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A homiletical-liturgical perspective on memoricide alluding to variegated re-membered memories

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This article seeks to provide homiletical-liturgical perspectives on memoricide, alluding to the graveness of variegated remembered memories. In light of current wars, the research highlights the need for constructive remembrance, especially when memoricide – the destructive process of erasing or killing someone's memories – is evident. Two examples of memoricide are explored: the destruction of schools, religious buildings and heritage sites, and the phenomenon of land expropriation within the South African context. Memory is deeply intertwined with identity, sense-making and meaning-making endeavours. Moreover, the vivid memory of place and home – where memories are created – and the experience of displacement demand careful reflection. The research follows three phases, beginning with descriptive perspectives on memoricide and land expropriation. The argument progresses to ethical considerations, culminating in normative perspectives that underscore the critical role of place in shaping people's memories. Drawing from Psalms 137–145, the concept of remembered space is explored, before concluding with strategic perspectives from a homiletical-liturgical viewpoint. It is my firm belief that faith communities have a vital role in addressing the injustices caused by memoricide, and their voice must not be silenced.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The article concludes with a call to make Heritage Day an essential occasion for communicative remembrance, engaging in a present-past mode. The interplay between inheritance and heritage should hold a central place in these reflections.

Keywords: memoricide; memories; remembrance; expropriation of land and heritage; remembered-memories.

Introduction

As a central research nucleus, the study of memories underscores their profound role in shaping our identity and the meaning of life. They are not merely a repository or depository; instead, they anchor the essence of our identity, also referred to as people's *coherence*. Memories resulting from this cognisance are determinative in our lives, aiding in self-identification and significance because they represent our connection with ourselves. Remembering memories profoundly links us to our past, helping us find sense and meaning in our lives. Consequently, people possess a deep-seated need or desire to share precious memories with others – a process known as 'communicative remembrance': the act of sharing and preserving memories through communication. This includes the communication of painful memories.[1] Memories enable individuals to navigate their current circumstances.

Within the field of Practical Theology, two essential concepts emerge: 'sensemaking' and 'meaning-making'. *Sensemaking*[2] refers to becoming aware of one's situation and understanding it, especially when making difficult decisions. Closely linked to this is *meaning-making* [*Sinndeutung*], which involves interpreting prior knowledge to derive significance from challenging circumstances. In moments of sharing, people inevitably reorganise their memories, reconstructing them in conversation with others. Memory involves participation in what is remembered. Ultimately, this process helps individuals recognise themselves and their place within the broader picture of life.

1.Niebuhr, according to Cone (1975:22), refers to the healing effect of remembrance and communication where stories are functional in building communities. Remembrance offers at least three possibilities. It makes the past understandable, urges people to remember what happened, and makes it possible to adopt and own the stories of others as our own. However, while nostalgia offers people the opportunity to experience meaningfulness based on their memories, the downside of what is called nostalgia-depression is also a reality meaning that happy memories could endanger people's views on present circumstances.

2.Sense-making denotes the ability of people to understand their experiences and thoughts. Meaning-making, on the other hand, touches on people's propensity and motivation to provide a desirable context to experiences, which cultivate hope and purpose in life (Mason 2016:206).

This article explores the profound interplay between the dehumanising effects of *memoricide* – a violation of personal history, identity and remembrance – that urgently demands our In order. Through the act of remembering, the connection between past, present and future is strengthened by situating the present narrative within the broader context of one's memories (Pentzold, Lohmeier & Birkner 2023:6). The need to communicate and share remembrances brings memories to life. Additionally, it provides a crucial space for exchanging memories in a present-past mode. Consequently, communicative remembrance is deeply tied to the everyday practice of sharing both individual and collective memories. It also enhances the practice of bringing people together and provides scaffolding for vivid remembrances[3] to paint a coherent picture in years to come. Remembering remains a transformative and reconnecting act that actively reunites one's past, present and future in a multifaceted way. The Greek word ποικίλος, which conveys the idea of being variegated and manifold, comes to mind. Remembrance involves diverse memories that shape our understanding of identity. Scholars refer to a reminiscence bump, which denotes the phenomenon of people readily recalling memories during a specific developmental period in which they have defined and explored their identity. To detach someone's memories via the harmful process of *memoricide*[4] is an undignified conduct towards them, a violation of their personal history and identity. Displacement because of war and land expropriation are two contemporary examples of *memoricide* that come to mind, posing intriguing practical theological questions.

The current manifestation of wars and land expropriation, also known as *land reform,* is a contentious issue in South Africa. The apartheid government initially expropriated land through the *1913 Land Act*, which stripped black people of the land necessary for agricultural activities, offering no compensation in return. After 1994, the democratic government implemented various programmes to address these historical injustices. Among these efforts, the South African government introduced the *Land Expropriation Without Compensation (LEWC) policy* to rectify past wrongs. However, the deep connection between people's memories and their land adds complexity to this process. The land carries diverse and profound meanings, evoking unique memories and emotions for each individual. Bastos and Batton (2023:4) highlight the injustice of *memoricide,* explaining that the apartheid legislation classified residents into racial groups and established conventions for the separation (segregation) of neighbourhoods, enforced removals and unbending rule of populace movements. In 1970, black people were prevented from their citizenship status and coerced into becoming citizens of one of 10 tribal homelands with authority over the state of affairs, four of which became independent states. Vivid memories of displacement remain evident in people's minds.

