



# Re-reading the Parable of the Good Samaritan in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa: A Narrative Paradigm

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## Abstract

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) is one of the most illustrious stories on human relations among the teachings of Jesus Christ. One of the critical questions among scholars is whether the parable should be understood as a mere story of loving a neighbour offering empathy and kindness to people in need, or as an allegory. This study interrogates the parable of the Good Samaritan as an allegory about the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. On that basis, the Priest and Levite may refer to the government; Jericho may represent the world; thieves represent the hostile forces of the world in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic; the Samaritan represents Jesus Christ, and the Inn represents the Church. The study argues that while the moral aspect of good neighborliness is emphasized in the parable, the parable may also be viewed as an allegory considered related to the experiences of people under the coronavirus disease. The study also utilized the narrative perspective as a theoretical framework to cross-examine the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concluded that the discourses on the parable of the Good Samaritan remind people to love everyone, including their enemies, even in the context of health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic where for the most part, others were shunned in an egocentric manner.

**Keywords:** Parable, Good Samaritan, COVID-19 pandemic, narrative paradigm, allegorical approach.

## Introduction

The parable of the Good Samaritan has turned out to be one of the most memorable stories in mankind in terms of its human relations lessons among the teachings of Jesus Christ. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle taught for an average of forty-something years per person. Jesus' ministry lasted a mere three years, but the impact of his salvific ministry



far outweighs the influence of forty and fifty years which the great philosophers had. Jesus' parables are case in point. There were many people before Jesus who taught in parables, but those that were taught by him remained a cut above them. Jesus related stories that revealed the truth about God's kingdom while simultaneously challenging the common world views of his audiences. Jesus' parables addressed diverse situations that were generally very familiar for his listeners and he introduced concepts of God's Kingdom into the minds and hearts of his audiences. However, the parables of Jesus were often prone to misinterpretation. Modern Christian readers of the parables assume for the most part tend to seek a moralistic lesson from a parable. This is problematic as the narrative context of a parable is often ignored. It is interesting to note that Snodgrass (200:177) is blunt in his argument when he says, "Throughout much of the church's history, the parables of Jesus have been mistreated, rearranged, abused, and butchered." Therefore, the proper interpretation is both academically relevant and spiritually imperative so that adherents of the faith can glean deep spiritual inferences. What is important at this point is the question of methodological consideration when interpreting parables: what hermeneutical tools should be used to make credible interpretations?

It is against this background that the focus of this article is to interrogate and examine the parable of the Good Samaritan as an allegory about the deeper spiritual essence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. This article utilizes Origen's allegorical interpretive hypothesis, which is now perceived as anachronistic *inter alia* by Decock (2011) and Clark (2014) and, receiving less attention than it probably may deserve. This paradigm is useful in this research because it will pay attention to a deeper symbolic meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. A narrative approach developed by scholars such as Rhoads (1982:411), Lawrence (2016:2), Van Aarde (2009:383), and Resseguie (2005:18) will complement Origen's allegorical paradigm in this research. The narrative approach will view the parable of the Good Samaritan as a story with the actual author, implied author, narrator, narrate, characters, plot, and conflict among other components, which can help in understanding the allegorical interpretation of the Good Samaritan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. This study is thus in many ways an endorsement of Origen's symbolic paradigm in the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The allegorical method does not exist in a historical vacuum; this article shall therefore begin by tracing the historical development of the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan from the second to the twenty-first century CE.

### **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

This article utilizes the insights of Origen's allegorical paradigm in interrogating the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The narrative approach will complement the theoretical framework (allegorical method). The term "allegory" comes from the Greek "*alla*", which means "other," and "*agoreuo*", that is translated to mean "proclaim" (CopticChurch.Net, <https://www.copticchurch.net/partrology/schoolofalex/1-Intro/chapter3.html>). Originally, it was meant to refer to a figurative speech defined by Cicero as a "continuous stream of metaphors" (ibid). According to Trigg (1983:120), an "allegory is a model of speech in which one thing is understood by another." In other words, it is a story with an intended deeper meaning—for instance, the parable of the sower in Mark 4:1-20. Jesus interpreted the story allegorically. In this case, an allegory is different from a parable because its presentation is more systematic of the variety of characteristics that it seeks to illustrate "as well as in its contents which are concerned with the exposition of theoretical truths rather than practical exhortation" (ibid). Having defined the term allegory, it is important to discuss its historical development briefly.

