

Conversions and Transformations: Missiological Approaches to Religious Change: Theological perspectives from Matthew 18:1-14 on conversion and transformation in relation to ministry with children in a missional setting within the African context.

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The research question is: How can we approach conversion and transformation in relation to children in a missional setting on the African continent?

The research will be delimited as follow:

- Children are the focus and not adults;
- Conversion and transformation are discussed just from a theological perspective;
- The ministerial guidelines is developed only from Matthew 18:1-14; and
- The missional context is Africa.

The goal is to formulate some ministerial guidelines which take both conversion and transformation in relation to children in the African context into account.

First, an historical picture on ministry with children on the mission field in Africa will be drawn. Some of the changes in the African context over the decades, especially the influence of globalization, and the challenges it poses to ministry with children, will be highlighted. Secondly, the important role Matthew 18:1-14 played in the development of Child Theology, especially as expressed in the Child Theology Movement, and in various organizations' ministry with children will be emphasized. An exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:1-14 in which the social context of Jesus' ministry and the structure of the Gospel of Matthew will be considered, will follow. The expressions "change" in verse 3 and "welcome" in verse 5 will be explored. Finally, the perspectives of Matthew 18:1-14 will be translated into guidelines for ministerial practices with children in the African context of the twenty first century, taking both conversion and transformation into account.