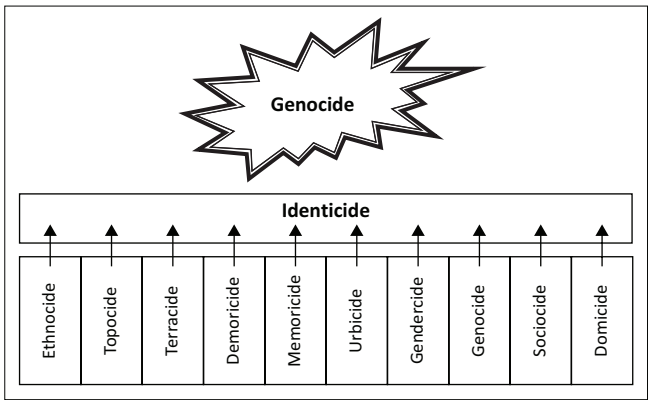
The two examples mentioned above profoundly impact people's lives, as memories attach themselves to existing ones, highlighting their connectivity with relevant aspects in an individual's life. Consequently, the picture prompts me to critically question whether South Africans born after 1994 can truly imagine life as a black person in a racially segregated area during apartheid. Although the memories of the injustices of the apartheid regime remain vivid in people's minds because of the sharing of stories with younger generations, many blame past injustices – such as land ownership and racial inequality regarding land – as grassroots problems. In political marches, a chant related to the song '*Kill the Boer*' powerfully mobilises support against the stark memories of apartheid and discrimination.

Hartley (1972:21) intriguingly reminds us of the perplexing nature of remembrance in post-apartheid South Africa, describing the past as a metaphorical foreign country where people did things differently. This idea leads Lowenthal (2015:3–4), for example, to acknowledge that the past can never be fully remembered or understood by those who live in present times because they do not belong to it. The authors mentioned above help us understand the beauty of memory and the underlying complexity of one's memories simultaneously, particularly when one cannot recognise oneself in the gallery of memories. South Africans have a heritage and celebrate Heritage Day once a year. This kaleidoscope of memories provides multiple dimensions to the so-called 'foreign land' and the meaningfulness of the present. While politicians are purposefully utilising the opportunity to remind citizens of past atrocities, what constructive actions are faith communities taking to remind people of their heritage?

Land expropriation, both before and after apartheid, can be likened to a prickly pear – laden with thorns and shrouded in dark clouds, each thorn representing the painful memories attached to this history. Figure 1 offers a schematic representation that illustrates the contagious and pervasive nature of *memoricide,* deepening the darkness of these metaphorical clouds. The memories of those who have experienced a shared event, whether pre-apartheid or post-apartheid, are neither identical nor precise representations of facts. Memory evokes different associations and feelings for everyone, making remembrance [*anamnesis*] within a homiletical-liturgical approach essential. Gress (2019:2), drawing on the layered nature of memories, compares the dynamic interplay between one's home and memories to a theatre where the grand dramas of daily life unfold. This analogy aligns with the 'place attachment' concept, which describes an individual's multidimensional emotional bond with a physical space. Such attachment profoundly shapes a person's perception of and relationship with their environment.

3.Remembrance denotes taking something from the past and bringing it into the present. It is making the past reality a present reality, giving it meaning for the present. *Anamnesis* as integral part of a homiletical-liturgical praxeology deals with the past as an integral part of living in the present and imagining the future.

4.Harming people's memory boils down to burdening or taxing the future because of meaningfulness and memory's reciprocity. Consequently, people will struggle to imagine a future filled with hope. *Memoricide* (killing of one's memories) deprives a group of sense-making within the present.



Source: Meharg, S.J., 2006, 'Identicide and cultural cannibalism: Warfare's appetite for symbolic place', *Peace Research Journal* 33(3), 89–98

FIGURE 1: Process of genocide.

Bachelard (1958:22), over six decades ago, delved deeply into the poetics of place from a philosophical perspective, emphasising the significance of home as a sanctuary. Building on this foundation, this article seeks to contribute to the understanding of *memoricide*, a phenomenon encapsulated by the German term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*,[5] which denotes the struggle to come to terms with the past and its associated memories. Grmek (2019) is renowned for introducing the concept of *memoricide* in 1992, defining it as the deliberate erasure or 'killing' of memory, which can manifest through the destruction of memorial sites, world heritage locations or even in the disruption of everyday practices. Porteous and Smith (2001:21) contribute to this discussion by drawing a parallel with homicide, which they describe as occurring in two forms: the deliberate and extreme destruction of the home and the everyday destruction of the home.

Meharg (2006:13) offers a significant schematic representation of *genocide* and *identicide* with a ripple effect.

The representation discussed in Figure 1 highlights the complexity of the numerous factors shaping an individual's identity, ultimately offering fertile ground for the perpetration of genocide. In this context, it is crucial to recognise that *memoricide* provides valuable insight into the ongoing debates surrounding the effects of forced displacement caused by wars, violent acts and land expropriation. However, the broader, coherent picture of these phenomena must not be overlooked.