The allegorical method was adopted by St. Clement of Alexandria, who was a leader of the Alexandrian School. Clement learnt the profound metaphysical truths of the biblical stories. Origen succeeded Clement as the head of the Alexandrian School (Trigg, 1983). Origen arranged



the interpretive principles, and he differentiated the moral, literal and spiritual senses of scripture, but he identified the spiritual (allegorical) as the best (Decock, 2011; Nicolaidis, 2021). Origen's threefold sense approach was adopted in the Middle Ages and expanded to fourfold by adding the anagogical sense. Osborne (2006) argued that the major interpretive method to interpret parables was the allegorical perspective up to the nineteenth century, It was considered to be the best method of bringing accurate meaning to the interpretation of the parables of Jesus Christ. How the allegorical method is used is that the interpretive paradigm revolves around the assumption that each component of the parable discourse is symbolic of something other than itself, specifically representing spiritual items. Therefore, the duty of the exegete is to firstly, apportion the correct meaning to each element of the story. Secondly, to interpret the spiritual meaning that the parable story is giving in relation to the corresponding spiritual aspects. According to Osborne (2006:308), "this method remained unvarying, the only development being the extent of the allegorizing, as later writers went into more detail, and in the Middle Ages they utilized the fourfold sense method." This article utilizes these ideas from Origen's allegorical perspective to comprehend the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

The allegorical method is relevant and useful in this article in interpreting the parable of the Good Samaritan because it has a deeper intended spiritual meaning that can be related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. If this article does not use an allegorical paradigm in interpreting the parable of the Good Samaritan, it would be missing the point in relating the parable to the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The symbolic interpretation and the intended deeper meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan will be knitted together with the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. However, the challenge with the allegorical method is that it seeks to find an allegorical exegesis on every passage in the Bible, even where it is not intended to be understood that way.

In this research, narrative analysis will also complement Origen's allegorical method in examining the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. According to Powell (1990), the narrative-critical perspective is a subsection of literary criticism, which is a relatively new method that has been applied to biblical interpretation. The narrative method used some concepts used in the interpretation work of fiction. The narrative paradigm envisages studying of narrative stories in the Bible by focusing on the text as a finished literary work, without dividing it into various layers of sources and without paying attention to the real author or the intended audience (Powell, 1990:84). This interpretive methodology is clearly defined by Keegan (1995:92) as "[a] highly developed methodology for studying biblical narratives from the perspective of reader involvement." This methodology can also be understood as a method for the theory of literature in which narrative literature is analyzed and examined (Van Aarde, 2009:383). It also analyses the formal structures of biblical narratives, which are: plot, real author/reader, implied author/reader, character, and conflict among others (Van Aarde, 2009; Rhodes, 1992; Powell, 1990). Powell (1990:35) correctly debates that "every story encompasses three elements: events, characters, and settings."

The narrative-critical methodology is essentially concerned with how language is structured in a discourse. Thatcher (2008:22) claims that discourse, it is understood to mean "a narrative as communication." While Keegan (1995:93) contends that discourse is how a story is told. In all communication systems, every narrative presupposes a sender (the author of the book or the writer of a story) and the receiver (the reader or audience). However, narrative stories are complicated systems of communication that the sender indirectly conveys to the receiver. The receivers may be comprehended differently, may either be implied readers, or the present-day receivers (Berger, 2007:29). Scholars such as Berger (2007); Osborne (2006); Powell (1995) are not in agreement on the interaction which is there among the sender (author), message (text) and receiver (reader). The parable of the Good Samaritan demonstrates important literary artistry,



which can be valued in this research. This can be evident in that the parable can be seen as either a narrative or an argument. Its basis is that “biblical narratives are an “art” that demonstrates the literary, artistic ability of an author” (Osborne, 2006:153). This study is concerned with the qualities that makes the parable of the Good Samaritan as literature. It focuses on how biblical stories works of fiction or as literature.

