

Urban Affairs Salute to Our Women

BLACK WOMEN:

"Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice"

By Robert B. Ingram, Ph.D.

You are my mother, my sister, my
sweetheart, my wife/
You are my colleague, my confidante,
My companion, my life/
You are a conceiver, a believer,/
A griever and an achiever,/
You've given your best, You are a start/
No matter the problem You know who
You are./
You will build what is right whatever the
cause/
Workfare or warfare, without praise or
applause
So, this is my tribute for all you have
done/
For the battles you've fought and the /
victories you've won,/
Your light shines where others can see,/
Their way of darkness to a land
that is free,/
I'm thankful, I've lived to attest,/
To your sound inspiration, your faith
and your zest,/
You're GOD'S precious gift, who for
hundreds of years/
Climbed the rough side of the mountain
despite many tears,/
You are brilliant, beautiful and strong./
Blazing the trail for those yet unborn,/
You've set the standard of excellence
and God is well pleased./

He knows you'd rather die on your feet, than to live on your knees!!! The scriptures ask the question: "Who can find a virtuous woman?" (Proverbs 31:10). Interestingly, too often the virtuous contributions of our women get overlooked and many of us are often quick to point out, when referring to women, that EVE plucked the tree of good and evil, the fruit, that was the sinful ruin of us all. But few, if any, are as quick to call attention to MARY, the handmaiden, who by her humble submission brought salvation to us all. So, in celebration of WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, I want to focus our attention on the accomplishments of women, especially women of African descent. You see, in spite of the distorted, and misleading obstacles, like our neglect of MARY, that are encountered by our women – the progress made by our women – especially our

African American women, rates as one of the SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD.



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Much of the history that we are taught does not include the contributions of women of color. Few of our people even know that scientists found evidence in the Ethiopian desert in 1974 and was able to isolate the gene cells to determine that a black woman – one whom they named “Eve” lived some 200,000 years ago.

The truth of our women’s history has been crushed to earth, but in the words of William Cullen Bryant, “Truth crushed to earth shall rise again”.



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And the truth is this, every man and woman on the face of this earth has been birthed, bathed, burped, bounced, boosted and bosomed by a woman and no matter where you go on this earth, the woman’s presence is felt. Think about this: We claim intelligence as Mother Wit; We call the ground we walk on “Mother Earth”, and we speak of Africa as our “Motherland.”

Why? Because women are unstoppable and dynamic. They are among the most self-reliant, realistic and proficient individuals on earth. Women and men together can lead our people out of the darkness of bondage, into the light of liberation.

Who are you BLACK WOMAN? You are God’s Creation. You are “Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice.” When I reflect on the history of black women – I’m reminded of people like SOJOURNER TRUTH (1997-1883).



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A "Pilgrim of God" whose mission showed the way by freeing our people from slavery. And when I think of Sister Sojourner Truth, I'm also reminded of her twin from far antiquity Queen Nzinga (1582-1663), the Amazon queen of Matamba, West Africa who was the astute diplomatic and military leader of her people.

Viewed from whatever standpoint you choose you find extraordinary women like Harriet Tubman (1826-1913), a woman who was unable to read and write – yet she was a woman whose lion-hearted spirit drove her to conduct the Underground Railroad – freeing hundreds of nameless slaves from bondage. Who are you – BLACK WOMAN? You are mothers of nations and queens of the universe. You are – Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice. There exists few institutions of higher learning that you have not graduated from, with honors; Spellman, Florida A & M, Tuskegee, Hampton, Florida Memorial, Edward Waters, Howard, Fisk, Vassar, Cornell, Harvard, you name them – you have succeeded in them all.

Not only that, there exists few achievements that you have not mastered; you are: Doctors, Lawyers, Administrators, Teachers, Homemakers, Wives, Mothers, whatever you choose to be, you make of yourselves the best. Often you become the best citizens and the most useful members of your communities and your churches.

Who are you – BLACK WOMAN? You are hued like the rainbow: Brown, Low-brown, High-brown, Lemon, Olive Gold, Ebony Light, Bright and a beautiful sight – Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice.

Who are you – BLACK WOMAN? You are the scintillating, splendid, shining example of brilliance. You are the enticing, elegant, exquisite and queenly pearls like the most revered women of our time: Great women like M. Athalie Range; Carrie Meek, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, Betty Ferguson, Eugenia Thomas, Mrs. Sadie Smith, Dr. Mary O'Banner, Dr. Barbara Edwards, Dr. Marty Pinkson, Dr. Norma Brady, Dr. Sandra Thompson, Ms. Retha Boone, Ms. Valerie Phillips, Ms. Vancella Mincy, Madame Rose Leon, Lady Gladys Bustamante, former Jamaican First Ladies Mitsy Seaga and Beverley Manley, Barbados' former Governor General, Dame Nita Barrow, former Trinidadian Prime Minister Eric Williams' daughter, Erika Williams-Connell and Vice President of Bank America, my wife, Delores N. Ingram, and so many others; you are unique

creatures whose hands not only rock the cradle, but also cradle the hands that bring changes into this world.

From your womb greatness has been born. You gave birth to those whose brilliance embraced the arts and sciences on the banks of the Nile in Africa. You gave birth to those whose minds designed great pyramids and unfathomed the mysteries of medicine. You gave birth to those who built the first university called the "Grand Lodge" of Wa'at. You gave birth to those who were able to reduce the heavenly constellations to minute and regular calculus. You gave birth to the one who would shed the first drop of blood for American Independence, your son, Crispus Attucks, who was shot down at Boston Commons. You gave birth to the military genius, Toussaint L'Overture who used his brilliance on the plains of Santo Domingo to defeat the combined armies of France and Spain. You are second to none and you are first among many. You are "Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice".

If we are to solve today's mess of ghettos, deprived and suffering children, urban slums, rural starvation, low wages, unemployment, drugs, brutality and bullets, we must include the power of virtuous women.

In many ways, BLACK WOMEN, you are the reason the songwriter could pen the words, "I don't feel no ways tired; I've come too far from where I started from. Nobody told me that the road would be easy. But I've come too far for him to leave me." Who are you – BLACK WOMAN? You are the "Born again" uncommon, uncompromising and unequalled living examples of the Virgin Mary, mother of a Glorified Christ whom John described as "Having hair of wool and feet of brass," You are the mothers of a chosen generation....A holy nation, a peculiar people...." You are virtuous women.

My Bible asked the question: "Who can find a virtuous woman? And then it states "For her price is far above rubies."

I agree, BLACK WOMEN – You are the ones who grow and glow below the mess of depravation. You are the ones who do good and not evil. You seek wool and flax and work willingly with your hands. You are like a merchant's ship bringing food from afar. You rise above the mess in the night to give meat to your household.

You grow through the mess of starvation that has brought misery to our people and plant the seeds that give birth to the vineyards, you tend the fields and you gather the fruits with your own hands. You stretch out your hands to the poor and you lift up the needy. Your children rise up and call you Blessed. Your husbands praise you.

Many of the women of the world have done virtuously, but BLACK WOMAN you excel them all. So I've stopped by to salute you and encourage you to keep up your good works; Mount up with wings as eagles; Run and don't get weary, walk and don't faint. I have been young and now I am old and I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed beg bread. True, obstacles, may endure for the NIGHT but if you don't get tired there will be JOY in the morning!!!