The following research question is posited: How can a homiletical-liturgical praxeology focussed on the graveness of remembrance [*anamnesis*] enable participants in the liturgy to reunite with memories in the context of memoricide? The analysis begins with a *thick description,* as outlined by Browning, to provide a comprehensive account of the current situation. Following this, the explanatory phase seeks to identify the underlying causes of the problem by formulating a hypothesis that can be tested and potentially refined, leading to the development of new theories or approaches (cf. Dingemans 1996). In the *normative phase*, praxis is examined in relation to established norms and traditions, providing a framework for evaluation. Finally, in the *strategic-practical phase*, the fourth step of the investigation, insights from all previous phases are integrated to identify actionable steps and propose strategies to address the areas of tension effectively.

5.The concept denotes the struggle of overcoming the past or work of coping with the past.

Descriptive perspectives on *memoricide*, land expropriation and remembrance

This section will address two essential aspects: war with the prevalence of *memoricide* and land expropriation cultivating *memoricide*. The two elements function in a mutual interplay. Robinson (2003:2) discusses displacement by mentioning people who are forcibly displaced because of developmental projects that provide economic benefits but come at the cost of their homes. The notion of displacement, which always comes at the price of people's memories, is undeniable. Hooper (2019:3) expands on the ripple effect of displacement and its harmful consequences, stating that displacement has become a woefully everyday practice. Thus, we can argue that home is where memories are made, including religious memories (Hooper 2019:3). Accordingly, Lartey (2018:viii–ix) helps us understand that being at home equates to a sacred sense of belonging, and displacement is a holistic assault on dignity, including one's memories.

Descriptive perspectives on the dehumanising essence of *memoricide*

Douglas (1991:294) describes the home as a *memory machine*, emphasising that destroying one's home can instigate a praxis of *mnemonic rupturing*. Similarly, Porteous and Smith (2001:106–107) highlight everyday instances of *memoricide,* where people's sense of belonging is sacrificed in favour of global economic priorities. In such cases, the sacredness of memories is supplanted by economic profitability. The argument favouring the common good of profitability often becomes the driving force behind development projects, tipping the scales in their favour. Goulbourne (2013:29) draws on Voltaire's classic tale of the daughters of Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, where all memories are temporarily erased. This leads to the discovery that the absence of memory plunges every aspect of human life into chaos. When people lose their memories, they lose their sense of purpose, hope and the ability to make meaning for the future. This tale serves as a powerful warning: *memoricide,* the erasure of memories, effectively dispossesses individuals of their ability to make sense of their present circumstances.

In modern warfare, such as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the ongoing war involving Israel, Palestinians (*Hamas*) and Lebanon (*Hezbollah*), deliberate efforts to erase or destroy cultural and collective memories have become increasingly evident. These acts frequently target heritage

sites, schools and other cultural institutions. The deeper objective is to sever ties with one's memories, undermine the enemy's will to resist, and attack their historical and cultural identity. Detaching a nation from its collective memory is a highly effective strategy during warfare, with libraries, churches and schools often becoming primary targets.[6] Civallero (2023:5–7) illuminates the concern, referring to three prime state libraries, including the National Scientific Medical Library of Ukraine, that have been severely vandalised or laid waste. Public libraries have faced even more devastating losses: 47 have been destroyed, 158 have sustained severe damage requiring extensive repairs, and 276 have experienced less significant damage (Ovenden 2023:2). Additionally, during one of Russia's invasions of Ukraine, 494 religious buildings and sacred sites were destroyed or severely damaged, highlighting the systematic assault on cultural and spiritual memory.

Davis (2002:418–420) explains that the desecration and destroying holy places is not new. In the Gospel narrative, Babel captivates Israel, but not before the temple in Jerusalem is in order. Davis notes that sacred sites have historically symbolised national power and piety, making their destruction a strategic means of demoralising the enemy. For years following this event, the Jewish people longed for the temple's restoration, which had served as a visible and sacred symbol of God's presence. A place or home often represents a unique awareness of space, carrying distinct and personal meaning for those connected to it. Gieryn (2000:470) highlights that a place derives its meaning and value from the people who inhabit and work there, emphasising the importance of communal ties and symbolic significance. Halpenny (2010:412) further elaborates that *place attachment* reflects people's emotional and cognitive bonds with a location, which serve as key determinants of meaningfulness in life.

Davis (2002:419) interestingly touches on sanctuaries in ancient times protected by asylum. For ancient peoples, sanctuaries were at the disposal of the gods, and it was prohibited to avow the ownership of the proprietorship of divinities. Therefore, every sanctuary was an inviolable precinct. The asylum status could protect wrongdoers who took refuge in a holy place that granted this facility. However, in the long run, the person had to confront their misdeeds by publicly confessing their wrongdoing, after which the office bearers would seek deliberation to mend them (Davis 2002:420).

In contemporary wars, sacred places can no longer offer safe shelter and refuge to displaced people, as they have become soft targets for the enemy. Knell's (2024:2) disturbing remarks about the military's use of shelters, schools, hospitals and heritage sites for planning operations are alarming because of the potential danger of misusing women and children as human shields. This situation allows us to pinpoint the contemporary experiences of people confronted by war, displacement and *memoricide.*

6.When they have burned books, they will burn human beings (Civallero 2023:6). If murder is a felony, *memoricide* is a form of genocide and cannot be underestimated. People are guardians of memory, and silence about *memoricide* should be avoided.

