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Christian Community Update 6

December 2009

I promised to keep you up to date on issues of interest to Hendon's Christian communities, so I thought with Christmas approaching, this was a good time to write to you, with a review of the past year.

Let me start by thanking you for the contribution that you and your church make to our local community. In the current economic climate, it is imperative that we ensure that those who have in the past been particularly vulnerable in a downturn – those on modest and middle incomes, young people, the unemployed and the elderly – are safeguarded. As the Prime Minister said in his historic address to both houses of the US Congress earlier this year, **“we cannot, we will not, we will never pass by on the other side.”**

Churches and the Christian community do tremendous work for the poorest in society. And the support you provide is needed now more than ever. I know just how important the work of local churches and associated organisations in

Hendon have been in supporting those who have felt the ill effects of the economic crisis. So I would like to thank you for the work you all do in our community.

Over the coming year we will continue to help the least fortunate. The **Child Poverty Bill**, which seeks to eradicate child poverty by 2020, should receive Royal Assent before the election, and we will introduce new legislation that will commit to the UK spending **0.7% of national income on development assistance** for the poorest people in the world.

I am committed to continuing to provide churches with support to serve their communities. You may wish to see the latest copy of *Churches Update*, a regular newsletter published by the Labour Party, which includes more information about the action we are taking. You can find the newsletter at:

<http://www.labour.org.uk/uploads/c459f000-7c9c-32d4-e5c3-ebf512f7494f.pdf>

If you would like to receive Churches Update regularly by email, please sign up at www.labour.org.uk/faith.

I thought you might also like a broad overview of some of my activities that you may find of particular interest, over the last year.

Church Visits

I have visited many Christian places of worship, for services, for community events organised by churches, and for meetings or celebrations where places of worship have been made available to the wider community.

For example, I very much enjoyed visiting Hendon's **St Mary's** open day, and learning more of the long history of the church (as well as going up their bell tower!). I also attended their anniversary concert.

I made my first attempt at bell ringing, at **St Margaret's**, Edgware, with the Bishop of Edmonton: it's pretty tricky to get into the swing of it! I also always visit their Fair Trade day, to stock up (mostly on chocolate!)

The **United Reformed Church's** new Eversfield Centre is a wonderful and imaginative use of the old church building, making it adaptable for a wide range of uses, in addition to worship. They kindly invited me to hold a feedback meeting there for the local Somali and wider African Diaspora communities.

I am also a regular visitor to **St Paul's** in Mill Hill for community events, most recently to talk about development issues in Africa, for Black History Month.

St John's, West Hendon, is also very involved in outreach, and being so close to the Multicultural Centre, this gives extra impetus to their work. I attended their interfaith day, when the church was opened up to other faiths.

The evangelical movement is growing all the time – I attended **Open Heavens'** 10th anniversary service, in the new church – putting the redundant Roman Catholic church in Broadfields, Edgware to new, lively and very full use.

I've also joined worship at the **North West London Church**, in St James's school hall, and I've been to visit the **International Gospel Church** in Burnt Oak, too. Church 'fairs' are also a good way for me to keep in touch – I go whenever I can, if invited – I seem to be a regular at **St Alphage's**, for example!

If you would like me to visit your place of worship, please let me know, through the church leader, and if I can, I will!

In Parliament

Work in Parliament is also important, especially supporting Christians who face oppression because of their faith, as well as more general efforts to support those who are less well off, both at home and in the wider world.

You can see some of the Parliamentary motions which may be of interest, at:

<http://www.andrewdismoremp.com/uploads/871c954f-9523-bb14-31c0-a5bb497aa3cc.pdf>

I know many Christians are very interested in the developing world, especially Africa. You might find it interesting to visit the African Community and International Development pages on my website, www.andrewdismoremp.com, to see what I and the Government have been doing on this. Better still, you can join my mailing list for updates on these issues, and to see what you can do to help, too. Just email me at updates@hendonlabourparty.com, or alternatively, fill out the enclosed feedback form, and send it back to me – you don't need a stamp.

Keeping in touch

If you would like copies of any of my previous reports sent to you, please email me at updates@hendonlabourparty.com. My previous reports are also available on my website, www.andrewdismoremp.com.

Finally, I also thought you would like to read the Prime Minister's Christmas message, which I you can find at:

www.andrewdismoremp.com/uploads/b9f6c5d3-107e-85a4-35ec-14974756e25c.pdf



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