**Book Title: ST AUGUSTINE’S SIN – *Why child abuse bedevils Christianity***

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**LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION IN BRITAIN’S STATE FUNDED SCHOOLS**

Most subjects taught in Britain’s schools are regulated by statute. However, some people do not realise that despite experience of sectarianism parts of the UK, there is no statutory curriculum for religious education. Guidance is provided, but schools are free to teach any religious beliefs they please (except teaching Creationism as a scientific theory).

**CHILD ABUSE**Alone amongst civilised nations today, Britain allows children to be beaten in the home.  Hansard reports that in May 2004 Peter Forster, the 55-year-old Lord Bishop of Chester sitting in the House of Lords, spoke in favour of allowing the beating of children as ‘reasonable chastisement’.  The 66-year-old Baroness Richardson of Calow agreed, on behalf of ‘a great many Christians across a wide range of Churches, particularly those which have come out in support in official statements, such as the Methodist Church, the United Reform Church, the Roman Catholic Church and many children’s charities’.  Yet research shows that corporal punishment does not work and can lead to mental health problems for some children.

**QUESTIONABLE VALUES**All Britain’s schools are obliged to teach Christian beliefs. Since the Education Act of 1944 passed into law, many state funded schools, mainly primary schools, teach their young pupils unhelpful and unfounded ideas:

**Disgrace**Infants are held to be *'stained by original sin'* and the sin needs to be washed out of them.  (Since Augustine's time, original sin has had corrosive sexual connotations.)

**False Obligation**Children are customarily told, as I was, that they are beholden to a chimeric 'Saviour,' who suffered for them and was hideously brutalised and crucified because of their wickedness.

**Moral Confusion**

Pupils are taught that if they cause harm to another person, if they abuse someone or even commit murder,  they can apply to a nebulous glorified being and gain forgiveness.  The circumstances of any sinful act is ignored, along with the victim, in this facile judicial process.

**Images of Violence**
Many faith schools expose children as young as six to gory images.  Some schools encourage their pupils to draw graphic pictures of torture and death, as exposed by the authors in *St Augustine's Sin*.

**POOR QUALITY STUDIES OF RELIGIOUSITY**

The benefits credited to religious belief are often misrepresented in research studies of religiosity and health, perpetuating the cycle of misplaced approval accorded to Augustine’s teaching. In studies analysed by the authors, participants are divided into ‘believers’ and ‘unbelievers’. Any health issues amongst unbelieving participants is held to be due to unbelief. However, the true reason might be related to any number of causes and quite possibly attributable to early proselytisation and not due to unbelief. For a proper study of the effects of religion on developing young people, it would be necessary to identify all the subjects who have been indoctrinated and later recanted, and classify them separately.  In the pages of *St Augustine's Sin* we discover why prominent academics tend to shun religion as a field of study.