International Criminal Law, for example, has ruled that sacred places sheltering vulnerable people during war must not be destroyed. Despite international laws prohibiting attacks on non-military targets, a Russian missile strike severely damaged the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, Odesa's most prominent church building and a UNESCO heritage site. This act could best be described as a symbolic attack on cultural identity (memory). Marx (1972:115–116) once ironically referred to war as the driving force of history. It could be described as the oldest manifestation of labour provision, but tragically, it is a provision that harms people and their memories.

Further illumination of the inhuman nature of warfare can be provided by referring to *memoricide*, where schools and education are targeted. On 02 September 2024, it was supposed to be the start of a new academic semester for schools and universities in Gaza, but 600 000 Palestinian students are losing yet another year of education because of Israel's *memoricide* and genocide. Israel has purposefully engaged in the wholesale destruction of the Palestinian education system. In this war, 10490 school and university students have been injured, and more than 500 schoolteachers and university educators have also been killed. A generation of young people has been left without access to education. A staggering 625 000 school-aged children have not had school access for a year. Hundreds of schools, an estimated 85% deliberately targeted in attacks, are also used as shelters. The destruction of schools, homes and memories raises concerns related to human dignity and the attachment to cherished places.

Memoricide is, among other aspects, a purposeful attack on people's memories as a vital constituent of their identity, although its immediate harm is often ignored. It primarily involves destroying physical property, such as religious buildings, schools, houses, graveyards and statues, to erase the history of the former inhabitants. While genocide and the displacement of millions are primary concerns, one wonders why *memoricide*, as an integral part thereof, is often overlooked. Interestingly, as the war in Gaza unfolds with its spillover into Lebanon and Iran, Palestinians, for example, try to counteract *memoricide* by remembering and celebrating 15 May, Nakba Day, an essential date for the Palestinian people. It is the day Palestinians commemorate their history and culture. The response to *memoricide* for Palestinians is encapsulated in vivid remembrances.

Descriptive perspectives on land expropriation, also called land reform

Hlongwane (2019:17–19) debates the issue of land expropriation with or without compensation, anchoring it to three vital spheres: the economy, politics and the legal environment. Because of the complexity of the matter, only 10% of land has been redistributed since the end of apartheid, primarily because of constraints on government funds to compensate farmers. The history of land expropriation dates

back to 1652, with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town. For example, the Khoi people were forcibly expelled between the Salt and Liesbeek rivers from their land. On 19 June 1913, the *Natives Land Act 27* was established, which prevented African people from owning land. Voices favouring restorative justice are notably strong in South Africa and should undoubtedly be an integral part of the agenda. However, I plead to consider the cost of this project, which is rooted in people's memories and ethical conduct, as these should guide decision-making. *Section 25 of the South African Constitution* (Republic of South Africa 1996:1243) states that land expropriation[7] is permissible when it serves public interest and purpose but must come with compensation.

Bezerra (2018:4) elucidates the highly emotional issue of land claims in South Africa. Ninety-five per cent of all land claims have been settled within this category. Bezerra (2018:5) discusses the complex issues surrounding land claims, specifically that land redistribution is necessary to address racial inequality in land ownership and land redress in areas deemed critical by law for conservation. According to a fixed plan, groups of people across the country were dislodged to establish protected areas. As a focal point in current discussions, ecology has become an essential interlocutor in the challenging land reform debate. Decisions regarding homelands and land for conservation reverberate in people's minds, raising critical questions, and the ripple effect cannot be underestimated. However, settling land claims in protected areas diverged from other land claims because the law stipulates that the land declared as a conservation region must maintain that status (Bezerra 2018:5–6).

It is essential to reflect on the influence of memories of land, which hold cultural and historical significance for people. Scholars have discussed concepts such as *place identity* and *place dependence*, which relate to an individual's opportunities, the functional quality of a place and livelihoods (Fay & James 2009:52). If the 1991 White Paper, according to Bekker, Cross and Evans (1991:43), with its objectives for land reform, is taken as a starting point, the purpose of land reform can be described in a fourfold manner, namely to:

- Reform apartheid's injustices.
- Advance and foster reconciliation and solidarity.
- Cultivate economic growth.
- Alleviate poverty.

Based on the four critical aspects, words such as *injustice, reconciliation, economic growth* and *welfare* circulate. These four nouns are intertwined with four verbs: *redressing, fostering, underpinning,* and *improving*, which pose significant challenges because of the manifestation of people's memories. While all four concepts mentioned are crucial, I am still surprised that there is no mention of anthropological vantage points and the stability of one's memory. All citizens in South Africa have memories that serve as the umbilical cord to place and land. One begins to wonder at what stage land expropriation equates to *memoricide*. Overhearing this question, I started reflecting on faith communities that are alarmingly silent when it comes to preaching and witnessing these concepts of justice and reconciliation. My concern lies in the legal, economic and political answers being provided; however, where are the practical theological perspectives in deliberating on these matters?

I agree with Alexander (2014:875) that wrongful land expropriation can never be justified or misused in a never-ending blame game. However, the current situation in South Africa has revealed a kaleidoscope of complex ethical issues related to property rights, the fundamental right of private land ownership and how to engage in land restitution. How can the land be returned to people with vivid memories of it without a title deed and/or formal registration process provided to new owners? Although politicians will eventually make the decisions, one can only hope that valuable theological perspectives and the dignity and worthiness of people's memories are incorporated. The question, however, is whether justice has been served by returning the land to its original owners as a mere transaction, without them becoming the new legal owners through a transfer deed. This leaves us with the challenging moral question of whether a wrong can be made right by another wrong, especially in the context of property rights.

