

CARBON OFFSET

by SCOTT CRAIN

GENRE: Dramatic Monologue

SYNOPSIS: An accountant is troubled by the apparent 'checks and balances' of his Christian walk.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Keep it real; we need to associate with Alan, so if his performance slips into falsity or melodrama, we lose the potency.

TIME: 3 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1M

THEME: Christian Living

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Romans 3:23; 6:23

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Seeker service; sermon illustration

CHARACTERS:

ALAN

PROPS: None

COSTUMES: Contemporary

SOUND: Wireless mics if desired

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Unspecified

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Lights up on ALAN.

ALAN: To stay in the black, my company's going green.

That's what the investors and consumers want these days—for their suppliers to be eco-friendly. Trouble is, it takes a lot of work to please Mother Earth and Uncle Sam at the same time. We tried making our distribution plants more energy-efficient, but in the end, it was easier to just buy what they call 'carbon offsets'.

The idea is, we can go on destroying the ozone layer and belching acrid smoke into the air in California, as long as part of our annual revenue goes to planting chestnut trees in Massachusetts. And as far as our board—and investors—are concerned, we've 'broken even'.

And I guess I can see the logic. I'm a CPA, after all. I know about balances and ledgers.

But in a deeper place...a place that has nothing to do with debits and credits...I don't know. It just...it doesn't sit right.

.....*Beat.*

I was thinking about it all weekend, and was still thinking about it come Sunday morning, as I folded my weekly check into the offering plate and watched that plate as it passed along to the next guy.

I looked around while the music was playing. Looked at all of us Christians with our our plastic smiles and our vacant eyes, half of us probably—like me—a thousand miles away in our thoughts.

And I got that same feeling.

Like maybe some of us—or even most of us—are just in church as kind of a 'carbon offset', you know? Like our way of 'balancing the ledger' on Sunday morning for what we did on Saturday night? For the lives we really live during the week.

Hoping that the Chairman of the Board will look down on us and call it even?

And maybe there's even a certain logic to that. Like telling your kids they can enjoy dessert if they finish their broccoli first. That seems fair, doesn't it?

But in that deeper place...the place that has nothing to do with debits and credits, but with a God who sent His only son to die in my place...it just...

...it doesn't sit right.

.....*Lights down.*