

## **Backgrounder to the Bountiful Petition**

At its September 24-25, 2004 meeting, the BCTF Executive Committee passed the following motion as a result of recommendations from the Social Justice Advisory Committee:

That the BCTF condemn the trafficking of young girls in Bountiful as wives, and the use of public funds to support the independent schools in Bountiful, and express our concerns to the premier and the ministers of education and children and families and the attorney general.

Acting on this mandate, the Status of Women action group developed the following petition for BCTF and community members to circulate. Completed petitions should be returned to

Jane Turner, Professional and Social Issues Division  
B.C. Teachers' Federation  
100 - 550 W. 6th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2

The petitions will be presented to the ministers of education, children and families and the attorney general.

### **Allegations made against The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in Bountiful, British Columbia**

Women who have escaped Bountiful are struggling to overcome a “lifetime of abuse, religious indoctrination, psychological coercion as well as fear and threats of retaliation.”

(Debbie Palmer, former Bountiful resident)

Women who have left Bountiful have reported that “their children aren’t properly educated...(and that there is)...abuse of both children and women...It’s Canada’s dirty little secret.”

(Audrey Vance, Creston resident)

“There are all these boys that are thinking, ‘Well, the girls are getting kind of short in numbers here. Where am I going to get a wife from?’ They are starting to get out on the streets, and do drugs and parties and find girls, and then, of course, once they start doing that they are considered the ‘lost boys’.”

(Jane Blackmore, former Bountiful resident)

“There is no other community that I know of in Canada where teachers, elders, heads of communities, and bishops can take under-age female children, impregnate them, and get away with it.”

(Debbie Palmer, former Bountiful resident)

“In 1992, RCMP even recommended charges against community leaders, based on evidence provided by a former resident, but Crown prosecutors chose not to proceed.”

(*The Tyee* [www.thetyee.ca/News/current/LeavingBountiful.htm](http://www.thetyee.ca/News/current/LeavingBountiful.htm))

“What I would like to see...would be in the education of the children. To have it not be such a closed society, and to have other people be able to go in and give information to the adolescents and children.”

(Jane Blackmore, former Bountiful resident)

Ministry inspectors reported Bountiful girls were only allowed to study “preparing, catering and cleaning up after a meal...sewing and other types of handiwork.”

(Vancouver Sun, July 17, 2004)

“Critics allege that the schools’ teachings are inconsistent with the provincial curriculum. The high and early dropout rates of these schools indicate that Bountiful students are not receiving an education that will allow them to function outside the community or to be knowledgeable about their rights as citizens.”

(John Russell, President, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association)

## **Bountiful Petition**

Whereas, serious allegations have been made against the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints community in Bountiful, British Columbia such as:

- trafficking of young girls into the community as wives for the older men;
- assigning husbands to girls as young as 14;
- older men impregnating girls as young as 14 or 15;
- casting out young men from the community to keep the gender imbalance;
- teaching a narrowly focused curriculum to children.

We, the undersigned residents of British Columbia, demand that the provincial government immediately protect women and children in Bountiful, British Columbia by:

- thoroughly investigating the allegations of sexual exploitation and trafficking of young girls in Bountiful, British Columbia.
- having the Ministry of Children and Families support the “lost boys” of Bountiful.
- sending a team of outside counsellors, educators and evaluators to live in the community while carrying out an investigation of the delivery of the provincial educational program.
- discontinuing public funding of the private schools of Bountiful if, after a thorough investigation has been completed, it is found that the schools are not following the Independent Schools Act and the mandate of the Ministry of Education.

<b>Name (Print)</b>	<b>Address (full home address or city and province)</b>	<b>Signature</b>
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**British Columbia Teachers' Federation**  
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**1-800-663-9163 • *www.bctf.ca* • TTY 604-871-2185 (deaf and hard of hearing)**