Until now, this section has indicated that land expropriation evokes painful memories of injustices within the South African context. An ethical conundrum unfolds, bringing concepts such as *inequality, justice, reconciliation,* and *what is right* to the fore. One thing stands out: South African history testifies to a political dispensation before 1994 guilty of *memoricide.* Action must be taken to resolve this injustice, but how and to which ethical guidelines should we adhere to avoid further *memoricide*? Halilovich and Fejzić (2019:88) remark that rectifying injustices and expropriation can temporarily address pressing political dilemmas, but can justice ever be afforded to someone's memories without creating new ones? Participants in the liturgy engage weekly in divulgences being made in liturgical enactment. Diverse experiences of memories related to land and land expropriation are vivid in people's minds. This is where a homiletical-liturgical praxeology focussed on heritage in post-apartheid South Africa, grounded in sound morality, could make a meaningful contribution.

Systematic perspectives from the angle of ethics and normative views on land

Earlier sections touched on the sensitive issue of *memoricide.* This article is interested in people's memories of place and land as the focal point. Therefore, it is not concerned with

7.On 19 March 2024, South Africa's National Council of Provinces passed the much-discussed *Land Expropriation Bill*. This Bill sets the notion of public purpose of public interest. On 23 January 2025, President Ramaphosa signed the *Expropriation Bill* and critical questions were raised about whether this Bill aims to amend section 25 of the Constitution of South Africa, which determines the circumstances for nil compensation (Mabasa & Karberg 2025:2).

right or wrong and even political arguments related to a more complex phenomenon. Thus, this article is concerned with an argument pertaining to people's memories that should be included in a discussion on a topic like this. It was posited that the desire to erase one's memories could be prevalent in violent attacks on church buildings, schools and heritage sites. The other side of this issue is also significant, as it can become part of everyday practices and government decisions, profoundly influencing citizens' lives. The example of land expropriation was elucidated by highlighting the *memoricide* associated with it. Now, we aim to provide systematic perspectives that scrutinise the underlying dynamics from an ethical and normative standpoint before pinpointing the vital role of remembrance [*anamnesis*].

Ethical perspectives on remembering *memoricide*

Broga (2012:2) boldly acknowledges that all wars are fought twice: the first time on the cognitive and physical battlefields, and the second time in people's memories. Broga's statement raises the question of whether the remembrance of injustices can be ethical at all. This is why the functioning of memories is elucidated primarily to denote that this matter can never be oversimplified. Rieff (2019:59–60) concurs but takes the argument further, indicating that societies and individuals have a moral obligation to remember the past. Rieff (2019:61) is adamant that expecting someone to forget the catastrophe of war and *memoricide* is unethical. Therefore, the problem lies not in an obsession with memories but rather in people not focussing sufficiently on the meaningfulness of those memories. People's memories can be compared to a live theatre, where new productions of the same pieces occur. Hence, our memory is based on the true story of events; however, each time we remember them, they are reconstructed with new information about the events coming to the fore. Most people, however, fear forgetting memories because it evokes a sense of losing control over their lives. This aligns with existing findings about the human drive to make sense of and find meaning in life.

One should acknowledge that collective memory entails how a nation or group remembers the past. However, the beauty of remembrance lies in the fact that people's memories of the same event can differ. Wertsch and Roediger (2008:320–321) connect collective identity and memory because of their inseparability, asserting that collective remembrance denotes the construction of people's fundamental identity. In the face of *memoricide,* people strive to remember and reconstruct memories as a concrete means of resisting injustice. Reilly (2011:465) further explores the tension surrounding the concepts of remembrance and forgetting. Reilly's formulation can be expressed differently: memory serves as the vehicle for a constructive thinking process when it becomes more than just a tale of 'once upon a time'.

The danger remains that when people selectively weave memories into a narrative, these memories can become distorted in their outlook on present reality. People tend to reinforce the current narrative in their minds. Volf (2006:111–112) elaborates on remembrance within a framework of giving and generosity. Metaphorically, Volf reiterates that forgiveness requires individuals to cross the bridge from oneself to the viewpoint of another, implying that people should be seen as forgiven.[8] If memory is an integral part of one's identity, the pain caused by *memoricide* is also a vital element of one's identity (Volf 2006:113). Therefore, the imminent danger of a victim becoming a perpetrator because of harmful memories is concerning.[9] Volf notes that the safeguarding shield of memory can change into a sword of violence, making responsible remembrance imperative. Todorov (2004:23) highlights the moral dilemmas surrounding collective remembrance, emphasising the potential misuse of memory to serve questionable agendas. He critiques the obsession with commemorations, which often generates ambivalent feelings. It is crucial to recognise that *memoricide* inflicts significant tangible and intangible harm on people's heritage of memories. Scholars describe this phenomenon as 'memoricide', which paradoxically fuels a memory boom while intensifying fears of social amnesia. Consequently, people have a deep desire to re-establish pre-war and wartime narratives (memories) (Azzouz 2022:2). Azzouz emphasises that reconstructing memory is important not only in times of war but also for future generations to understand how they arrived at their current situation, to remember and to reflect on valuable lessons. Rigney (2018:370), focussed on a constructive outcome of remembrance, expresses concerns that harmful memories from *memoricide* could hinder a responsible and positive movement towards the future.

