



Socio-rhetorical re-examination of Luke 9:51–56: Mission, migration, and nationalism

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The conjoined themes of mission, migration, and nationalism are central issues in the Gospel of Luke. These essential motifs were amalgamated in a rhetorical composition to persuade implied readers to be mission-focused but accommodate the views of transiting communities or consular decisions and national pride. Luke 9:51–56 has been variedly interpreted on discipleship, media communication, Christological, and Elijah's spirit tenets. Emphasising individual themes in the interpretation of Luke 9:51–56 is legitimate, but it leaves out a holistic understanding of the text as the opening narrative of Luke's travel narratives, which concerns multiple issues. This study engages the socio-rhetorical criticism propounded by Vernon K. Robbins to reinterpret Luke 9:51–56. The objective is to respond to the questions: (1) what is the relationship between mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke 9:51–56? and (2) what is the relevance of mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke 9:51–56 for African migrants in the diaspora?

Contribution: There is a proximity between mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke 9:51–56. It prioritises mission over migration and nationalism. Mission is the key determinant for migration and nationalism. Migrant Africans emphasise migration for economic fortunes over mission and nationalism. This may be due to personal aspirations.

Keywords: Luke 9:51–56; mission; migration; nationalism; Africa.

Introduction

Luke 9:51–56 has been named the beginning of the travel narrative of Jesus. It serves as a transitional nexus between the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem. It is the central section of the Gospel that Moessner (1983:575–605) argued that the narrative is saddled with the central problem of stiff tension in the Gospel. He observed the four main approaches to unravelling such a complex narrative: (1) Theological-Christological sought to argue for the movement (migration) of the salvation message (mission) from Galilee to Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth; (2) Ecclesiastical-Functional proponents argue that the narrative was meant to teach the disciples of the Gentile mission as Jesus was preparing to end his ministry. The most important element in the Gentile mission is patience and respect for human rights amid conflicting national interests; (3) Literary-Aesthetical approach sees the passage as a designed and cohesive piece to reflect the story of Moses (migration) in the Book of Deuteronomy. Tradition in scripture had been alluded to in the composition of the text for ease of assimilation and present Jesus as Moses – biblical Israelite's prophet par excellence; (4) Traditional-Logical view considers that the text existed in its chronological order that Jesus had finished his work (mission) in Galilee and would have to move on to Jerusalem for death exaltation. Luke then distorts the narrative with ecclesiological and nationalist themes. All these four approaches have immensely contributed to the delineation of the text.

Migration is well-known in the African context. It is often motivated by economic aspirations. It is a means for economic, educational and social well-being (Walls 2002). Although it is considered a brain drain by some scholars because some of the migrants are educated and young persons (Bekoe 2018), migration is a form of expansion of African Churches (mission), and African culture and national ethos in a foreign land. The reason is that Africans are incurably religious and would practise their religion and culture wherever they find themselves (Mbiti 1991). This study will help the African Christian to effectively manage mission, migration, and nationalism as a critical component of life and nurture.

This study undertakes a socio-rhetorical re-examination of Luke 9:51–56 to determine the correlation between the various themes the implied narrator engaged in the composition and how

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he intends to persuade implied readers to 'see' Jesus as a man of peace in the context of mission, migration and nationality. The approach will be both Traditional-Logical and Ecclesiastical-Functional. Traditional-Logical approach will be used to delineate the building blocks of the narrative, while the Ecclesiastical-Functional method will apply the findings to migration in Africa without neglecting mission and national values in the diaspora.

