

A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift

by
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To Reduce Carbon Emissions, Every Little Bit Helps

Year 2020 has been reported to be the warmest year ever recorded, and the past five years have all been the warmest on record. There is no question that this is due to the continuing increase in carbon dioxide emissions as well as other greenhouse gas emissions. There are many ways that these emissions can be reduced and while some can have a great impact, there are also many that have a small impact. However, every little bit will help particularly if everyone does a little bit. Here are just a couple of examples of what each of us can do to help reduce carbon emissions.

Everyone sooner or later has to paint their home or apartment or even their workplace. There are probably many choices of the type of paint to use. What if one of the options is a paint that will not only absorb odors but also carbon dioxide. That paint exists today and is produced by a company that wants to be considered in the carbon tech business rather than in the paint business. Smog Armor has produced a paint that will absorb over 95% of the indoor air pollution and will also reduce carbon dioxide emissions. If you paint the outside of your house, the carbon dioxide emission reduction could be as much as that of 12 trees. That doesn't sound like very much, but it is much better than planting 12 trees on your property to make your contribution to carbon reduction.

Let's assume that all the outdoor paints are produced with the same formulation. There are about 130 million homes in the U.S., and if half of them were painted with this type of paint, it would be the equivalent of planting about 800 million trees solely to absorb carbon dioxide. I am not suggesting that this is something we should all do because for one reason, there isn't enough paint available to make it happen. This is just one example of what may be possible if everyone makes some small contribution to this important effort.

Another example of what we as individuals can do to reduce carbon emissions is to participate in an initiative called UCapture. This is an organization that has partnered with over 25,000 online companies to help reduce carbon emissions. You can learn about it very easily by going to its website, www.ucapture.com. But let me explain it very simply by giving you an example. I introduced this initiative to my classes at DePaul University, and we created an account for the school, www.ucapture.com/depaul. Then each of the students who wished to participate registered on the DePaul account page. That is all that anyone needs to do and after that the benefits are automatic.

Anytime a student went to any of the 25,000 websites that sell products or services, you will see a little window pop up indicating that this company is working with UCapture. If any purchase is made on that website, the company will pay a commission to UCapture ranging from 1% to 20% of the amount purchased with an average of about 4% of all the companies in the program. There is no additional cost to the purchaser. Of this commission, UCapture sends 67%

to any one of over 25 carbon offset projects from which you can select where your contribution should be sent. Of the remaining 33% of the commission, UCapture applies 28% for administrative expenses and 5% is returned to the account holder which in this case is DePaul University. When someone goes shopping on one of these websites, there may also be an opportunity to receive a coupon from that company that is only available to UCapture account members. The beauty of this initiative is that once you register, the entire operation is passive.

You might ask why any of these 25,000 companies would be willing to send a commission to UCapture. The primary reason is UCapture helps direct online traffic to these companies. Another question you might ask is how an individual can participate with UCapture. You need to identify an organization that will create an account with UCapture. This could be your place of work, your school, or perhaps your religious affiliation. In addition to the account that was created at DePaul, I also created an account with my church. This way each parishioner that wishes to participate can help reduce carbon emissions and send 5% of the commission back to the church. If you go to the UCapture website and click on 'Leaderboards', you can get an idea of all the different organizations that have created accounts with UCapture. It is simple and passive.