### **Historical Overview of the Interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan**

A closer look at the parable of the Good Samaritan in interpreting it, one would join almost a tradition of two thousand years in interpreting this parable which continues to give a multiplicity of possible meanings. The early church focused on the use of the allegorical method to uncover the Gospels and had weaved symbolic components embedded in buried meaning in parables. This section will look at the brief history of the allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan from the second to the twenty-first century.

Origen (185-254 CE) adopted Clément’s views on the use of the allegorical method in interpreting the parables. He argued that just like the human body, which consists of the three senses, (body, soul, and spirit), so does the scripture which comprises three meanings which are literal, moral, and spiritual. Origen’s exegesis had a deeper meaning for every element in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Augustine (354-430 CE) embraced Origen’s allegorical method but with few modifications to the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Ambrose (339-397 CE) adopted the allegorical model to exegete the parable of the Good Samaritan to his detriment. His interpretation of the oil, which the Samaritan used to pour on his wounds, is completely different from Origen's and 'Augustine's. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) went on to utilize the allegorical method in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where he sees the parable as a conversation of sin and its effects. The allegorical method continued to be used to interpret the parable during the Reformation. For instance, Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) contrasted grace with the law when he sued the parable of the Good Samaritan, while John Calvin (1509-1564 CE) viewed the Samaritan as Jesus Christ.

The development of reason in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries started to question the authenticity of applying the allegorical method to the parables in the Holy Bible and began to focus on the historical and scientific approaches. According to Adolf Julicher (1976), the parables have a one-point meaning comparing a story and what it is representing. He claimed that the allegorical interpretation of parables did not come from the evangelists, but probably from the sources rather than from the historical Jesus. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Julicher observed an exemplary story with moral teachings for the church (Julicher, 1976). Charles H. Dodd and Joachim Jeremias are the representatives of the twentieth-century scholars who contributed immensely to the interpretation of parables, particularly the parable of the Good Samaritan. Dodd (1978:16) suggests that a parable should be understood as “... a metaphor or simile is drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.” He also emphasized that the Kingdom of God is ‘already-and-not-yet’, meaning that Jesus brought the Kingdom and will be realized at the end of the world (Dodd, 1976:30). Dodd (1976) rejected the use of the allegorical method, and he agreed with Julicher (1976). Jeremias (1972) focused his interpretation of parables by paying special attention to their “setting in life.” He started his study of the interpretation of parables by looking at the historical setting of first-century Christianity.

Contemporary scholars such as William Herzog (1994) and Robert Funk (1988) have different approaches towards the interpretation of parables. Herzog (1994) claims that the primary focus of the parables of Jesus was to show the way oppression is serving the interest of the elite, thus





the ruling class. In other words, parables came in as a form of social analysis as well as a theological reflection on issues that manifested in society. Funk (1988) on the other hand, viewed the parables as metaphorical writings. He went on arguing that parables “mark yet another transition to what has come to be known as a “language event” where the literal sense of the narrative draws readers into the parable as participants.” In other words, listening to a parable will ultimately create meaning from the text. Funk (1988:61) claims that the parable, which is under investigation “does not suggest that one behaves as a good neighbor like the Samaritan, but that one becomes the victim in the ditch who is helped by an enemy.”

This brief historical development of the interpretation of parables has shown the shifts and turns in interpreting the parable of the Good Samaritan in particular. It has been observed that the allegorical paradigm was a prominent approach in interpreting parables up to the eighth century. The emergence of reason resulted in the New Testament scholars to question the validity of using the allegorical method opting for historical and other methodologies of the day. The allegorical approach has been mostly rejected mainly from the reformation up to the twenty-first century. This could be probably because from the reformation scholarship was no longer considering this methodology due the fact that historical paradigm was at the center stage. Allegorical methodology rejected the historicity of the text among other issues. However, this research has identified the allegorical methodology as a useful tool to interrogate and examine the parable of the Good Samaritan because it will lead to understanding how the parable may be related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The narratological methodology insights will take the parable of the Good Samaritan as a story and hence will be examined as a literary work.