Luke 9:51–56 in scholarly discourse

Kodell (1987:415–430) opined that the pre-Lukan tradition was saturated with Luke's theological themes for a desired result. The theme of discipleship is critical and demonstrates a training curriculum that includes diplomatic communications to prepare conducive access for a master to conduct his ministry. This concept suggests the meaning of discipleship to be not only following but also what follows. It fosters a bilateral relationship between Jesus and his entourage and cities that grant access. This is confirmed by the narrative of the sending of the seventy (Lk 10:1). Kodell (1987) explained that the hostilities that erupted between the disciples and the Samaritans happened at the beginning of his Galilean ministry when he was rejected at Nazareth. Hence, the beginning of a new phase of the ministry of Jesus is characterised by rejection. The Samaritans conceived a political challenge with Jesus' use of their city as a means to reach Jerusalem. He added that Luke portrays Jerusalem as a heavenly exaltation of Jesus rather than an early mission. Although Luke 9:51–56 is an independent pericope, 'each of the three pericopea (vv. 46–48, 49–50, 51–56) contains similar contrasting pairs: disciple-child, John-exorcist, Samaritans-Jesus; the figure of John connects the Marcan material to the Lucan special material' (Kodell 1987:423). The perspective of Kodell concerning the interpretation of Luke 9:51–56 reflects the Traditional-Logical approach of the journey to Jerusalem.

Allison (2002:459–478) postulated that although other passages in the Hebrew Bible relate to fire, Luke 9:51–56 resonates with the encounter of Elijah and the soldiers he commanded fire from heaven to burn (1 Ki 1:9–12). The setting for the Elijah and the soldiers encounter took place in Samaria and the disciples of Jesus were sent to a Samaritan city. He added that the two passages offer two different theologies. While the theology of 1 Kings 1:9–12 portrays the God of biblical Israelites to be violent in judgement against opposition, Luke 9:51–56 depicts a theology of a Christian God that is non-violent against opposition. Allison (2002) offered an intertextual study of the text, which is closely related to the Literary-Aesthetical approach of interpretation.

Loubser (2002:206–219) explored the media communicative and orality nuances of how the author manipulated existing text either in oral or pre-Lukan tradition to interpolate various themes to depict a form of communication in the ancient Mediterranean society. He situated his argument in the context of orality and literacy at the time of the composition of the Gospel by analysing media technology

and theories that were engaged and how they affected the text. It is the attempt to bring to the attention of Lukan scholars to consider the media texture of Luke 9:51–56 to bring to bear a contemporary niche on the ancient text. He stated that the:

[N]arrated time is protracted to create emphasis and to heighten tension; Jesus' resolve to proceed to Jerusalem is emphasized by repetition. But there are also contractions to signify a narrative climax. (Loubser 2002:212)

This situation can be unravelled by entering into the text with a media critical point of view. It is within the approach of media point of view that the rebuke of Jesus concerning the thoughts of John and James to call down fire against the Samaritans can be perceived. The proposition of Loubser resonates with the Traditional-Logical approach of interpreting Luke 9:51–56 with a more contemporary slant of media texture.

Research methods and design

Socio-rhetorical criticism propounded by Robbins (2004) '... is an interpretive analytic – an approach that evaluates and reorients its strategies as it engages in multi-faceted dialogue with the texts and other phenomena that come within its purview'. It is a cohesive approach to biblical interpretation because of the diversity of procedures and approaches it advocates. Socio-rhetorical criticism is adjustable in diverse situations. It is an adroit blend of narrational criticism and social-scientific criticism. It is composed of five textures: (1) inner texture, (2) intertexture, (3) socio-cultural texture, (4) ideological texture, and (5) sacred texture. In this study, the inner texture is adopted because of the close reading the study adopts and the relationship between mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke 9:51–56. The inner texture of socio-rhetorical interpretation is the investigation of terms and concepts as found in a narrative piece or within the vista of a study. The objective of the inner texture 'is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meaning and meaning-effects that an interpreter analyses' (Vondey 2012:134–159). It can be referred to as the close reading of the text. Inner texture in this study will delineate the communicative significance of the narrative for the implied narrator and the implied reader(s), and how the keywords link the rhetorical communicative process between the implied narrator and the implied reader(s). It also investigates words, phrases, and *topoi* that lead to the possible discovery of the social identity, 'cultural, and ideological networks of meanings and meaning effects in the rhetoric of [the] text' (Robbins et al. 2016:xxii). It is the literary and rhetorical exegesis of a text guided by repetition, progression, narrational, opening-middle-closing (plot), argumentative, and sensory-aesthetic textures. All these elements (rhetology or rhetography) in the inner texture help generate a graphic image or reasoning of a certain possibility of persuasion.

