

11 February 2020

**Mr. Mohit Bakaya**

Controller, BBC Radio 4

*Copies:*

**Mr. James Purnell**

Director, BBC Radio

**Mr. Graham Ellis**

Deputy Director, BBC Radio

Dear Mr. Bakaya,

Since June 2018 I have demonstrated monthly outside the BBC – including today - with others from South East London Humanist Group (SELHuG). Our campaign calls on the BBC to include humanists and other non-religious thinkers on Thought for the Day. You can read our statement on the back of the enclosed flyer – your colleagues to whom I have copied this letter are already aware of it.

While the relevant BBC decision-makers doggedly refuse to accede to our request, the ‘interfaith’ or ‘dialogue’ approach to understanding others’ beliefs is growing apace. By excluding the non-religious voice, *Thought for the Day* is out of touch with what is happening in the real world i.e. a willingness to listen to others - *of all faiths and none* - matched with inclusiveness. (I am actively involved in this, as a humanist speaking in schools alongside those of faith and accredited by the award-winning Faith and Belief Forum.)

The BBC report on Religion and Ethics from 2017 states (my bold):

“Thought for the Day and Pause for Thought will continue as religious slots in primetime radio, with speakers from a wide range of faiths reflecting on an issue of the day. It is important that these slots are grounded in different lived experiences of faith and philosophical underpinning **aimed at resonating with the whole audience**, so that the item is not just a reflection on current events, but also a chance to learn more about other religious beliefs.”

May I suggest that it is not possible to resonate ‘with the whole audience’ if (as all recent independent polls show) around 50% of the population are not religious? In saying it’s ‘a chance to learn more about *other* religious beliefs’, the report presupposes that listeners already have a religion, but at least half do not. As a humanist I am part of that group and continue to support SELHuG’s campaign.

I and my colleagues at SELHuG would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

**Trevor Moore**