### **Allegorical and Narrative Interpretations of the Parable of the Good Samaritan**

This study predominantly interprets the parable of the Good Samaritan through the lens of Origen’s allegorical paradigm. This theoretical framework will be complemented by the narrative methodology. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a story with a well-defined plot, characterization, conflict, and setting among other things. The utilization of these methods will help in the understanding of the parable of the Good Samaritan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

The term “Good Samaritan” is very popular in different walks of life. There are several hospitals and charitable organizations which bear this name. It is usually used as a metaphor for those with a desire to help the needy and the oppressed. The story of the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is in Luke 10:25-37 is interpreted in a broader way to mean an expression of love of a neighbour. Nonetheless, this article would want to adopt the prominent patristic interpreters who emphasized the allegorical interpretation, which takes the attacked man as symbolizing the fall of humanity and the character of the Good Samaritan, which pictures Christ. Clack (2014:300) claims that “by assimilating the identity of the outsider-Samaritan to that of Christ, this interpretation homogenizes the ethnic identities in play and thus seems to exempt the audience from confronting the concrete social boundaries of their neighbor love.” Though this methodology has not been dominant throughout the last decades in the history of Christian tradition, the article wants to apply it in examining the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

The early church fathers in the first and second centuries, such as Origen and Irenaeus, accepted and approved the application of the allegorical paradigm in the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. As discussed above, Origen (185-254 CE) agreed with Clement’s ideas on using the allegorical method in interpreting the parables of Jesus. Origen (185-254 CE)



interpreted the Good Samaritan in that the man who was attacked by robbers on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho represented Adam or even humanity. He viewed the city of Jerusalem as being heaven / paradise. According to Clarck (2014:306), Jericho could be interpreted as “representing morality (because of its etymological relation to the moon and its waning phase)” Other people would view this as picturing the real world. Origen interpreted the robbers as “representing Satan and the fallen angels, who strip Adam of his immortality and leave him “half dead” (Clarck, 2014: 306). They can also represent the hostile powers that haunt humanity. Origen went on in his interpretation, arguing that the Levite and the Priest represent the Old Testament; that is, the Priest pictures the Law while the Levite refers to the prophets. The Samaritan represents Christ, while the wounds of the unknown attacked man are the disobedience of humanity towards God. Clarck (2014:307) claimed that “by binding the man’s wounds, Origen took the parable to refer to the empowerment Jesus gives the believer to resist sin, while the healing oil and wine respectively signify good hope and the exhortation to fervent striving.” The inn could mean the church, which accepts anyone who wants to enter it in faith. The manager of the inn represents the head of the church, who would normally take care of those who joined it. The allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan will be complemented by the narrative analysis of the same parable below.

The tenth chapter of the book of Luke can be recognized as the story of the Good Samaritan; this will be interrogated and examined through the lens of narrative analysis. This theoretical paradigm will complement Origen’s allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. In this exegetical analysis using the narratological approach, this research will mainly focus on the story's setting, plot, characters, and conflict. According to Powell (1990:35), almost all stories constitute settings that constitute the three elements: settings, events, and characters. The said elements interact with each other as the story unfolds, and it is pretty difficult to separate them. It is justified to apply this methodology because the parable of the Good Samaritan is like any other story, which can be analyzed through the insights of the narrative analysis.

### ***The setting***

The setting of the parable of the Good Samaritan is not precise but when Jesus told the story to his audience, he situated it on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It is the road on which the unnamed character was attacked by the robbers which left him half dead. Some people would want to think that the story of the Good Samaritan appears to be a true story because several people were moving along this road. According to Jeremias (1972), the road that is between Jerusalem and Jericho was a major road which was used by traders, pilgrims who visited Jerusalem several times yearly and also military personnel. Due to the nature of the terrain, which was isolated, people who used this road were targeted by robbers who could find good places to hide and escape into the desert where no one would likely find them. In Jesus’ story, when he said, “a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,” his audience would have understood and recognised the risks that this particular journey would entail. The other interesting phenomenon in the story of the Good Samaritan was that the audience was surprised to hear that it was a Samaritan who was helped. However, the Samaritans were known as perpetrators of foul deeds such as for example, robbing Jews on the road up to Jerusalem from Jericho for their holy days.