Inner texture interpretation: Close reading of Luke 9:51–56

Repetitive texture: The building blocks of mission, migration, and nationalism

The personal pronoun αὐτός [he] occurred four times in its varied forms about Jesus. The implied narrator alluded to the suggestion that the implied readers might have known Jesus in the previous pericopae in Luke 9. It demonstrates a connection and succession between the previous pericopae and the narrative under interpretation on mission, migration, and nationalism. The phrase καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ [and set his face to go to Jerusalem or he was determined to go to Jerusalem] (v. 51) occurred again in a similar concept in verse 53 ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ [because he set his face to go to Jerusalem or his attention was on going to Jerusalem]. This depicts the concept of mission. It confirms that Jesus must, of necessity, go to Jerusalem as a missional requirement. The first occurrence indicates that it is required of Jesus to proceed to Jerusalem, and the second occurrence demonstrates the willingness and commitment of Jesus to go to Jerusalem. The term κώμην [village] an accusative, occurred in accusative form twice in verses 52 and 56. The first appearance relates to a Samaritan habitat. The second occurrence is not specific but it is obvious that Jesus' route to Jerusalem was not through cities and towns but through villages – rural dwellings, which draw on migration. Hence, the critical building block of the narrative is Jesus – αὐτός, καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, and κώμην. It sums up Jesus, his mission route to Jerusalem and how the journey was frustrated by the Samaritans' national aspirations. They form the hermeneutical clues for the interpretation of Luke 9:51–56.

Progression texture: The development of the motifs of mission, migration, and nationalism

The repeated terms and phrases demonstrate progression. The personal pronoun αὐτός progressed to κύριε (v. 54) when John and James attempted to seek permission from Jesus to call fire from heaven to burn the Samaritan village. It points to a banter between two opposing national groups. The term ἀγγέλου [angel, messenger] (v. 52) progressed from being anonymous to specific – οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης [the disciples James and John] (v. 54). It demonstrates that disciples are also messengers or errand protégés. The concept of the phrase καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ moves from a general principle and mission to a specific function: ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. These are non-polyptoton progressions in which different terms or phrases have been engaged to develop the same or similar objective in a literary piece. In other words, the implied narrator employed terms from similar roots to emphasise the mission and migration of Jesus to Jerusalem. κώμη progressed from a specific location to a general domain. It is a relapsing progression in Hebrew rhetoric to enable insertions and non-specific thinking by implied readers, which allows for the exploration of ideas (Leroux 1995:1–25).

It helps the implied readers to smoothen some rough concepts that are difficult to understand.

Narrational texture: The composition and characters of mission, migration, and nationalism

Two theories have been argued for gospel narratives: (1) 'πρατκὸν πρᾶγμα [event narrative], which is an account of an occurrence that has political and historical significance'; and (2) 'μυθικὸν πρᾶγμα [(*muthikos pragma*) mythical narrative], which is a story that includes gods, heroes, and other mythical figures' (Robbins 1996:368–384). The narrative under interpretation is difficult for a straightforward categorisation into any one of the types mentioned. This is because of the fusing of three critical themes of mission, migration, and nationalism in a single narrative. The name of Jesus was not stated specifically but in pronouns and homage as κύριε – Lord, master. It can be cogently argued that the pronouns can be traced to Jesus in previous pericopae, because it is John and James who addressed Jesus, κύριε, which is a term that disciples or protégés use to address their masters in the ancient Mediterranean world (Aryeh 2020). Upon this evidence, the narrative could be classified as μυθικὸν πρᾶγμα. Jesus is the chief missionary and migrant.

