

Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

7th July 2010

I was concerned to read in the Sunday Express that you believe that “Labour tried to force Britons to turn their back on faith.” In fact, the previous government spent millions of pounds encouraging religious individuals and groups to get more involved in communities and deliver public services. A large percentage of that money, much of which was not accessible to community groups who were not religious, went to Christian groups.

Secular charities constitute a majority of the voluntary sector and have much good practice to learn from - surely better than the practice of organisations whose main purpose is to promote an unshared belief. We would urge you to not make a fetish of faith groups and churches in the voluntary sector at the expense of more inclusive bodies that bring together people of all beliefs.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Copson
Chief Executive
British Humanist Association