### ***Plot***



The term plot has been defined by Resseguie (2005:197) as a structure of events that take place in a story. In other words, it is the unfolding of events that culminates into a climax as well as the reader's involvement in the story. Concerning the story of the Good Samaritan, the story builds up with the dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer. Marevesa (2021:67) states that a plot has a linear arrangement of actions with the beginning, middle, and conclusion. A plot may be viewed as either a macro or micro. By macro, it is a situation where the whole book is viewed, whereas micro is a solitary section found in a particular book. For instance, in the Gospel of Luke the narrative of the Good Samaritan is viewed at the micro level. There are two main forms of plots in the New Testament, namely tragedy and comedy (Marguerat & Bourquin, 1999; Resseguie, 2005). The story of the Good Samaritan appears to be a tragedy. It could be a tragic story in that the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan started with a conflict which went on to a dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer. As Jesus went on telling the story, it developed until it became a disaster, where an unknown person was attacked by robbers and was left half dead on the roadside.

### **Characters**

Characters are a group of people in a story. Resseguie (2005) calls them *dramatis personae*. The implied author is the one who creates characters in a literal work and plays a part in the activities of the development of the story. In the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan there are characters such as Jesus, the lawyer, a Priest, Levite, robbers, an unnamed person who was attacked by robbers, the Samaritan and the inn keeper. It is intriguing to note that the Samaritan's kindness and love embarrassed all sorts of descriptions of neighbourly love to which the lawyer thought to give, but it changed the orientation and meaning of the lawyer's challenge. The discussion between the lawyer and Jesus led to the unfolding of the story. The lawyer was a character who stood to put Jesus to the test on the love of the neighbour. Clarck (2014:307) is apt in arguing that "[o]riginally an exercise in justifying exclusionary principles of social recognition and assistance, the parable now becomes precisely the opposite: a deconstruction of the social criteria governing the scope of the neighbor love command..." The characters of the Levite and Priest surprised their readers because these two could not assist the unknown character who was attacked by the robbers guided by their religious beliefs. In this context, the narrator in the story was "telling" his audience that the Priest and the Levite had bad and selective characters in sync with their Jewish tradition. However, there were readers who could construct their judgment in terms of the characters of the Priest and the Levite. The Samaritan is a character in the story of the Good Samaritan, he is presented as someone who is kind and compassionate because the reader would notice that after the Priest and the Levite could not help the attacked victim, he did. The narrator here "shows" the actions and words of the Samaritan to the readers his kindness.

### **The COVID-19 pandemic in Africa**

The outbreak of coronavirus has wreaked havoc on human life globally. A number of organisations, schools, universities, supermarkets, churches, public health facilities, and workplaces among others, were at a standstill because of this pandemic. The spread of the virus was so rapid that it led to the confusion among the whole world in finding the mitigation for the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by surprise, and all countries were in a panic mood, just like the thieves who attacked the unnamed man in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is probable that the unnamed person who was attacked by robbers on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho could represent humankind. Humanity was caught unaware of the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus, it claimed thousands and thousands of people globally. From a coronavirus perspective, the setting of Jerusalem could be viewed as picturing heaven where those who succumbed to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic will go to paradise.



The setting of Jericho in this context of the COVID-19 pandemic can represent the hostile environment of the natural world where the coronavirus was wreaking havoc on humanity. There was no defense against the coronavirus because there was no cure. The coronavirus was harvesting humanity at will. The people in Jericho could have been owning land and carrying out agricultural activities. Those who were removed from the land were probably the people who were attacking the new landowners. It is most likely that this land could have been allocated to Priests as they were part of the ruling class. Priests were then giving this land to tenants who were paying rent to them. The robbers were probably attacking the system of displacing people who owned land and giving it to the priest. This can be understood in Africa in that God is unleashing his anger on humanity as punishment for sin. Those who were attacked by robbers were the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and beyond. According to Clark (2014:306), Origen claimed that robbers represent “Satan and the fallen angels....” If we go by this characterization, coronavirus is referred to as the devil who stripped humanity of its immortality and left it “half-dead.” It is, therefore, the tool that God has used to punish humanity probably because of its unrepentant behavior. In the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan, these robbers can also be seen to mean the hostile influence that troubles humankind. The characters in this story of the Priest and the Levite, interpreted from the allegorical interpretation, could be taken to mean the religious leaders of today who are critical of the government of the day.

