

Friday 22nd July 2022

To: The Chair of the ISRSA and Council Members,

We are writing as Chief Executive, the Chair of Trustees and the Chair of Grants and Education Committee of Culham St Gabriel's Trust to express our disappointment and concern at the publication of your recent report: *Religion and Worldviews (Weltanschauung)*; we respectfully urge you to withdraw it.

We are disappointed because the report is an inaccurate representation of the Commission on RE (2018) and subsequent developments of religion and worldviews. In light of this we are concerned about the ISRSA's reputation. This is important to us as we have funded your essay competition, and there is an associated reputational risk for the Trust. We note, for example, that Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, Chief Executive of the Independent Schools Association, has expressed publicly his personal reservations about the report. In addition, we see that several academics have expressed grave concern regarding claims made in your report about recruitment being undermined by a religion and worldviews approach, claims these academics say are unfounded. The report does not consider the many developments, including a literature review and discussion papers which build on the Commission report.

We are concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the process of development of the report and its research base. The report as published by the ISRSA does not explain the following:

- Who authored the report
- How views of the ISRSA Council were gathered
- If and whether ISRSA members views were surveyed, how these results were analysed, and conclusions drawn
- Whether the views are representative of the ISRSA membership, and/or the views of the entire ISRSA council and/or the views of the authors on behalf of the ISRSA.

This contrasts starkly with the report of the Commission on RE (2018). The CORE Report makes clear who drafted the report (Amira Tharani), the Chair of the Commission (Very Revd Dr John Hall) names of the commissioners (p.78-80) and 17 pages of organisations and people consulted or who provided evidence (p.81-97). Therefore, the lack of transparency about the methodology used for your own report is not just telling but concerning.

Our call to you is to withdraw the Report and enter a dialogue with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, to whom many of the comments in your report are directed, about the development of the subject. We note the eight reservations regarding a religion and worldviews approach. We would encourage you to read the following well-informed critiques of your arguments listed at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Kathryn Wright
Chief Executive



John Keast, OBE
Chair of the Trust



Dr Linda Whitworth
Chair of Grants and Education

Professor Trevor Cooling, with accompanying statement from Professor Bob Bowie
<https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/nicer/personal-response-addressed-to-the-isrsa-patron-and-council-from-professor-trevor-cooling-emeritus-professor-at-canterbury-christ-church-university-to-the-isrsa-report-religions-and-worldviews-welt/>

Dr Wendy Dossett <https://reformingre.wordpress.com/2022/07/02/the-isrsa-report-a-personal-response/>

Mr Wayne Buisst <https://venividiteachy.wordpress.com/2022/06/15/obscure-german-words-and-other-such-ablenkungsmanovers/>

Luke Burns <https://ocrs.online/2022/06/20/what-the-weltanschauung/>