



*“The woman I was yesterday, introduced me to the woman I am today; which makes me very excited about meeting the woman I will become tomorrow.”*

We can live happier, more fulfilling lives. We can be more content, more present, more authentic version of ourselves. When we live an authentic action-based life, when we become who we are meant to be, we focus on what really matters, then life transforms. Though, it is not always easy to reconnect with who we really are. Hence, the vital need for the annual Celebration of Pan African Women’s History Month. As African American women, we may wonder where we fit into such a celebration. A review of our history, whether on the macro level or within the intimate spheres of church, family or small group encounters is an important tool of empowerment.

Understanding our accomplishments in the world, despite facing racism, sexism and classism, can help black women illuminate a positive “Best-Self” image to counter the perceived negative stereotypes we see reflected back to us. For sisters in the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church our Liberation Theology challenges us to look at the ground breaking strides in our Pan African History, surveying decades of gathered data about our perceptions, needs and intellect and our social attainment.

By doing so, affirms that yes, we can create our own reality. Moreover, if we want to live a life of higher purpose, we do so in connection with God and with one another. Co-creation is a Best Self mindset that allows us to manifest our individual and collective gifts. One of the purposes of our spiritual journey is to make the unconscious, conscious. When we intimately begin to know all of our parts, we will be better sculptors in how we mold our lives. We are reminded by the bold declaration of the Prophet Jeremiah, “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” says the LORD. “*They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*” The more inner work we do, the more conscious we become and the more masterful we will be at the art of co-creation.

Our ancestral griot Rev. Nkenge Abi prompts us that the expectations of our ancestors are really high based on their past achievements and that “anecdotal” narratives retell the stories of our progress which can only complement our broader social narratives. Like wiping the steam away from a foggy mirror, appreciating great black women of the past and the greats still with us in the present allows us to intuit a truer perception of who we are as a collective. We are women building on the tremendous growth secured by our foremothers before and since slavery. We are resilient, we have high self-esteem and we are extremely hopeful. This hopefulness is rooted in the awareness of everything we have overcome to arrive at the now.

This year, the Women of Worship Ministry will celebrate the “Shining” Accomplishments of the venerable **Madame C.J. Walker, Oprah Winfrey, and Folorunsho Alakija**, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, social activists and yes Billionaires, these rich and powerful sisters endured hardship, abuse and neglect in the world. I can only imagine that quite often, it was a process of readjusting and redefining themselves in order to achieve their goals. “*I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations....I have built my own factory on my own ground.*” Madam C. J. Walker, July 1912. They were empowered by God; they remind us that we are valuable and that we have purpose. Scripture teaches us in Matthew 5:14-16 that “*You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before people that they will see and glorify God.*” In celebration of their work and for the work to do and to come our theme for this year is, ***Inspired by Our Past, Prepared Our Present and Excited about Our Future!***

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