On the other hand, in the Old Testament period, the Priest and the Levite characters were part of the kingship. This may represent the governments in Africa who did not do much in promoting and funding research as far as the invention of the vaccine was concerned during the peak of the coronavirus. According to Marevesa *et al.* (2021), there were two countries in Africa which emerged to support the invention of herbal medicine; these are Tanzania and Madagascar. However, their efforts were ‘shot down’ when the World Health Organisation could not approve their herbal medicines, citing that they were not tested as required by scientists. If we take the Priest and the Levite as religious leaders, one may argue that during the peak of the coronavirus, they were not seen praying and healing for their congregants, who could have been the victims of COVID-19. Other religious leaders ended up using televangelism, where they would preach to their members online even daily in some cases. They were restricted from doing home visits and having Sunday services because of the mitigation measures which were instituted by the WHO through all governments worldwide (Sibanda & Muyambo, 2020).

In the story of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:29-37, which was told by Jesus to his audience, the character of the Samaritan may epitomize Christ. Relating this to the COVID-19 pandemic, these were international donors who would bring information for the mitigation of the pandemic, equipment used in the treatment of the virus, and vaccines, among others. These were brought to Africa by well-wishers though they were entangled in a somewhat deep vaccine distribution political conflict. For instance, Matambo (2021:2) claimed that “the COVID-19 vaccine has become the symbolic totem of a new form of political power. In Africa, European actors through the COVAX facility have politicized the vaccine as they try to show their benevolence towards Africa while reaping soft power diplomatic benefits in turn.” This type of political competition between the Global North and the Global South powers was having negative insinuations on how public health and its improvement are responded to and apparent in Africa, as officially approved vaccines were either dangerous or ineffective, subject to which media reading or politicians would not listen.

Regardless of the political upheavals in the distribution of vaccines, there was a will to help Africans during this difficult period. The term “Good Samaritan” is synonymous with charitable organisations which have the desire to help the oppressed and needy. Hence these organisations which helped the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic may represent Christ in the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan. According to Origen, the wounds of the unknown man who was





attacked by thieves could symbolize the disobedience of humanity. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this could be the sin which humanity had committed before God, which angered God. When the Samaritan was binding the wounds of the attacked man, this could be understood as the herbal medicines and the vaccines which were administered to the victim of coronavirus, which could have given them at least some good hope in their suffering. Lastly, in the story of the Good Samaritan, the attacked man is taken to the inn, where he received some treatment. This inn could signify the church where everyone is accepted if he/she joins willingly.

## Reflections

This article has observed that the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) is one of the most popular stories on human relations among the teachings of Jesus Christ. In this research, it emerged that one of the critical questions among scholars is whether the parable should be understood as a mere story of loving a neighbour and offering empathy and kindness to the needy or as an allegory. This study has taken the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan as an allegory in order to relate it to the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. Inasmuch as scholars from the Reformation have partially rejected the use of Origen's allegorical method in the interpretation of parables; this study has adopted it. Whilst the narrative critical methodology was complementing the allegorical paradigm in the interrogation of the story of the Good Samaritan in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. It can be drawn from this study that while the moral aspect of good neighborliness is emphasised in the parable, the parable may also be viewed as an allegory, which is related to the experiences of people under the coronavirus disease. The symbolism that Origen proposes of the settings of the story that is Jerusalem and Jericho, the characters in the story such as the robbers, the Priest and the Levite, the unnamed man who was attacked by robbers, the Samaritan among others, all helped one to better understand the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The unfolding of the story was made possible because of the conflict/dialogue which was there between Jesus and the lawyer on the essential question: Who is my neighbour? In addition, the activities of the characters who were created by the implied author helped to develop the plot of the story and relate it to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Conclusion

This study established that although Origen's allegorical method of interpretation is perceived as archaic, it can still be used in the analysis of the parables, specifically the parable of the Good Samaritan. The utilisation of the insights of the two methodologies, namely allegorical and narrative perspectives, helped in the understanding of the story of the parable of the Good Samaritan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. This study is an endorsement of Origen's allegorical paradigm in the interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this study, it emerged that the allegorical paradigm was useful in this research because it paid attention to the deeper symbolic meaning of the parable in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa. The study revealed that the symbolism of different aspects in the parable related well with the experiences of people under the coronavirus disease in Africa. Therefore, the study concluded that the discourses on the parable of the Good Samaritan remind people to love everyone, including their enemies, even in the context of health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

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