**Assignment 1:**

**Discussion regarding Essential Core**

**“Christianity’s Influence on Society”**

Michael B. Bowe

Omega Graduate School

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Dr. David Ward

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The church has had its heyday of influence. There was a “church growth” movement in the late 60’s that extended to the 80’s. In fact, there was a moment when church was the only option on Sunday. In their book: *Resident Aliens*, Stanley Hauerwas and Will Willimon write of a time when a theater broke the traditional “blue laws” of the day. They write,

On that night, the last pocket of resistance to secularity in the Western world served notice that it would no longer be a prop for the church. There would be no more free passes for the church, no more free rides. The Fox theater went head to head with the church over who would provide the world view for the young. That night in 1963, the Fox theater won the opening skirmish (Willimon, 2014, pp. 15-16).

Sadly, this was just an example of how the church has lost influence on society. Andy Stanley, in his popular, not scholarly work *Irresistible,* makes the assertation that Christianity was deeply examined during the aftermath of 9/11 (Stanley, 2020). Furthermore, the decline of almost every major denomination, including Evangelical ones, express the decline of influence on society. However, not all hope is lost. Christianity does have some influence. Unfortunately, the influence is political pandering. However, this can change. This does not mean that there should be a return to the “church growth” movement of before. No, that movement had its own problems. But, the church can start moving toward a new influential position by redefining its mission. Kgatla and Kamukwamba begin their article writing, “The traditional definition of ‘mission’ has always carried with it the salvation or redemption connotation, leading to the division of the world into two spheres: the world for the saved and the world for the unsaved” (Kamukwamba, 2019). This definition of mission is limited and it needs to change. The traditional definition of “mission” limits the church’s influence. Martha Grace Reece explains that evangelism makes people’s lives better (Reece, 2008). Therefore, if the church wishes to increase it’s influence on society, it needs to broaden its definition of specific terms and help people live their lives better.

# Works Cited

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