Mediation[10] is, however, vital to these dynamics, and according to Heitink (1999:154), it offers a unique opportunity to mediate the gospel to society. Memory becomes collective when it is shared; for it to be shared, it must be mediated. Mediation provides a platform in which listeners' memories are edited, reconstructed and transformed, considering the new dimensions offered by the remembrances of the gospel. Mediation, in turn, refers to both the channels of transmission and the cultural forms used to make sense of events. Ethics could enhance reflection on whether and what we should remember. On the other hand, it could also provide perspectives on people's memories in diverse societies and whether those memories should be further shaped to cultivate discussion on injustice and reconciliation.

8. According to Volf, memory is central to conflict and reconciliation because neither apology nor reconciliation could function without memory. Remembering rightly the wrongs we have committed, or those committed against us, is essential to be reconciled. At the root of every conflict is some kind of memory.

9. See Vosloo (2009:4) on the interplay between memory and freedom and that no freedom without memory can ever be realised. Furthermore, responsible historical hermeneutics is needed to deal with memories. Ricoeur's (2004:21) words remind us that memory is a vital resource for people's past, and the more people remember their memories, the more they can interpret them with an eye on a meaningful life in the present.

10. Narratives, as an intervention or mediation of memory, are implanted in the dialogic telling moment, implying language mediation.

Normative perspectives on remembering what matters most

Ethical conduct towards remembrance

Myin and Van Dijk (2022:280) help us understand that remembrance [*anamnesis*] is inherently directed at the aspects that matter most to people. Above all, human life is cherished; thus, it is essential for people to remember it. The act of remembering strengthens the connections between individuals in society and emphasises the idea that memories of human life hold significant meaning for people. Re-member-ing[11] memories of the past offers a hinge that functions between one's past, present and future dimensions. However, traumatic events in history have left a deep wound in people's memories and collective psyche (Gill 2023:17). When it comes to past atrocities related to warfare, *memoricide* and displacement narratives are presented in books, films and archives, constantly reminding us of the value of memories that should not be forgotten. Suppose remembrance boils down to editing one's memories and bringing aspects that were once present in people's lives back to the here and now. In that case, remembering memories interprets present circumstances and charts a course for future hope. The remembrance of inhumane and undignified expropriation and *memoricide* is never a straightforward activity because of the challenge that it remains an embodied response to what happened. One's most profound feelings, the role of the senses and the sense-making of experiences immediately emerge. Hence, remembrance is a private and communal act, not a public display. Ashley (2004:2) expresses concern about unethical remembrance, particularly when people use memories to speak about God.

Normative perspectives on land and memories

The imperative of *zakhor*, or remembrance, is remarkable in the Old Testament (Cockayne & Salter 2021:275). Childs (1962:51–52) elaborates on this imperative by highlighting the actualisation of memory, particularly for contemporary people who are temporally removed from past events. The memories of *memoricide*, where Israel's ancestors were enslaved in Egypt and suffered under Pharaoh, should focus on the decisive moments in history where God's ongoing acts take centre stage, rather than on the bitterness of the oppression itself. The communal retelling and ritualisation of past events – essentially time-travelling – are crucial in the Old Testament's celebration of festive days, serving as meaningful ways to relate to God and the world. The Gospel's treatment of past, present and future aligns with this concept of time-travelling and underscores the necessity of remembrance.

11.Re-member-ing denotes putting dismembered memories into their unique and appropriate place. Remembering in the context of dismemberment due to *memoricide* denotes a meaningful act of putting things back in their place and offers space for re-imagination. Brueggemann (1995:320) explains that hope is simultaneously tied to the past and pulled into the future. If preaching enables listeners to reimagine, remembering the mighty deeds described in the Gospel is needed. Therefore, remembrance entails bringing memories of the past to the present and making them alive. *It deals with rediscovering a memory as a functional member again.*

Wright (1990:22) boldly states that, from an Old Testament perspective, it is crucial to understand that all land exclusively belongs to God. He appoints human beings as responsible stewards, entrusting them with the duty to care for his property. The idea that humans possess only temporary rights on earth is increasingly evident. Wright (1990:119) specifically elucidates this notion and applies the concept of temporary rights to the reality of poverty in the Old Testament. Leviticus 25:23–28 elucidates the possession of land and confirms the return to the original owner in the Year of the Jubilee (Wright 1990:119). Wright (1990:88–89) debates the symbolic meaning of land as a sacred place of communion with God, where people operate according to the contours of the laws of the covenant. Notably, every 50 years, every Israelite was expected to return to their originally allotted land. This moral lifestyle encompasses a moral compass grounded in security, inclusion, fellowship, blessing, corporate sharing and responsibility.

The memory of the gift of land, along with the responsibilities of stewardship and obedience to God's will, emerges as a central theme among many others. Viewed through the lens of the Old and New Testaments, discernment and concern for vulnerable people stand out as pivotal concepts. Building on this, Kaiser (2012:3–5) notes that God granted dominion to the first human pair, not sovereignty, for God alone is Lord. This dominion, intertwined with creation, is reinforced in the eighth commandment of the Decalogue: 'You shall not steal' (Ex 20:15), which underscores an understanding of property rights.

