**Book Title: Why Punish Me?** *Augustine’s sinful lust unwrapped*

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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).

Alone amongst civilised nations, Britain allows children to be beaten in the home.  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.

All Britain’s schools are obliged to teach Christian beliefs. Since the Education Act of 1944 passed into law, state funded schools have been required to teach pupils the unhelpful ideas of St Augustine. Augustine held that all humans are innately evil, and even new-borns bear the stain of sinful lust.

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 many such studies, 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 *Why Punish Me?* we discover why academics tend to shun religion as a field of study.