

2024-2025 COGIC Charities Scholarship
Essay Questions

There are two questions. Please write a comprehensive essay for each question. Each question is worth 25 points, for a total of 50 points. Type your essays using 12-point font and upload them at the prompt on the scholarship application. You will not be judged on your opinion but on how you structure your essay and grammar. Please ensure that your essay is in your own words and that you use the sub-questions to guide the essay development. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to answer these questions will automatically disqualify you from receiving a scholarship.

1. In his recent documentary on gospel music called “GOSPEL Live!”, Dr. Louis Henry Gates, Jr. explores the origin of African American spirituality through sermons and songs. Dr. Gates, who is a Harvard professor, historian and filmmaker, highlights the influence of the Church of God in Christ on the gospel genre through the artistry of such persons as André Crouch, The Clark Sisters, Edwin and Walter Hawkins, Mary Mary, Kirk Franklin, Mattie Moss Clark, and The Winans. If you agree with Dr. Gates’ assertion that the Church of God in Christ has been highly influential in shaping and promulgating gospel music, please answer the following questions in one or two paragraphs. If not, please share why you disagree with him.
 - a. What role do you think the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to northern and western America played in the proliferation of gospel music as a ubiquitous American art form?
 - b. What do you think is the future of gospel music as an art form and as a worship form? Do you think that gospel music can be only an art form, or must it be a part of the worship experience of African Americans to be legitimate?
 - c. Few African American churches have the large gospel youth choirs that they had from the 1970s through the 1990s. Many have moved to praise teams with bands that lead the church worship. Do you think this is a positive or negative trend and why?

2. In his recent book, Invisible Generals: Discovering Family Legacy and a Quest to Honor America’s First Black Generals, Doug Melville discusses the lives of General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. and General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., two of the first black Generals in the American Armed Forces. Davis, Sr. was a General in the Army, and Davis Jr. became a General in the Air Force. While at West Point in the 1930s, Davis Jr. was ostracized by his fellow white cadets, and when eating in the cafeteria (mess hall), he was forced to eat alone. He endured this racial discrimination for four years, but graduated near the top of his class. He subsequently became the officer in charge of the Tuskegee Airmen, where African American men were taught to be combat pilots and helped to win World War II.
 - a. Do you think that you would be able to live in a segregated college environment where you were treated as a second-class citizen? Why or why not?
 - b. Is racial discrimination present in our society today? If so, how is it manifested today compared to the historical context? Do you think Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream has or will become a reality? Please explain why or why not.
 - c. How can we celebrate African American trailblazers who suffered to improve the lives of the African Americans who came after them?