

Seeking a J-O-B through G-O-D

By Sam Morton

Recession and depression are scientific terms used by economists. But when you're out of work, can't provide for your family, and perhaps facing foreclosure, who cares what you call it? It's panic time. Or is it?



When your financial house collapses, first seek the Lord, advises the Crossroads Network, a faith-based, job-coaching service. That's what Angela Cain did.

"During my time without work, I was praying," she recalls. "I seemed to understand that God wanted me to approach my job search in a new way. I did not know what this endeavor would look like, but it seemed to me that the way I searched for a job would never be the same again." She remembered a verse she'd read long ago, Isaiah 43:19. "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."

Rather than use a traditional career-help service, Cain opted for Crossroads Network, available through Eastminster Presbyterian, Northeast Presbyterian, and Lake Murray Presbyterian churches. Participants don't have to be members of the host church, or any church, and the curriculum is free.

"It's really designed to help people discover their spiritual gifts and their true calling," observes Ken Carey, volunteer coordinator for the curriculum at Eastminster. "We stress three things: attitude — accepting loss and discovering opportunities; aptitude — a self-assessment; and altitude—target-marketing your skills (searching, sorting, and selecting) toward regaining employment."

Founded in Georgia in 1987 as a 501(c) (3) non-profit group and headquartered in Charlotte, Crossroads is presented in a group setting. If you attend its weekly meetings, you can complete the curriculum in eight weeks. Or you can go faster if you work on your own using its Internet resources. Close to 500 people have gone through the programs in Columbia.

A few people even come into the program as participants and wind up becoming volunteer lay teachers, Carey notes. That's why they call it a network. Such incidents are the essence of what Crossroads, as a career



Angie Cain



service, is about. As a ministry, it's about seeking God's purpose for you as an individual.

One of Carey's volunteers, Dr. Beth Medlock, is a life coach by profession. She found herself having to "walk the talk" after being blinded from an accident in her home last year. "I really have no choice in the matter," she says. "By nature, human beings are highly adaptive. I can change. I try to keep that attitude, and in doing that, I can do the things I used to, my life's purpose. Is it harder? Yes. Does it take longer? Yes. But I have to find new ways to make it work."

Such is the inspiration, determination, and example she brings to the Crossroads Network and its participants – sighted and able-bodied – seeking jobs.

Crossroads differs notably from other career services because it comes from a Christian perspective. "People get things they wouldn't get in ordinary career coaching, which is essentially centered on résumé building and networking," Medlock says. "Crossroads stresses being truthful and being clear on your morals and values as you go about seeking employment. Little white lies on a résumé can turn into big lies later on. You don't get that kind of guidance in other career service programs."

Some people come through Crossroads and work hard simply to get re-employed because, as the family breadwinners, they need a job right now, Carey says. "I wonder sometimes what would have happened if they had stayed in the network long enough to discover God's will." Others like Angie Cain did.

"I learned to ask, 'God, what do you want me to do right now?'" Cain says. "I tried diligently to follow God's promptings. I began to substitute teach. I had always wanted to work directly with children, and this was my chance. I also began pondering going back to school, and after a lot of soul searching, decided to look into getting a master's in speech pathology. I learned that many children receiving speech therapy have autism. This made me even

Top left: Shannon Johnson, a recruiting manager with Synergetic, and Louis McElveen volunteer with Crossroads Network. Top: Volunteer and life coach Dr. Beth Medlock. Above: Midlands Technical College president, Dr. Sonny White with Crossroads Network volunteer coordinator, Ken Carey.

more interested, because I had been working with children with autism in the schools, and fell in love with them."

Cain currently manages the office of a clinic that provides speech, occupational, and physical therapy for children with special needs. She is a Crossroads success. **ROC**

To find Crossroads seminars near you or to download free career resources, visit www.crossroadscareer.org.



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