Kaiser (2012:7) highlights the injustice of land theft, drawing attention to the narrative in I Kings 21:25 about Naboth's vineyard. In this account, the prophet Elijah confronts King Ahab and Queen Jezebel for their unjust treatment of Naboth, a poor landowner. Naboth steadfastly appealed to the Lord, who forbade him from relinquishing the inheritance of his ancestors. This resistance ultimately led to his execution.

The book of Deuteronomy serves as a reminder of God's mighty deeds, stirring the people's memories to recognise that he does not forget them (Du Toit 2002:59–64). This call to remembrance encourages them to draw strength from the past for present circumstances and hope for the future. They are urged to recall how God redeemed them from slavery in Egypt, where they had no land or property and how he guided them through the wilderness, despite their persistent disobedience that kept them from entering the promised land.

Upon entering the promised land, God reminded his people to keep him at the forefront of their memory throughout their journey and daily lives. The Lord was to be remembered in all aspects of life, with his mighty deeds forming the foundation for their stewardship of the land and everyday activities.

Butler (2019:5) concludes that when people in the Gospel remember, it leads to worship and awe. Each memory is, after all, a powerful reminder of the sacredness and greatness of the living God's presence surrounding that memory.

This allows Kok (2020:64) to discuss the so-called remembered space in Psalms 137–145. The Psalms utilise memory to reconstruct space and experiences during exile. Van Grol (2010:332) makes an interesting comment: Psalm 137 introduces the vivid memory hall of the exiles, while Psalms 138–145 represent the response of exiles enduring these strenuous circumstances. Viewed from a liturgical perspective, it all begins with the remembrance of the hostile experience of exile, which seeks to erase Israel's memory. Collective remembrance emerges powerfully in Psalm 138, with a vivid recollection of God's steadfastness and kindness (Kok 2020:67). The thought pattern in the collective memory, where one memory builds on another, is remarkable, and the shift towards cognisance of God's presence is profound. The remembered space enables the Psalmist to experience hope and imagination in exile, allowing the Psalmist to liturgically confess faith in the living God as King above all things. In Psalm 143:5, the Psalmist reflects that the remembrance of past days is evident, enabling him to meditate on the Almighty's works and muse on the works of his hands.

Bowman (2019:93) observes that remembered space is an influential realm where collective memories function in a transformative manner amid arduous circumstances. Craven (2009:24) is convinced that every psalm in the book of Psalms relies on memory regarding God, the self or the community. Significantly, the Psalmist is empowered to praise God's name in Psalms 144–145. Editing the Psalmist's memories evokes the vividness of the liturgical awareness of the living presence of God and opens a window to praise. Hence, remembered space is a transforming space in which someone's memory provides a foundation for the present and upon which to build the future (Matthews 2013:74).

Homiletical-liturgical perspectives on *memoricide* allude to the graveness of variegated re-membered memories

Thus far, this article has examined the diverse nature of memories and the integral role that places, homes and land play in their creation. Because memories are never exact representations of past events, the act of remembering or reconnecting with them becomes essential. Faith communities, in particular, are dedicated to weekly liturgical practices where remembrance [*anamnesis*] plays a central and transformative role.

Homiletical-liturgical perspectives on remembrance as an antidote to silence and forgetfulness

The concept of *feasts and meals* is deeply intertwined with remembrance in the Gospel (Cockayne & Salter 2021:275). By grounding present circumstances in the framework of memories, a vital act of connectivity is established. Through the re-telling and ritualisation of past events – such as the Seder meal, where bitter herbs were tasted – the purpose was to actively participate in the bitterness of past experiences while simultaneously reflecting on and rediscovering God's mighty deeds amid challenging circumstances. In this sense of the word, remembrance [*anamnesis*] is influential in reshaping people's collective memories, especially considering the aforementioned thoughts. In this vein, Errera and Dellulis (2023:53–54) address the dilemma of the politics of remembering and forgetting in relation to public memory. Their research raises the critical question of what should be remembered as vital aspects of a nation's history (collective memory).

Kourdis (2018:188) asserts that public memory should be understood semiotically, as it relies on signs (linguistic or visual) situated within a shared sign system for meaning-making. If this is the case, the meaning-making system is deeply embedded in culture and will remain an essential anchor for people. This inevitably leads us to a homiletical-liturgical praxeology in which remembrance [*anamnesis*] takes people's memories of culture and liturgy seriously.

Omolo (2022:6) explains that a homiletical-liturgical praxeology becomes meaningful when it acknowledges the (ever-changing) contexts of its participants. Therefore, I fully agree with Stott (1999:14–15) that it is not the primary task of faith communities to take over the role of governments in terms of politics or to become uncritical of cultural practices; this is an issue that deserves attention, especially given people's suffering and the harmful consequences of *memoricide.* We should be reminded that politics is never solely the domain of politicians; it pertains to citizens' lives and their ability to coexist. It is integral to a practical theological concern for a liveable life.

