

## Such A Dilemma

May 25, 2003

Wellesley officially became a town on October 23rd, 1880, when the original town fathers met in the ballroom of what is now the clubhouse of the Wellesley Country Club. They signed a document that carved out the new town from the territory of the adjacent town of Needham. So... the birthplace of the town of Wellesley was indeed that ballroom of the Country Club.

Why do I give you this piece of trivia? In a nutshell, after a yearlong study, the members of the Wellesley Country Club have decided they need a new clubhouse. So... what happens to the old clubhouse, which houses the ballroom, which is the birthplace of the town? The discussion has included such fine points as "the difference between a historic site vs. building." To quote one official, "contrary to original concerns, our clubhouse is not a historic building; it is a historic site." Adding to the dilemma is the human element. "Beyond the historical significance there are social ties to the clubhouse among town residents that stretch beyond the membership. Many of Wellesley's senior proms have been held in the clubhouse over the years. Some lifelong residents... have fond memories of learning to swim or play tennis at the club, with the clubhouse serving as the focal point of activity."

Now I don't belong to the Wellesley Country Club. As a matter of fact, I have never belonged to any country club. I don't play golf... I don't drink (not because I'm a Baptist but because it's a waste of calories)... and the thought of sitting around in stuffed chairs smelling cigar smoke sounds like a trip to the dentist to me. But I certainly understand the dilemma here. As a seasoned pastor, I can't begin to tell you how many good church folk live in the past... expecting church to be the same way it was five years ago... ten years ago... fifty years ago... Change something at church and you are tinkering with memories or patterns of behavior that "may" have worked for years.

The apostle Paul understood this dilemma. In a letter to his favorite church he writes these words, "But one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and

straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13,14)

We can't afford to live in the past. We don't do it in our personal lives, we shouldn't do it at church... and we certainly shouldn't in our spiritual lives (are we living on milk or meat?)... I'll keep you posted on the fate of the old ballroom.