The denial of the Samaritans to allow Jesus' passage to Jerusalem through their village and the desire of John and James to call down fire from heaven to burn the entire Samaritan village recall the historical, political and anthropological debate between biblical Jews and Samaritans. A contestation between two national ideas, which categorises the narrative as πρατκὸν πρᾶγμα. Hence, I posit that the narrative is eclectic and complex. It is the amalgamation of both μυθικὸν πρᾶγμα and πρατκὸν πρᾶγμα. In other words, it is heroic and has religious (mission) significance, and it is also political with historical significance. Hence, it is a politico-religious composition or narrative that emphasises the complexity of mission, migration, and nationalism. This classification reflects the assertion that the implied narrator engages various themes in the composition of the text (Kodell 1987:206–219). Narrative texture has fourfold components or scheme, namely: (1) events, (2) characters, (3) settings, and (4) discourse, which may express any branch of rhetoric – epideictic, judicial, and deliberative (Robbins 1996).

Event

The passage of Luke 9:51–56 is a rhetorical unit that follows the order, duration, and frequency model in four to six parts of rhetorical composition (Phillips 2008:226–265) (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: Rhetorical unit and corresponding reference in Luke 9:51–56.

Rhetorical unit	Corresponding reference in Luke 9:51–56
<i>Exordium:</i> Introduction to the composition	Verse 51
<i>Narratio</i> and <i>Propositio:</i> It explains the nature of the narrative or discourse and the thesis of the narrative with supportive arguments	Verses 52–54
<i>Peroratio:</i> The recapitulation of the main thoughts in the narrative into the conclusion	Verses 55–56

The *exordium* demonstrates a change in the focus of the implied narrator by the use of Ἐγένετο δὲ [but when]. This concept has been replicated in Luke 5:12, 17; 8:1, 9:18, 29; 11:1; 14:1; 17:11; 19:29; 20:1; 24:50, and it is always found on the lips of the narrator (Aryeh 2021:493–516). It serves as a break or end of a particular theme to begin another. In the context of Luke 9:51–56, Ἐγένετο δὲ serves as a break concerning Jesus and closed discourse with the disciples to continue to control the hot temper of the disciples amid national security issues. The issue of Jesus and the disciples started from the beginning of chapter 9 through to the beginning of chapter 10. Ἐγένετο δὲ also serves as an end to the exorcism that preceded Luke 9:51–56, and the beginning of a novel narrative concerning the migration of Jesus to Jerusalem through a Samaritan village. However, the most significant use of ἐγένετο δὲ is the demonstration that Jesus has ended a particular phase of his mission and would have to move (migrate) to the next phase. It is the identity marker of time in a rhetorical narrative unit. The *exordium* gave the reason why Jesus would have to go to Jerusalem – τῆς ἀναλήμψεως (for him to be taken up to heaven or ascension). The *exordium* demonstrates a change in conversation to whet the curiosity instinct of the implied readers concerning the migration of Jesus to Jerusalem. Upon reading the *exordium*, the implied readers are made aware of the timeliness of Jesus and the reason why he must go to Jerusalem. It does not keep the implied readers in a dilemma or suspense. The *exordium* shows that Jesus (the chief missionary) is the protagonist of the narrative.

Both the *narratio* and the *propositio* can be identified in verses 52–54. It demonstrates the nature of the narrative as a linear one that attempts to narrate the event in the order in which it happened. The *narratio* identified the disciples (John and James) as the tritagonist and the leaders of the Samaritan village as the antagonists based on nationalistic ideas. The *propositio* shows that critical decisions have to be taken in consultation and approval of the protagonist. The *peroratio* shows that the protagonist did not approve of the proposition of John and James; hence, they need to look for an alternative route to Jerusalem through other villages.

The Gospel of Luke is predominantly deliberative (Robbins 1996). Luke 9:51–56 fits the deliberative rhetorical purpose: (1) to examine where the authentic teaching of Jesus can be found and it seeks to direct readers to specific social locations – the migration of Jesus to Jerusalem; and (2) the *topoi* used by the implied narrator are hermeneutical, such that they seek to authenticate and afford the necessary rudiments for the interpretation of how Jesus trained the disciples to act in the context of opposing national issues.