Pakpahan (2012:13–14) rightfully posits that liturgy is a response to God's salvific acts, with all liturgical elements contributing to this idea. When people remember, they provide meaning to those memories. However, in connection with this poignant salvific message, people's memories are edited (Pakpahan 2012:16). Liturgical enactment enables people to renew the memory of generations and to actualise God's mighty acts in the present; without participation, hope is endangered. It boils down to the realisation that when participants in the liturgy remember, they connect the significance of memories, reliving and re-experiencing their power. Participants in the liturgy have vivid memories of the past, including painful ones of *memoricide*.

Moore-Keish (2008:27) makes a convincing statement that remembrance [*anamnesis*] focusses on meaningful participation in everyday life and reunites people mentally, emotionally and volitionally with God, as proclaimed in the sermon and celebrated in the liturgy. Phiri (2020:102) concurs, stating that silence in addressing the injustices of *memoricide* hurts more than one could express. Remembrance [*anamnesis*] serves as a stern reminder that no one can bury another's memories or remain silent about the injustices attached to

them. To put it differently, participants celebrate their liturgy for it to transform their lives. In this sense, when people engage in their liturgy, their attitudes – including those regarding painful memories of the past – are renewed and altered, as the starting point is not to fuel irresponsible thoughts but to foster an outlook on life determined by the salvific act of the living and resurrected Christ. Hence, Gruchow (1995:6) aptly states that the *presentiness* of one's memories of salvific acts enables one to imagine an imaginable future.

A one-sided preaching on forgiveness and reconciliation, without grounding it in the injustices of daily life and reflecting on how it should be established, could create a praxis where valuable concepts become 'zombie-category' words with limited meaning. Liturgy in worship is planned, repeated and filled with symbolic meaning. Therefore, in remembering the essence of its vivid memories, much can be done to heal painful memories by ensuring that proclaimed sermons and liturgical elements addressing forgiveness, reconciliation and justice are applied to current focal points, without falling into a one-sided praxis of finger-pointing and playing a blame game. Participants in the liturgy should be challenged to renew their thoughts and outlook on life. Geldhof's (2020:7–11) valuable words remind us that a penetrative liturgy encompasses two essential concepts: permeation and fermentation. These words emphasise that a mutual interplay is evident, meaning that liturgy should be within people, and people should be wholeheartedly engaged in their liturgy.

Remembrance of Heritage Day in a homiletical-liturgical praxeology

In South Africa, Heritage Day is celebrated annually on 24 September. However, it has unfortunately been rebranded by some as 'National Braai Day'. I concur that Heritage Day should not be reduced to a superficial, nostalgic reflection on individual memories. From a homiletical-liturgical perspective, celebrating heritage should empower participants in the liturgy to honour the present while imagining and shaping the future. A homiletical-liturgical praxeology needs to utilise all liturgical elements to make participants aware of the love and privilege of receiving land and enable participants to edit their memories of land through the lens of remembrance.

This task is particularly complex in a nation with 11 official languages and a rich tapestry of ethnic groups. It raises the question of which cultural heritage should be celebrated on this day. In light of the harmful consequences of *memoricide*, as discussed in this article, it becomes evident that celebrating one group's heritage could inadvertently evoke memories of trauma for another.

A cultural tapestry filled with memories unfolds and reminds people of history. In this context, a homiletical-liturgical praxeology focussed on the unique interplay between inheritance and heritage, alongside the gift of land and one's identity, could offer new impetus to those struggling with painful memories. If God provides the inheritance of land, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice, and it becomes our heritage, it should indeed be passed on to people and generations. The Psalmist in Psalm 16:6 liturgically praises the Almighty, stating that he has been assigned a portion and cup and that all boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places. The Psalmist concludes that he has received a delightful inheritance (Fremont 2015:2).

The kaleidoscope of remembrances regarding the contours of inheritances and the essence of our heritage should hold a prominent place in a praxeology that acknowledges their richness and variegated nature. In our remembrances of participating in the liturgy, we should be reminded of the title deed of land inheritance according to Joshua 1:2–3, which states that every place that the sole of your foot treads upon is given to us. One of the most potent ways to tread carefully is to pass on our heritage through communal remembrance in the liturgy. Liturgy, as a significant continuous act, embodies the proverbial 'walk the walk', and it is unimaginable that a liturgical outlook on life could ignore the importance of being a moral compass (cf. Stott 1999:172). A homiletical-liturgical praxeology rejects the injustice of *memoricide* and embraces one's identity and memories by employing vivid remembrances. In conclusion, I urge that beautiful grammar in a homiletical-liturgical praxeology should become integral to everyday liturgy.

Conclusion

This article addresses the concepts of memory and remembrance [*anamnesis*]. It explored the idea that remembrance is vital for editing one's memories. In light of the prevalence of *memoricide* during the war and the expropriation of land, the harmful attack on one's memories cannot be ignored. A homiletical-liturgical praxeology could offer dynamic possibilities for helping people remember the salvific acts of the Gospel and, consequently, enable participants in the liturgy to connect these acts with their painful memories. Worship, as a remembered space, could allow participants to engage in communicative remembrances, where a willingness to listen to others' sharing of memories becomes part of the everyday liturgy. Listening, therefore, becomes an attitude rather than a responsibility. It paves the way for meaningful relationships to develop. Painful memories should be shared within a constructive framework of remembrance, where inheritance, heritage and land are valued with a moral compass.

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Author's contribution

F.P.K. is the sole author of this research article.

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