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Conversions and Transformations: Missiological Approaches to Religious Change

Equipping the poor to become agents of transformation: A case study of milk as a catalyst for social transformation in Burundi

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Abstract

Social transformation has cultural, political and religious dimensions. In the case of Burundi, ranked 167/169 on the scale of the world poorest countries a fatalistic attitude of poverty as a result of the unstable political climate has resulted in a climate of suspicion and cynical expectations that has muted the resourcefulness of one of the poorest nations. The Christian Church has developed a sense of dependency and the role of the church has been reduced to lifting the poor out of abject poverty.

Evariste is someone who has succeeded in creatively using resources available in his rural village to make a positive contribution to the welfare. The approach was focused on fulfilling the maximum potential of the people in his village so that they can participate in world missions. The poor have been empowered to become fully participating members of the Church and involved in the church's mission. The empowering of the poor for active mission is the working out of a theology of the poor of the Newfrontiers Churches in the engagement with the poor.

It is an approach that has lifted people from requiring on-going support to becoming contributors to their local community and national transformation as participators in the mission of the church and the *missio Dei*. The mission's approach of Newfrontiers is prophetic in that the poor are empowered to envision an alternative future through recognizing their potential and becoming agents of transformation.