Regarding the principal structure as presented in a display of the narrative, the following outline is preferred because it vividly represents the actions, results, and *topoi* mission, migration, and nationalism in the narrative unit:

Topic: Mission to Jerusalem:

- Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem, verse 51b
- Jesus sent his disciples to prepare a way for him, verse 52a

Topic: Access to Jerusalem:

- The disciples were denied access by the Samaritans, verse 53a
- The disciples went to another village to seek access, verse 56

Topic or result: Jesus rebuked John and James:

- John and James sought approval from Jesus to call fire from heaven to burn the village, verse 54
- Jesus rebuked John and James, verse 55

This brief narrative features both speech and actions attributed to Jesus and his disciples. The narrative world (the text) is a complete event re-told. The narrative is edited as a trajectory of communication among contributors in a discourse.

Characters

The narrative demonstrates Jesus, John and James, and the Samaritans as the characters that navigate mission, migration, and nationalism. The character of Jesus was portrayed as a well-known missionary, who is migrating from one location to the other, and the disciples would have to prepare his way for a smooth transition. It implies that Jesus is a character that can be classed among the highly respected religious elite whose movement (migration) demands prior maximum protocol at the national level. This system of protocol was often the preserve of politicians and high office holders in ancient Mediterranean society (Jones 2008). It presents Jesus as a character that shares political privileges when moving from one geographical jurisdiction to the other, probably because he is κύριος – Lord, master. This κύριος hates violent responses to national and ethnic decisions that do not favour his mission. It makes Jesus a religious κύριος over the disciples and not a political κύριος. The use of κύριος and the settings raise issues of the Christology of Jesus. The sequence and accumulation of the actions of Jesus portray him as a character that is focused on liberating and preventing humans from the oppression of others: an obdurate open-ended character in terms of tolerance, national and ethnic pride, and liberation. The character of Jesus had assumed a free and independent character rather than a closed one (McCracken 1993:29–42). Jesus is the main character of the narrative – the protagonist and chief missionary around whom all activities revolve.

The disciples (John and James) are tritagonist characters who appear to be intolerant or religious fundamentalists. They are characters that are serviceable for protocol and able to organise a trip for their master. John and James demonstrated their weakness in their attempt to burn the Samaritan village in the quest to demonstrate their loyalty to the mission of Jesus to Jerusalem. The Samaritans in the narrative are the antagonists who resisted or did not grant permission for Jesus to use their village as access to Jerusalem.

Setting

Although there was mention of cities and villages in chapters 9 and 10, the narrative did not state the venue in which the event of contending national pride took place. There is no

iota of information that would lead one to speculate. However, it appears that the event took place at the border of the current location of Jesus and his disciples and the Samaritan village. This is so because the reason for rejection by the Samaritans is that *ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ* [because he determined or on his way to Jerusalem] (verse 53b).

Discourse

Key terms and concepts used by the implied narrator serve to lead to the discovery of discourse through the *point of view*. Both biblical Israelites' and biblical Samaritans' *point of views* were engaged in politico-religious communication of mission, migration, and nationalism. The use of Ἱερουσαλήμ, a Jewish city and centre of political and religious power, and the concept of Jesus going to Jerusalem to be glorified signify a biblical Israelite *point of view* because Jerusalem is the city that persecutes and kills great religious personalities (Mt 23:34–39). The attempt of John and James to call fire from heaven to burn the Samaritan village reflects the event of Elijah in the Hebrew Bible who commanded fire and consumed soldiers (1 Ki 1:1–16). The narrative would resonate with biblical Israelites and persons who are familiar with that system. A Samaritan village and their antagonistic approach draw home the long anthropological and national banter between the biblical Israelites and the Samaritans concerning the principal place of worship, either Jerusalem or Mount Moriah (Ayegboyin 2004:30–31). Therefore, going to Jerusalem through a Samaritan village would be resisted by the Samaritans. Giving way to Jesus through a Samaritan village may mean that the Samaritans have adopted the biblical Israelites' place of worship.

Concerning holism and context, the implied narrator leaves gaps for the reader to speculate and to fill or the implied readers (initial receptors) knew, hence no need to mention. The implied narrator failed to mention the specific Samaritan village that refused access to Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem. There was no disclosure of the name of the other village the disciples went to seek access for Jesus to Jerusalem and whether it was successful or not.

