

ALARM FOR UK PARENTS: UNITED NATIONS WAKE-UP CALL

Saturday 8 July, 2023

In June 2023 the United Nations expressed concern regarding UK education. Alone among European nations, collective worship "*broadly Christian character*" is compulsory in UK schools. A UN committee called for repeal of the law, and recommended pupils be given the independent right of withdrawal from religious worship.

Recent data from The Children's Society revealed that young people in the UK exhibit the lowest level of life satisfaction in Europe.

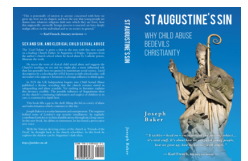
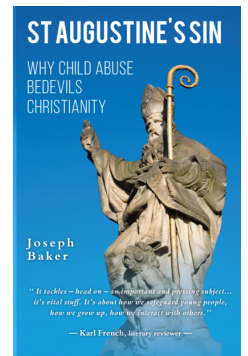
A new book, *St Augustine's Sin*, offers personal perspectives on faith school education. The author, a one-time Christian Brothers pupil, explains how his life was influenced by enduring feelings of **guilt** and **deference**. Chapters by a primary school teacher examine with rigorous scrutiny how current teaching in faith schools might affect a child's vulnerability.

In 2021 an inquiry in France reported that children are more likely to be abused within Church settings than state schools, holiday camps and sporting organisations. Around the same time, our own UK Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse disclosed that 100 new cases of clerical abuse are being reported every year. Yet in June 2023, the Church of England sacked the panel of experts who provided independent oversight of how it dealt with abuse.

Why is abuse more prevalent within a Church than in other settings, and why is the Church so lax in addressing the issue? Here the origins of clerical abuse are traced all the way back to one of the most influential of Church Fathers, Saint Augustine of Hippo. Meticulous notes link to evidence, and the disturbing findings in this book should alarm all parents.

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