simon has also been sharing about the work of TFT with church leaders at conferences he has attended, which increases the number of organic connections our staff team has with churches in the areas in which we operate. We have drawn up plans to resource our VWs to do more of this important work, which we hope to implement in the coming year.

### *Online interactions*

Members of the staff team meet regularly to review the website's content and design and keep elements fresh. Quite a lot of work has been done behind the scenes in the 22/23 period upgrading the software on which our website/servers operate, and a number of actions have been taken to improve page rankings on search engines such as Google. The most popular articles of the last year were:

- “What does the Bible teach about same-sex practice?” – 93,502 views
- “Is it OK to masturbate?” – 24,685 views
- “Freedom from masturbation” – 3,120 views

Our total Ascend higher podcast downloads is 2731 and the highest listened to podcast is “He thinks he might be gay” at 345 downloads.

### *Fundraising*

This year we held a campaign with the focus on having a TFT presence, with a stand, at various Christian conventions. The campaign was well received and we are successful in our application to be able to attend a convention with a stand in the summer of 2023. This will hopefully reach out to more people who will benefit from our services and raise the profile of the ministry. We have continued to be supported by many individuals, churches and trusts throughout 2022/23. We are very grateful to them for their financial support.



### 3 - Plans for 2023-2024

In June 2023, we are collaborating with Living Out to hold our first in-person joint day conference with them since 2018, since our 2021 “Exiles” conference was held online. We are excited to be holding the conference in central London on the topic of being part of the “Family of God”. As well as encouraging those who are same-sex attracted to attend, we are also hoping that a good number of church leaders will come, in order to better understand how to make our churches welcoming and inclusive places while holding on to biblical orthodoxy.

Several local Barnabas Groups will be organising day conferences around the country, and we will advertise and support these events as they happen. This allows the local groups to set their preferred format for each event.



In autumn 2023, we have Andy Robinson, Training Director at Living Out, coming to our residential National Conference to speak on his favourite Bible book, 2 Corinthians, on the theme “Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing”.



Support for women between conferences, mainly through online groups and events, has become more established in recent years. We are keen for 2023-24 to expand similar ongoing support to men within TFT. We are planning to give renewed impetus to the “Men of Faith” secret Facebook group through resourcing, in collaboration with the “Women of Light” Facebook group. We will also promote and encourage the support group for married men with SSA, which is flourishing.

## 4 - Governance

### *Membership*

We have maintained our project to contact long-standing members and confirm with them if they still want to support the work by continuing as part of the membership. As a result, we now have 1,670 members.

We continue to work through renewal as each member reaches the end of their five years of membership. The implementation of a stricter system for interested parties to become members has proved effective and well appreciated by both new members and by the TFT staff.

### *Voluntary Workers*

We have forty-nine Voluntary Workers on our register, 46 who provide pastoral support, including 7 who are also speakers, and 3 who are speakers only, with new volunteers appointed this year.

Pastoral VWs specialise in support to one or more of these groups: SSA men, SSA women, married SSA men, spouses of SSA men, married SSA women, parents with same-sex attracted sons/daughters, couples and those with gender issues. Pastoral speaking team VWs provide care to those they meet at speaking engagements and training.

Voluntary Workers often provide contacts with accountability too, whether help for addiction or overcoming habits, breaking emotional dependency or wanting to practise regular spiritual disciplines.

The VWs are organised into teams, each led by a Support VW who review their team twice yearly, in particular ensuring that they still agree fully with the Basis of Belief, the Confidentiality Policy and the Safeguarding Policy. We were able to run two half-day training sessions, one using Zoom and one in-person, where the training covered pastoral referrals, the role of the pastoral support worker, healthy friendships, whether to attend Pride events and leading Barnabas Groups.



## Staff

During the year, Paul Bach retired from the staff team and we would like to thank him for his work over many years.. The staff team going into 2023-24 consists of Stuart Parker (Director), Simon Byrne (Teaching & Outreach Co-ordinator), Liam Dietrich (Pastoral support Co-ordinator), Ruth Daly (Women's Worker) and Owen Leadbetter (Digital Media Technician & Team Administrator).

## Trustees

The trustees were able to meet in person throughout 2022- 23. The Trustees going into 2023-24 are Iain Baker, Donald Dewar (Chair), Graham Baker, Naomi Skull, Robert Walsh, Laura Oliver, Duncan Beet and Jane Gibbs.