Open-middle-ending (plot): The coherence of mission, migration, and nationalism

Luke 9:51–56 is a fully developed narrative elaboration that began, developed, and concluded. It is to indicate connotation and congruence in the narrative to explain that it is not a sheer cataloguing of terms and impressions (Matera 1987:233–253) but a soundly thought through and systematised composition by the implied narrator to convince the implied reader(s). The narrative of Luke 9:51–56 has an opening – Jesus sent the disciples to prepare a way for him to Jerusalem. Middle – The Samaritans did not allow Jesus to go to Jerusalem through their village. Ending – Jesus rebuked the disciples for thinking about burning the village and they went to another village to seek access for Jesus. It demonstrates the inherent challenges between mission, migration, and nationalism. The interconnectedness

between the open, middle, and ending forms a plot or scheme that discloses the literary pacts and cohesion of the narrative (Eck 2001:593–611). The plot is both epic and epistemic (Ryan 2008): the disciples addressed Jesus as κύριε [Lord] towards the end of the narrative. It establishes that the protagonist who was referred to in pronouns at the beginning and the greater part of the middle section of the narrative is the Lord and master of the disciples. The Christological depiction of Jesus as the master of the disciples who is seeking access to Jerusalem is the Messiah.

The plot or scheme has both satellites and kernels (Matera 1987:238; Carter 1992:463–481). There are two kernels involved: (1) the seeking of access to Jerusalem; and (2) the disciples want to call fire to burn the antagonist Samaritan village. Around the kernel of seeking access (migration) through the Samaritan village are the satellites of: (1) the Samaritans refused access through their village to Jerusalem; and (2) the disciples went to seek access through another village. The kernel of calling fire from heaven to burn the village is the satellite of: (1) Jesus rebuked the disciples. These satellites are important in constructing flesh around the kernels to produce a literary and well-organised narrative (Matera 1987:237). In other words, national pride is a critical matter in mission and migration.

Argumentative texture: The appeal of mission, migration, and nationalism

The argument of the implied narrator is inductive, *pathos*, and rhetographical. It is inductive (paradigmatic) because the implied narrator did not provide evidence in the narrative concerning the Christological claim of Jesus. The Samaritan villages were not named for verification purposes. Although Jerusalem oversaw the persecution and murder of prophets, it does not suggest that every religious intermediary perished in Jerusalem. The argument is intended to move the implied reader's thoughts, sentiments, and beliefs regarding the person and identity of Jesus without demanding proof. A *pathos* reasoning is required from the implied readers in the context of rhetography, which is made vivid by the phrases: *καὶ οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν, ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ* [however, the Samaritans did not receive them because Jesus has set his face to go to Jerusalem] (v. 53); *ιδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης εἶπαν* [When his disciples James and John saw it] (v. 54a) and *στραφεὶς δὲ ἐπέτιμησεν αὐτοῖς* [he turned and rebuked them] (v. 55). These statements appear to be more *pathos* rhetographical than *logos* and rhetological reasoning. A reflection that 'Luke is certainly after a visual prominence corresponding to the bold authority of Jesus' presence and words' (Nolland 1989:211).

The first statement sought to suggest that the rejection was based on the assumption that Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem through that Samaritan village before consulting the village for access. This may suggest that Jesus was already on his way to Jerusalem and got to the village and suspected that he would be restrained, hence, the need to send some of the disciples ahead of him. The second statement suggests that

the Samaritan village did not refuse access by word of mouth but the interpretation of the body language of the Samaritans by the disciples. The third statement, that is, Jesus turned and rebuked them suggests that the disciples were talking to Jesus from behind him or Jesus could not look at the face of the disciples to rebuke them. Arguably, this is a form of media communication available in the 1st century (Loubser 2002), which demonstrates the inductive character of Luke.

