

THE GREATEST NEEDS OF NEGRO WOMANHOOD

A Symposium

Opinions of the Leading Negro Clubwomen of the Country.

Education in Christian citizenship, to my mind, is the greatest need of our women, for in that may be included every phase of human uplift.

Race consciousness, wise leadership and power of organization are the fundamentals that every woman must realize and are imperative for future advancement. Women are the keepers of the ideals of civilization, they are the home makers, they must train the children and send them forth with sound bodies, intelligent minds and brave hearts, prepared to serve their day and generation.

Our women must know every phase of race history in order to develop great pride of race in our young people and lose no opportunity of letting them come in direct contact with the leading men and women in every community who are setting such fine examples of altruistic service in the work they render. They must be taught that they only are their superiors, who have more of the milk of human kindness, more of the spirit of justice, more of the love of God, than they have.

On every hand there is a lessening of social restraint, a shifting of standards to lower levels, a weakening of the moral tone of society and during the past year or two religion has been attacked by apostasy, unbelief and worldliness. A strong spiritual vision is America's greatest need. We believe this is an opportunity for our women to give of their deep love and spiritual fervor, by living true to the teachings of our Lord and Savior, and co-operate with

every organization working for human betterment and be prepared to render efficient service to the end that a spiritual vision be preserved in our youth.

Nothing is more imperative today than the need of every woman courageously facing her responsibility to vote, the right inevitably carries with it the obligation. We little dream of the magic power of large organization and racial solidarity. Especially in the use of the ballot it will be a potent factor in breaking down barriers and bringing recognition.

Our women are moving along new pathways, to the highest leadership is given to hold steadily with one hand the sacred sanctities of life and in the other the flaming torch to light the way for coming generation.

ESTELLE RICKMAN DAVIS,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

"I consider it presumptuous in any one to try and decide what women are or are not, can or cannot be. The woman of today can be whatever she wants to be by natural constitution. They have always hitherto been kept back as far as regards spontaneous development, in so unnatural a state that their nature cannot but have been greatly distorted and disguised. If Woman's Nature were left to choose its direction as freely as man, the conditions of human society given to both sexes alike, there would be no material difference, or, perhaps no difference at all, in character and capacities which would unfold themselves."

Leadership

For leaders we will have to develop a type of woman whose imagination, insight and

spiritual vision is so great that, though she be in her home or what not, or at the head of a great organization, she must be able to understand the needs of her sister at the other side of the United States, living in circumstances utterly different from her own with needs quite different, younger in years, different in social classes, she must understand the needs of the women all over the country. If she cannot do this, she is unequal for the vast responsibility she bears.

So it is necessary that the womanhood of today must have a spiritual power equal to the intellectual and material advance that has been made nowadays. It is the hour when women must, once more, and this time consciously and deliberately create that atmosphere both in the home and in all organizations wherein, that which makes us human, that which is spiritual, that which is civilized, shall be immeasurably more developed than it has been in the past.

Surveying must be made, our women must organize to clasp hands with each other; leaders carefully chosen for the young women. The self-respect of our women must in all ways be encouraged. Above all, a better social opportunity to the domestic workers. They must be admitted and provided for. In lifting as we climb.

MRS. T. W. FINES,
Wichita, Kansas.

Now that all women can have anything they want, the question arises, what do women want? What career is best for them? What are their greatest needs? In other words, the modern question is no longer one of woman's rights. It has become the question of the Womanly Ideal.

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Negro Womanhood

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The new woman will first of all possess intellect. She will be a better mother, a more efficient companion and a true living, breathing, inspired and aspiring individual.

Negro womanhood today is in need of numerous factors to aid in its progress and advancement. The greatest of these needs are Educational and Contact.

The Negro woman as she actually appears in modern society is less a subject to variation than man. She is less liable to be a genius or an idiot than her brother. She is physically more fit. She lives longer. The fact that she more often appeals to emotion than reason, as cause for action, in no way marks her as inferior to man, but simply different.

If the education of the home and school can be unified, and together they give a training that will lead girls into the actualities of life, many heartaches will be forestalled, and many stumbling blocks will be removed from the pathway of our Racial Progress.

The needed mental expansion for the Negro woman implies a higher average of trained intelligence unfolding normally into all lines of human activity. It signifies a womanhood moving irresistibly toward the highest realm of existence, a factor absolutely essential for symmetrical racial development.

Education will make the Negro woman think and see the real significance of her life. She will understand the true meaning of fair play, and freedom from interference. Nevertheless it will take contact to cause her to act and outgrow her narrow prejudices.

Only ripened intelligence, experience with others and an ability to judge conflicting evidence can enable her to select wisely in all matters. Contact develops a social conscience.

Marriage is the ultimate goal of the majority of women. In the past marriage meant segregation. Today true marriage should mean a larger life, a mutual stepping out into the world's wonder house for both participants, and a happy service in performing together the world's needed tasks,

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Negro Womanhood

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which can only be accomplished from contact.

VIVIAN OSBORNE MARSH.

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