

Wallis Browne, born 19 March 1940

His journey in Christ. He was the third child and only son of Ebenezer Wallis Browne and Jessie Jean Browne (nee MacPhee). Raised in Waiwhetu, Lower Hutt, Wallis has memories of his serving naval officer father from when he himself was about two year of age. The family was closely associated with the local Methodist church, and his father served as Circuit Steward and treasurer for some years, and also as the Boys Brigade Captain attached to Waiwhetu church, which had a thriving Sunday School and Bible class. Wallis remembers also Easter camps held on a farm property on the Wainuimata coast road, and giving his heart to Jesus as a teenager in the 50's. The Lord has never lost his hold on him since then.

A voracious reader, Wallis found school fascinating and coped with learning confidently. His initial plan for a career was directed towards architecture until he became conscious that God was calling him to study for the ministry. He became a member of what was called a Mission Band made of teenagers which conducted services of worship in various churches around the Circuit, and successfully completed the required study to qualify as a local preacher. Enrolled at Victoria University for study towards a Bachelors degree in Arts which he completed within four years, and included a credit in classical Greek stage 1.

He applied as a candidate for the ministry, and was approved at Circuit and District level, but in the meantime his former fiancee rejoined him and he appeared at Conference as a married man. The shattering truth of the Conference's rejection of his application for training hit him very hard. However shortly thereafter he was contacted by the President Rev. Bob Thornley, who invited him to accept a position as a Home Missionary in Eketahuna because the church had insufficient ministers to fill all the vacancies.

Two years of service there, the second as a pre-college probationer, saw Wallis accepted for Trinity College study. He worked as a school caretaker in Papatoetoe to support his wife and their small daughter for the first year, and then was asked to be a student pastor in Otara while he continued his studies at Trinity. Two more children were brought into the world, and Wallis was ordained at Dunedin conference in 1967, and served briefly on the Faith and Order Committee. The experience of ministry in a new housing area, and including many Samoan worshippers, was richly rewarding.

Sadly, Wallis's marriage broke up and his wife and daughter moved to Australia, leaving Wallis a solo father of two little boys, one of whom was severely deaf from birth. Blessing flow from all manner of circumstances, but a major one was teaming up with his deaf son's teacher. Wallis and Jane remain seriously in love after forty three years, and the arrival of two further offspring. Jane is his rock, and his most useful critic.

There followed 27 years of service in Justice as a probation officer and manager, and he found this challenging and productive, leading to a keen interest in the rehabilitation of the socially outcast. Restructuring of the Public Service saw his job disestablished, and the call came to return to ministry in 2002. Wallis has served since then in Levin, Blenheim and Rotorua and still believes in the farewell comment of the Trinity College Principal, Dr. D O Williams who intoned, " The best is yet to be!"

Signed R. Colegrove (ret) Mentor to Wallis Browne      date: 8 - 7 - 13