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Church as a Social and Cultural Institution
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Essay V

What is the church's role on *Biblical Issues in Mission and Migration*? The church is a place of refuge where oppressed and afflicted people are welcome to come in for comfort and help. Church is a safe haven. The church cannot be silent when our brothers and sisters from different parts of the world are persecuted for their Christian's faith, humanitarian crisis, socio and political issues.

The earth is the Lord's and its fullness. In the book of Genesis 12:1, the Lord said to "Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." The Lord asked Abram to leave the land of his parents because He was getting ready to do something extraordinary with him and his generations for the whole world to see the power and the glory of God through Abraham's seeds. The Lord kept His promise and did to Abram what He told him he was going to do with him. The Lord was with Abram, and later changed Abram's name to Abraham, which is a "father of many nations." In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, migration was the norm and God was always with His people as they moved from one place to the next. God's protection was with His people against their enemies. In the book of Exodus 23:9, "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." The Lord God reminded and urged the Israelites to care for strangers for they were once strangers. As God was with them, protected them, fed them when they could not provide for themselves; they had to

do the same for the strangers. In the book of Zechariah 7:10, “And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” God’s message to the Israelites was to treat other, as they would want to be treated. They were not to abuse nor take advantage of those who could not care for themselves. God will reward those who care for the stranger and the less fortunate. In the book of Matthew 2:14, “When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.” Joseph took his wife and Jesus to Egypt and fled for their safety. They were strangers in a foreign land because they were trying to escape the death of the young boys at the time. In the book of Matthew 25:43, “I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.” Whenever a stranger is cared for, the name of God is glorified because it is one of the ways of preaching the gospel of Christ. As Christian, when we fail to help those in needs, we disobey God’s command by allowing God’s children to suffer.

According to Christine D. Pohl, “We must take seriously the level of persecution faced by Christians around the world and work as advocates on their behalf.” (pg. 2) God has called us to be a voice in the world especially for our brothers and sisters who we share the same faith. If they do not find help from their Christian brothers and sisters, who are going to help them? God is not going to come down from Heaven and do the work that He has assigned us. We have to meet them where they are and give them hope for a better tomorrow. The call that we have received from God as leaders, is not just to preach and convert the unbelievers, but also to be an advocate for them in time of distress. Christians are the light of the world and they have what it takes to make the world a better place through the power of the Holy Spirit.