

BBC allows Today programme to be used to promote Church's evangelism campaign

Posted: Thu, 1st Jun 2017

The National Secular Society has criticised the BBC for allowing the first *Thought for the Day* slot of June to be used by the Church of England as a platform to promote its latest evangelism initiative.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby spoke on Radio 4 about the Church's 'Thy Kingdom Come' campaign, which invites "more people to come to know Jesus Christ".

NSS campaigns director Stephen Evans said, "It's bad enough that the BBC dedicates part of its flagship news programme to offer an unchallenged platform for religion, but allowing *Thought for the Day* to be used as free advertising slot for the Church of England really takes the biscuit. It further calls into question the appropriateness of this anachronistic and discriminatory slot."

In February, the BBC slapped down the new *Today* programme editor after she suggested *Thought for the Day* should be opened up to humanists.

Shortly after her appointment, the NSS wrote to Sarah Sands, urging her to use her influence as editor to rethink the slot.

Despite sitting within the *Today* programme, *Thought for the Day* is produced by the BBC's religious affairs department – and the BBC has repeatedly insulated *Thought for the Day* from any reform.

The slot's editorial policy explicitly discriminates against the non-religious as they are the only group barred from contributing.

In its letter to Ms Sands, the NSS suggested that *Thought for the Day* should be opened up to non-religious contributors, turning the daily segment into an "ethical current affairs reflection slot."

Otherwise, the discriminatory slot should be renamed 'Religious thought for the day' and moved away from Radio 4's flagship news programme and into a more suitable timeslot reflecting its niche status, the NSS said.

While you're here

Our news and opinion content is an important part of our campaigns work. Many articles involve a lot of research by our campaigns team. If you value this output, please consider supporting us today.

- [Support us from just £1 a month](#)

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)

- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Thought for the Day](#)

Related Campaigns

-

[Reform 'Thought for the Day'](#)

Thought for the Day should include nonreligious contributions – or be scrapped.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

[Nicky Campbell to deliver NSS Bradlaugh Lecture](#)

'The Big Questions' host to share insights into career and media's treatment of religion at NSS event [Read More »](#)

[When it comes to religion, the BBC is showing its age](#)

Radio 4's discriminatory 'Thought for the Day' slot is totemic of religious privilege at the BBC and should be the... [Read More »](#)

[Ep 17: Thought for the Day | RE in Wales](#)

In this week's episode, Emma Park is joined by Chris Sloggett and Helen Nicholls to discuss whether BBC Radio 4's... [Read More »](#)

[Scrap 'discriminatory' Thought for the Day, says former presenter](#)

The National Secular Society has urged the BBC to reform its Thought for the Day slot on Radio 4 after the former... [Read More »](#)

BBC dilutes protections for religious ideas after NSS lobbying

The BBC has watered down some protections for religious ideas but retained a clause placing a premium on depictions... [Read More »](#)