



# *Shrines of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church*

*Racially Affirming • Spiritually Uplifting  
Culturally Enriching • Intellectually Stimulating*

Detroit - Atlanta - Houston - Calhoun Falls - Liberia  
[www.shrinesoftheblackmadonna.org](http://www.shrinesoftheblackmadonna.org)

## Basic Principles of Best Self Theology

Best Self Theology asserts, we can only change the world by changing ourselves since ultimately, ourselves is the only thing we can control.

Best Self Theology begins with the belief that all human beings are endowed with a spark of divinity that gives us the *dynamic potential* to perpetually learn, grow, improve, adapt, evolve and create.

God is the animating force that gives us life. Our life is essentially cosmic energy and creative intelligence expressing itself through us. Growth, development and learning are basic to life in all its forms.

The object of life is to *flourish*. Our inner divinity gives us the natural inner drive to attain the highest expression of our humanity. Best Self Theology exists to facilitate human flourishing.

**The maximization** of our potential is our primary personal religious obligation. Thus, striving to be our best possible selves is the ultimate act of worship.

**Our first divine obligation** is to develop our God given potential. The second divine obligation is to use our developed potential to serve God by serving others.

**Best Self Theology** is not just about specific techniques, processes or disciplines. It is about shifting from a *fixed mindset* to a *growth mindset* by helping us believe that cosmic energy and creative intelligence is seeking expression through us and that we have the ability to assist its expression through commitment, passion, effort and training.

**Best Self Theology** triggers and reinforces the growth mindset through inspiration, encouragement, modeling and faith.

**The Kingdom of God** is not a place but a state of being attained when human consciousness has been elevated to be in alignment with divine will and purpose.

**The social goal** of Best Self Theology is to inspire a Best Self Movement dedicated to creating a positive new culture that changes our negative beliefs and opens us to the infinite possibilities God makes available to us. We believe that this positive spiritual development is the key to social transformation.

**Global transformation** is simply inspiring enough “best-self” practitioners to cause a shift in human consciousness.

**Best Self Theology** is an outgrowth of Black Theology, not a replacement of it. Black Theology is a political theology concerned with liberation, i.e. changing institutions and the material conditions of oppressed people. Best Self Theology is focused on maximizing human potential by developing the beliefs, values and attitudes that enable a seeker to strive for the full realization of their abilities in order to struggle effectively for liberation.