

Pail of paint a handy metaphor

By David Clements

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This summer I've found a minor new passion – painting green.

Actually, I would probably enjoy painting with any colour, but green happens to be the colour of everything I need to paint, it also makes for a good metaphor.

I've discovered our house has a lot of green surfaces; first it was the deck, and then the trim around all the windows, doors and more.

The deck was a family project, but was like a brush with destiny for me – I just couldn't put my painting implement down after that.

There's something appealing about the smooth swish-swash of the brush, refreshing the wooden surfaces and providing a new resistance against the elements.

Faded green or even brown in places is renewed with a fresh new promise of green.

The other night as the sun was setting I was on the roof painting green, listening to praise songs through my oldest son's open window.

The creator's power flowed and a few drops of it trickled down to my paint brush. Wonderful.

Hopefully by now you've picked up on the metaphor. We are all to wield brushes that flow green over all we do.

No other colour is needed, and the effect of this green passion is purposeful, penetrating and perpetual.

The term "environmentalist" is losing its importance in our society, and this is a good thing.

More and more people are picking up green paintbrushes, rather than just a few of us taking on a radical green hue. The old, worn ways of doing things unsustainably are getting washed over by new waves of green.

I'm not saying we are anywhere near finished this paint job.

I'm just saying that we are all learning new ways to do things more greenly.

And we must make sure it is a good job, not "greenwashing" – the term used to describe practices and products that are purported to be green but really aren't.

For example, in the 2010 annual greenwashing report by terrachoice, although 168 toys claimed to be "greener" there was little proof that any were, in fact, greener.

And if our green practices are attempting to paint over wood that is rotten, there's not much point.

Even two or three coats of paint won't help.

For example, the efficiency of our use of fossil fuels is increasing all the time, but ultimately these finite resources must be replaced by renewable energy sources.

Then we can continue to brush up on the new energy sources.

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