The inductive argumentation reflects three levels of schema blending and space of early Christian apocalyptic rhetorict (Robbins et al. 2016:xxii). Applying the first blending space to the narrative shows the political and national power of the Samaritan village to disallow Jesus and his entourage (missionaries) from using (migrating) their territory to another political jurisdiction – Jerusalem. This can spark religious and security tension between Jerusalem and the Samaritan village. The second blending space demonstrates the supremacy of Jesus when he was addressed as κύριε – Lord. The third blending space indicates the transition and the glorification of Jesus, which is why he was headed to Jerusalem. This is evident by the statement: Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως [when the days were drawing near for him to ascend or glorified] (v. 51a). It demonstrates early Christian means of rhetorically communicating apocalyptic narratives blending them with political and heroic socio-cultural issues of critical concern. An attempt to posit that Lukan narratives do not neglect their politico-cultural and social contexts of the implied narrator and the initial implied readers. In other words, the mission of Jesus to Jerusalem did not disregard the cultural and national issues between biblical Jews and Samaritans.

Mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke and Africa

Migration is an important phenomenon in many African countries. It is motivated by economic and educational aspirations. Mission and nationalism serve as a byproduct of migration. Migration is mainly driven by the quest for economic and educational welfare. This can be referred to as a voluntary migration. There is also a forced or compulsory migration where the migrant moves and settles in another jurisdiction because of force majeure such as war, conflict, natural hazards, among others. However, the majority of migration in Africa is voluntary migration for greener pastures in economically well-endowed countries (Mouthaan 2019:1–20). That notwithstanding, religious groups move from one jurisdiction to the other with the desire to convert others to the faith. It is a form of migration that is motivated by conversionist ideas of religious expansion through numerical increase. Although nationalism was keenly manifested when many African countries were under colonial rule and there was the quest for political independence, which the African Initiate or Indigenous or Independent Churches (AICs) contributed immensely (Baëta 2004). Nationalism took a revised mode when political independence was achieved by many African

countries. Nationalism is demonstrated in foreign lands or countries where migrants find their neighbours. It helps the migrants and their children born in the diaspora to maintain their national identity.

Africans mostly migrate to Europe and the United States of America (USA) for economic or educational pursuits and later gather together and start branches of Churches that are dominant in their home countries. These Churches in the diaspora have the candour of nationalist elements such as language used for liturgy, culture, and a sense of community. These diaspora Churches later become branches of the local Church in the home country where missionaries are sometimes sent from the home country to oversee the activities of the diaspora Churches (Edu-Bekoe 2018). For example, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist Church, Ghana, and some Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches have international missions' directorates that coordinate these diaspora Churches founded by immigrants (Edu-Bekoe 2018).

Hence, there is a dichotomy between Luke 9:51–56 and mission, migration, and nationalism in the African context. In terms of pattern and emphasis, Luke 9:51–56 is mission-migration-nationalism, while in the African context, it is migration-mission-nationalism. Nationalism in Luke 9:51–56 is expressed by the community used for transiting, while nationalism in the African context is expressed by the migrants to keep to their home culture in worship. In Luke 9:51–56, the mission was determined before the migration, while in the African context, the mission of economic and educational well-being finds expansion in Church planting. Therefore, the concept of mission, migration, and nationalism in Luke 9:51–56 and the African context is motivated by personal goals. Although the same themes can be found among the two poles, the emphasis differs. There was resistance by the transiting community – the Samaritans – to avoid and prevent Jesus and his disciples from having extended missions that would contribute to the dominance of biblical Jews over the Samaritans. The African migrants did not experience such resistance from Europe and the USA to set up Churches, although that was not their main mission.

Conclusion

Luke 9:51–56 demonstrates a rhetorical relationship between mission, migration, and nationalism. Mission is critical to the movement (migration) of Jesus from one location to the other. The Samaritans resisted Jesus and his disciples' access through Samaria, it was accepted by Jesus. The disciples attempted to force the mission and migration of Jesus against the nationalist notions of the Samaritans. Migration by many Africans is motivated by economic aspirations. The issue of mission and nationalism are byproducts of migration. It makes Luke 9:51–56 a relevant narrative for African migrants in the diaspora and Africans who are harbouring migration aspirations. It expresses an Ecclesiastical-Functional concept

of the interpretation of Luke 9:51–56, which demonstrates the religiousness of many Africans who take their religious practice anywhere they find themselves.

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Author's contribution

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Ethical considerations

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