

INSIDE NEW ZEALAND: LEAVING THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

08:30 PM THURSDAY

Go where no cameras have ever gone before when Inside New Zealand investigates Leaving the Exclusive Brethren on Thursday, August 18th at 8:30pm on 3.

The hidden world of the Exclusive Brethren sees members exclude themselves from the outside world – living apart from the rest of society, sending their children to Exclusive Brethren schools, and even working in businesses run by Exclusive Brethren. The Exclusive Brethren believe they are ‘the chosen ones’.

Now, Inside New Zealand: Leaving the Exclusive Brethren goes where no other television cameras in the world have ever been allowed to go. Elders of the Auckland branch of the Exclusive Brethren have permitted television cameras behind the veil.

Viewers will see children in the classroom of an Exclusive Brethren school, and an interview with an Exclusive Brethren family about what their lives are like takes place – what is life like with no television, no radio, no opportunity to ever go to university, and no contact with anyone who is not a member of the Exclusive Brethren?

However, this documentary is not just a mere look at this enclosed existence. Viewers will see as some serious allegations are put towards the church, allegations about the way they ex-communicate people from the fellowship.

People who leave the Exclusive Brethren are totally isolated from their old lives. They are outcasts, shunned by the family and loved ones that they leave inside the Church.

Inside New Zealand: Leaving the Exclusive Brethren follows four people who have been ex-communicated from the fellowship and charts their difficulty in the transition to life outside the select Church.

Martin's parents were ex-communicated from the Exclusive Brethren, and their children were kept away from them for two years. Martin was scared of what would happen to him if he went back to his parents.

"When Dad came and got me and brought me home the Exclusives said to us, 'you'll be going to hell if you stay with your parents,'" Martin recalls.

Then, Carolyn married a man that she didn't like, let alone love. Her physically, sexually and emotionally abusive relationship was ignored by the Exclusive Brethren, and she was ex-communicated from the fellowship when she left the marriage and would not return.

Carolyn recalls, those days were the darkest in her life, and as she struggled to find a way out of the marriage with no one in the Exclusive Brethren to listen and help, she contemplated drastic measures.

"I was like, 'do I kill the kids and me to get out of here or is there some way I can, you know, run away?'" Carolyn says.

Ngaire grew up in the Exclusive Brethren and, with her husband, left in the 1970s, leaving behind friends and close relatives. Ngaire remembers good times in the Exclusive Brethren, but her most vibrant memories are of the control exerted over women and the power wielded over people's lives.

Finally, Matthew left the Exclusive Brethren three years ago, after contemplating it for about five years. Eventually, he quietly packed up his car and left.

Matthew saw the hypocrisy in the system and had started challenging people there. He didn't want to be



broken by the Exclusive Brethren.

"Not everyone was into it at all. People rebelled. But in the end they were all broken. I didn't want that," remembers Matthew.

Inside New Zealand: Leaving the Exclusive Brethren director Kathleen Mantel says the documentary is a "fascinating insight into a world that very few of us have ever seen or experienced, a world that we don't understand and seems alien to our modern values and sensibilities."

Tune in for the enlightening and never-before-permitted footage that is Inside New Zealand: Leaving the Exclusive Brethren, screening on Thursday, August 18th at 8:30pm on 3.