***“The TFT speaker served our church excellently by bringing both gentleness and clarity. Our church has really made some great steps towards being convinced of the goodness of the biblical sexual ethic and of the importance of welcoming and loving all people regardless of their sexuality or gender.” - Simon***





Income

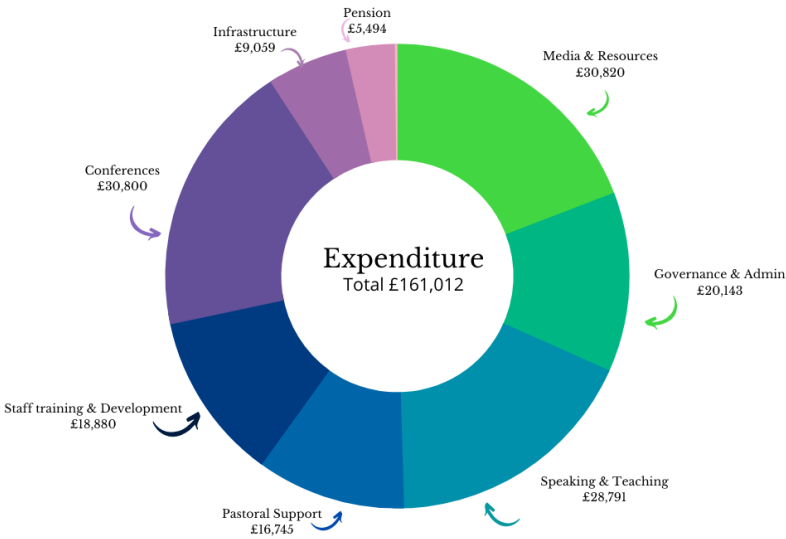
Total £166,448



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. We are thankful to God for this provision.

Over the year 2022/2023 , expenditure was higher than 2021/22 due to rising costs and the lifting of restrictions of COVID, meaning we were able to do more in person.

Thanks to the generosity of so many and the situation just described, we ended the year with a surplus of £5,437. We kept our statutory reserve at £43,000 for the year, with the rising cost of living.



The chart above illustrates how our financial resources were spent during the reporting period. A little under 80% of our expenditure went towards staff salaries and pensions to enable them to carry out our core activities. Please note that staff salaries are reflected in various expenditure allocation within separate ministry sections in the chart.

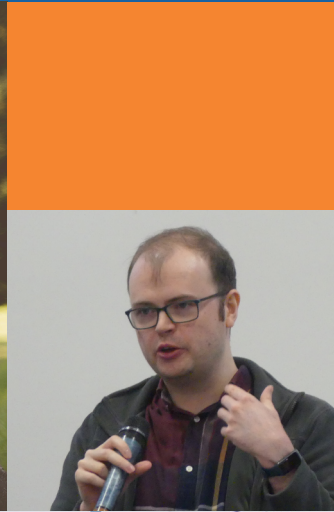
Expenditure for our Speaking & Teaching ministry increased on the previous 12 months due to more speaking requests. Our conference costs and media resources also went up due to having more in person conferences and producing more resources. These also reflect the rising costs of inflation.

The expenditure shown for pastoral support is relatively low, because a substantial amount of care is provided by volunteers. We remain grateful for our team of VWs, without whom our costs would be much higher. Not labelled on the chart is £280 to a new area of the ministry, outreach.

*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.*





**TRUE FREEDOM TRUST (TFT) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (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 01/05/22 to 30/04/23**

**Receipts and payments**

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last Year Total funds to the nearest £
<b>Receipts</b>			
Total Donations	£150,673	£150,673	£138,487
Sales and fees	£15,776	£15,776	£15,153
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>£166,449</b>	<b>£166,449</b>	<b>£153,640</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Expenses	£11,709	£11,709	£8,597
Media & Resources	£3,286	£3,286	£4,038
Salaries & Nat. Insurance	£113,458	£113,458	£105,849
Office Rent & Utilities	£3,917	£3,917	£3,661
Post	£3,020	£3,020	£2,316
Comms & tech Support	£2,094	£2,094	£1,155
Office Equipment	£1,184	£1,184	£901
Transaction Fees	£1,864	£1,864	£1,017
Miscellaneous expenses	£0	£0	£38
Conferences & Meetings	£14,986	£14,986	£12,010
Pensions	£5,494	£5,494	£4,584
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£161,012</b>	<b>£161,012</b>	<b>£144,167</b>
<b>Net of receipts/payments</b>	<b>£5,437</b>	<b>£5,437</b>	<b>£9,473</b>
<i>Cash funds last year end</i>	<i>£96,394</i>	<i>£96,394</i>	
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	<i>£101,831</i>	<i>£101,831</i>	

**Statement of assets & liabilities at the end of the period**

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £
Cash funds	
Bank	£101,813
PayPal	£20
Cash	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£101,832</b>

No other assets or liabilities

Signed by the Treasurer

Date:



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF  
TRUE FREEDOM REUST**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 30 April 2023

**Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Independent Examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention 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 not come across any 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.

Date 30 December 2023

Signed



A. E. M. McGraa  
18, Poulton Green Close,  
Bebington,  
Wirral.  
CH63 9FS