

## CARING FOR CREATION NEWS

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There's an old joke that goes something like this:

"I'm never really bothered by anything!"

"Really? I find that hard to believe."

"For me it's just a case of mind over matter."

"How's that work?"

"If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

I giggle every time I hear that old line. Of course there's a grain of truth in it; sometimes disassociation is good - the right thing to do. But more often than not, denial is bad policy. Problems don't go away when ignored; typically they get worse. And, with delay, the consequences become more severe.

The Caring for Creation Ministry understands that our environmental problems are significant and persistent. In fact, the more you know, the more overwhelmed you feel - ignorance is a tempting option. How much can one person really do anyway? But don't give in, helplessness is an illusion. Environmental problems can be solved - one contribution at a time.

The people of Hope Church are making positive decisions to improve our environment. The Caring for Creation Ministry will be sharing their stories in this and following issues of Hope Church News. We encourage you to find your contribution.

It's said that in one hour of operation a power lawn mower emits as much climate changing pollution as a car traveling 250 miles. Tom Boogaart has made a decision to mow his yard the old fashioned way - with a push mower. His story follows:

*I've never met the Joneses, but they have had quite an influence on me. In ways I don't understand, I've been trying to keep up with them. The Joneses - those people whose approval I desire - they all have power lawn mowers. They started buying them in the 1950's. First there were the neighbors who lived in the fancy house across the street; then Jimmy's dad, and finally the Boogaarts, last on the block to purchase a power mower. They were so convenient, so efficient, so progressive, so ubiquitous, so American, that the old push mower was relegated to a corner of the garage and the corners of my memory, and eventually to the trash heap.*

*The old push mower was extinct. Until . . . until there was a sighting; my brother Pete had one. Then another sighting; my son Jeremy had one. "Where did you get this?" I asked. "And why?" They told me that my power mower polluted the air more than my car did and that a push mower was easy to operate. How could that be, I wondered? The Joneses were saying just the opposite - that there was a kind of natural selection for machines; that machines progressed from the primitive to the sophisticated; that power mowers were good, right and true.*

*I went to Lowes and bought a push mower. As I assembled it, memories of my boyhood yard flooded back - a time before we put motors on everything, a time when hand and tool worked in concert, a time of callused palms. I pushed the mower to the front lawn and heard again the clicking of the blades. All the while I was cutting, I was somewhere between 560 State Street and 1828 Mayfair Drive, my boyhood home.*

*I was done cutting in about 15 minutes. I was surprised. I had bought the mower partly out of nostalgia and partly out of concern for the environment. I had expected the pushing to be hard work. It was not. In fact, this mower was easier to push than my heavy, motorized one. Why hadn't I made this change years ago? I guess it was the Joneses. I never questioned what they were saying. Now I wonder what else about lawn care I ought to question. I wonder about fertilizers and watering. I know this: in the case of lawn mowers, the new was not the improved.*