

CEO Letter – Day of Prayer

30th May 2017

Large print 25pt

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**The Torch Trust for the Blind
A charity registered in England and
Wales no. 1095904
A company limited by guarantee
no. 4616526**

**This letter is available in the following
formats: audio CD, braille, email and
large print (17, 20, 25 and 30 point).**

Dear Prayer Partners,

We have set aside Wednesday 7th June as Torch's Day of Prayer. This annual feature of Torch's calendar is an important opportunity to give extra time and emphasis to prayer.

Prayer has been the bedrock of Torch's existence from the outset. Each working day at both Torch House and the Torch Holiday & Retreat Centre we set aside time to pray together but on this special day we commit the whole day to prayer.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to join in from wherever you are, for as little or as long as you can. The rest of this letter is intended to inform your prayers. We seek to mobilise a chorus of prayer that reflects our experience of God's blessing in the past, the vision for God's work in Torch that we embrace and the challenges we face.

The day following our Day of Prayer is not just the Election Day but also the 58th Anniversary of the foundation of the Torch Trust of today. In our prayers we can look back with thanksgiving and forward with anticipation and faith. With this letter is an outline of the Day of Prayer programme at Torch House and some topics for both praise and prayer.

Torch continues at a pace to realise the benefits of the years of investment in automation, now operating a streamlined system to produce the braille and large print Christian books that blind and partially sighted people need and when they need them. This requires relationships with publishers that allow us immediate access to computer files for the books and a relationship with the Christian books trade that enables us to reach more prospective readers. Later this month

we are hosting a meeting at Torch House of Christian publishers and booksellers with the aim of stimulating effective partnership working.

We are actively recruiting, seeking people to work with us around the country to advance our 'Presence' activities that bring Torch closer to blind and partially sighted people where they live, coming alongside people losing their sight at their times of greatest need. Key to the effectiveness of these activities are the relationships that we foster and develop with local churches and with the local agencies that engage with people with sight loss in their community. This growing national network requires the support of a strong team at Torch House, especially the client services and communications departments, to support activity distributed across the nations of the UK.

Torch is an international mission and our worldwide activity again depends crucially on the partnerships we have with nationals, with churches and church leaders, local Christian agencies, and with blind and partially sighted people themselves. We are working to build a sustainable future for the Torch operation in Malawi.

We have designated 2017 as Torch's Year of Building Together and our verse for the year is Ephesians 4:16 . . .

'From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.'

It comes from the passage where the apostle Paul is calling for togetherness,

among Christians. He emphasises that which we hold in common, most significantly ‘one Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father of us all’ (4:4-6). It’s undoubtedly significant that Paul chooses not one but two more metaphors to illustrate the effectiveness of those that pull together around Jesus: growing and building.

Building suggests organisation, a plan and a programme of work. Building, in the physical sense, requires many trades to cooperate, contribute their skills and coordinate their activities. Without this togetherness the progress is slow and the quality poor.

Growing makes us think about life. Plants, animals and children grow. We grow old! We can do a lot to set conditions favourable to growth but we ourselves can’t make the growth happen. So it is with God’s Kingdom. Paul once observed that he planted the

seed 'but God has been making it grow' (1 Corinthians 3:6).

If Torch is to build well and experience growth in our ministry among people with sight loss we are conscious we need to do it together: staff and volunteers, with churches and church networks and with all who support us in prayer and financially.

Both building and growing require resources. I am acutely aware of our dependency upon God for the funds that are required to secure the future of Torch. When I wrote at Christmastime our financial situation was anything but secure. I'm immensely grateful to many who responded, yes, with donations, but also with notes of encouragement and, most importantly, with prayer.

In the goodness of God we are no longer in crisis, but neither are we secure. The downwards trend in donations Torch has

experienced is widely observed among UK charities. We still have only one month's expenditure covered by our reserves.

We are deeply grateful to all who faithfully support us by committed giving using Direct Debit or Standing Order. This greatly helps with financial stability and we pray for growth in this type of income.

I and the leadership and trustees of Torch are committed to acting in faith to build the work in line with our Strategic Plan which we believe captures the vision that God has given us.

Our verse reminds us that everything flows from Jesus Christ himself. Torch is a confidently Christian organisation and aims to be Christ-centred in every plan and activity. In our prayers we acknowledge and affirm this. There'll

be no progress, neither growth nor building, if we drift from our anchorage.

So please do join your prayers with ours on our Day of Prayer. We are as conscious as ever of our faith dependency upon our God and our need for his guidance and help each day. Let's come together before our heavenly Father in faith on 7th June.

God bless you,

Gordon Temple, Chief Executive