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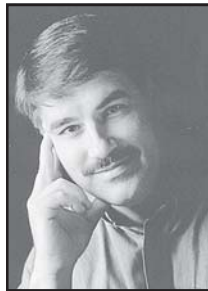
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## *Body, Mind and Spirit* **Going green**

By **Todd Outcalt**

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Years ago, other colors had more notoriety. There was my blue heaven and yellow submarine and red sails in the sunset. Green was the color of envy or illness. But today, when someone asks, “Have you gone green?” they are asking an entirely different question. Green is in. And not just with the young.

A few weeks ago a dear woman in her eighties asked me if the congregation used “green coffee” during the fellowship hour on Sunday mornings. We don’t, but we will.

Actually, I’m afraid I’m behind the curve when it comes to going green. Two of our family cars are behemoths. We grow none of our own food. We use too much electricity.

But this spring I decided to try my hand at saving the environment and simplifying my life. Our home in Brownsburg sits on the same White Lick Creek that flows south past Calvary church. And, since I had a kayak, I thought I would paddle to work instead of driving the 1«-mile trip.

The experiences I’ve had so far on the creek have been en-

lightening.

For example, paddling 400 hundred yards past our property, I discovered that the appearance of a town quickly gives way to the appearance of a wilderness. There are no buildings, no sprawling subdivisions and no exhaust fumes. Actually, the quiet rippling of water is very peaceful. And along the creek there is a surprising amount of woods - and wild life.

To date I have encountered ducks, geese, blue herons, squirrels, raccoons, foxes and every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. I also have discovered a 10-foot-square beaver lodge about a half-mile from our house - the source of the beavers who chewed down some 40 trees on our property this past winter.

Amazingly, these wild things live nearby - right in the heart of town - but I rarely notice them, or they are not visible. Likewise, I note that we humans have created a disturbing amount of pollution and dumped it in their habitat. The creek is not only home to many wild things, but also a frightening amount of trash: old tires, dozens of rolls of barbed wire, bottles, cans, plastic jugs and a thin, oily film that clings to the water like skin.

During my mornings paddling to church, I also have become more aware of certain biblical affirmations. The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. Consider the lilies of the field. The heavens are declaring the glory of God. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.

I’m still growing - right now I’m just a mustard yellow bordering on chartreuse - but I might become green some day. One step at a time, I guess. But as I can, I’m just going to enjoy my new ride to work. It may not be ministry in the traditional sense, but maybe those beavers will go easier on my timber next winter. I know my shade trees would be a lot greener if they did.

*Todd Outcalt serves as senior pastor of Calvary UMC in Brownsburg, Ind. His new blog is [toddoutcalt.blogspot.com](http://toddoutcalt.blogspot.com) and some of his latest writing can be found in digital form on [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).*



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