

Surely, the Lord Wouldn't Do That?

February 23, 2003

At first blush, it seemed a wee bit surprising... but given the economic times, maybe not! For the first time in recent town history, a school related tax override was defeated. The Wellesley Middle School (which my youngest daughter attends) was, in the minds of some folks, in desperate need of renovation but in a fairly close ballot, the override was defeated 2,894 to 2,271. Not only that, but the School Committee cut nearly \$300,000 out of next year's budget.

The comments from both sides of the override were predictable... "I think the School Committee should focus on the real needs and not the wants of the Middle School... I hope the School Committee got the message that enough is enough... we don't need to have the Cadillac of everything... citizens should care enough to put in a little extra money to do the right things to support the school system... the money (override) is worth it for a good education... the school is old and some of the equipment is the same as when my husband went there in the 60's..." Besides the fact that my daughter goes to the Middle School, what I find most interesting about this debate is how it plays out in the life of a church.

Any good soul who has worked on a church budget knows the anguish of trying to find the right balance between responsible stewardship and generosity of spirit... where does one draw the line between faith and responsibility?

I've come to the conclusion that it is unique to each individual. We have some folks who give way beyond their means - truly sacrificially... yet the actual amount of dollars and cents is far less than some who gives a lot of money yet never at the cost of personal sacrifice.

The Bible teaches both... good stewardship and sacrificial giving. I remember once hearing a speaker say to the congregation, "Would you be willing to show the Lord your checkbook?" He asked the question as if it was hypothetical - the reality of course is that since the Lord knows the inner

workings of a person's heart, He already knows the contents of our checkbook.

So, to support the work of your local church... would the Lord ask for an override of your budget???