

The Exclusive Brethren separated from the Open Brethren in 1848 and follow a rigid code of practice that among other things restricts the contact their members can have with those outside their group. The Open Brethren believe that their individual churches should have freedom in their dealings with others. The two groups remain separate and do not hold joint events.

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There are about 6,000 Exclusive Brethren living in New Zealand at the moment, which is about three times their estimated numbers in 2006, although exact figures are not available. The majority of local Exclusive Brethren live in Wellington's northern corridor.

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The Wellington Exclusive Brethren has a growing congregation of over 300 members, using temporary premises in Linden as their Church. The building fits the description of their typical church with its frosted windows, high security fence and no signage on the premises to identify it as a Brethren church.

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Exclusive Brethren children attend Plymouth Brethren Christian Westmount schools. The local Johnsonville School (Decile 8) has about 100 students from Year 3 to 13. Education is conducted as per the New Zealand curriculum. Their schools get very good reports. Parents take a very active interest in the education of their children showing that they are like all parents who consider the education of their children as being very important. The Exclusive Brethren treat girls and boys equally at their schools. They "focus on recruiting and retaining quality teachers and offer an attractive package with competitive remuneration, good student discipline, proven academic performance and small class sizes" ([www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/](http://www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/)).

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Exclusive Brethren regard the Darby translation of the Bible as the absolute, infallible, inspired word of God. It defines their beliefs, morality and code of conduct. It is their essential companion and authoritative guide. From their earliest childhood, members are read and taught Bible stories. This Bible is used as it is 'claimed to be a more correct and up to date version than the 1611 Authorised Version' (<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Salient33101970-t1-body-d28.html>)

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Exclusive Brethren largely shun the "conduits of evil communications" such as television, radio and the internet. This, however, cuts them off from the real world. It seems a very strange thing to do, as they will have problems then relating to the world, especially as it becomes more involved with technology. Exclusive Brethren separate themselves from others due to their belief that the world is a place of wickedness and mostly restrict their social activities to interactions with other Exclusive Brethren. This could lead to a less developed understanding of how to relate to non-Exclusive Brethren people.

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