



Advent Update 2005

**Creating Life-Enriching Experiences:
Coaching • Counseling • Workshops**

**Attentional Growth Inc.
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My Advent Prayer for YOU:

As Mary was **attentive** to what was happening in her,
and Joseph **attentive** to the possibility of God at work in the events of his life,
so too may **you** be **attentive** to God's Spirit at work in you.

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated April 12, 2004 in Birmingham, Alabama.

Its stated purpose: to promote health and provide educational enrichment programming for members of the helping professions and the general public.

It is an approved Mission Advance Special of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Jim Robey is officially endorsed as a Pastoral Counselor by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency.

Providing the professional, business & religious communities with quality workshops, seminars & counseling.

Offices at Riverchase UMC (Birmingham, Alabama) & Gulf Shores UMC (Gulf Shores, Alabama)

A Personal Word From Jim Robey

This has been year of adjustment and learning for me. In my role as executive director of this non-profit organization, I have learned about financial statements, recruiting board members, making do with what little one has, and strategic planning. Moving from the secure church-world of being a minister to the uncertain world of being a ministry missionary has been filled with challenges. I have been working on the spiritual disciplines of trusting God and simplicity. I am convinced that this venture in faith is being used by God as I connect with many new people. The support and encouragement of so many has been confirmation for this part of my journey.

Advent is the beginning of a new Christian year. I find myself especially mindful of Advent because it reminds me of the coming of God among us. Learning to see this incarnation is a vital part of the work of *Attentional Growth*.

Attentional Growth Inc.'s First Grants

The Baldwin County Board of Education is funding two programs for at risk youth. The first will provide 100 life coaching sessions for middle and high school youth. The focus will be on their goals and values and ways to live more congruently. The second, entitled "*Even Good Kids Can Make Bad Decisions*," will focus on drug education and prevention for both parents and youth. My wife Betty, who is a nurse, will be helping with this program.

Hurricane Relief

This is personal since Betty and I live three miles inland in Gulf Shores, and have survived three hurricanes and two tropical storms in the last fourteen months. After Hurricane Ivan, I provided counseling and grief work through Gulf Shores United Methodist Church. In



July, after Hurricane Dennis, I led two seminars for the Gulf Coast communities called "Living with Hurricanes – How

to Bend and Not Break.” This focused on the anxiety experienced by City Workers, Business Leaders and Church Staffs after Hurricane Dennis barely missed us. In August of this year, I was the



mental health professional for Camp Noah which was held at Gulf Shores UMC. During this week, children

ages 4 to 12 had a chance to talk about their experiences of Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis and to prepare for future hurricanes. The motto for the camp was “We’re not scared, we’re prepared”. Following Hurricane Katrina in late August, I organized two meetings for evacuees to provide information as well as to introduce them to additional resource people within the community. Since Katrina, I have provided counseling for evacuees, and participated in Gulf Shores UMC’s storm recovery work in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Academy for Spiritual Formation

The 25th Academy will be held at Camp Sumatanga (near Gallant, Alabama) beginning in February 2006. I will be the Theologian on the Team that provides leadership for the two-year Academy.

Family Update

Betty and I are now living in Gulf Shores, Alabama, where she is employed as a Hospice Nurse. Our 18 year-old daughter Mary (Emmi) left high school early to begin college at Southern Union Community College in Opelika, Alabama. Our daughter Jennifer and her husband Howard live with our two precious grandchildren, Wesley (age 7) and Megan (age 5) in Alabaster, Alabama. Howard is scheduled to return home in late November after spending three months in Iraq.

Counseling

I continue to provide counseling in Birmingham at Riverchase UMC and in Gulf Shores at Gulf Shores UMC.

Life Coaching

I have enjoyed being trained in the skills of co-active coaching this year. While similar to counseling, teaching & spiritual direction, its focus is on deepening the learning and furthering the action. It can be done in person or by phone, which provides more flexibility for me and those I serve.

Future Visions

- *A program for clergy and their families who have been affected by recent hurricanes for rest, renewal and revitalization.*
- *To provide staff development workshops for non-profit organizations and businesses.*
- *To respond to new opportunities for service.*

Financial

While we have benefited from contributions from individuals and from two Sunday School classes at Riverchase UMC, fees for services have been our main source of funding. There has been enough money to pay for expenses but not enough for salary. I have requested funding in next year’s mission budget from three churches in Birmingham. Our form 990EZ has been filed with the IRS for Tax Year 2004.

How you can help

Your prayers are vital for this ministry. We also ask for your prayerful consideration for financial support. Your tax deductible contributions make it possible for us to offer free and reduced-fee services to people in need. The mission of Attentional Growth Inc. is to create life-enriching experiences that bring people into the fullness of life that Jesus offers.