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Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Pakpahan, Binsar Jonathan
Publisher	Globethics.net;World Council of Churches
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Download date	2026-11-13 16:53:31
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Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4260161

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Honour the Covenant! Reimagining the Covenantal Relation in the Implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in an Honour-Based Society

Binsar Jonathan Pakpahan

Introduction

This chapter will argue the need to see how the honour-based society views a covenant differently from a more individualistic society. The implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has hit stumbling blocks, especially in Asian society, which is based on a collective morality. Seeing the important role of religion and the collective element in Asian culture, the re-examination of the theological understanding of covenant will give us insights into implementation. The question is: Can theology offer a new way of looking at the covenant, especially in the context of collective society?

This chapter will describe the collective factor of covenantal stewardship in covenantal theology that offers a new way of looking at how we could view human dignity in a collective context. The covenantal language is also recognized in theology. In fact, the idea of a collective society and the implementation of covenants are deeply rooted in theology. This research would propose a collective approach of looking at the theology of covenant from the perspective of honour and shame as a way of implementing the covenants.

Human Rights as a Basis for International Covenants

The international community has always seen the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a basis for international covenants.[1] Due to the history of how it was declared and the content, some would argue that the UDHR is part of the legacy of Christian political theology or the Christian contribution.[2] In later discussions, Catholic and Protestant theologians differ on the basis of human rights. Protestant scholars would generally use it as a universal ethics but have different opinions on looking at the natural law approach. Meanwhile, Catholic theologians consider as the basis the idea that human beings are created in the image of God and, because of this, humans have dignity and rights.[3] Allen has found similarities between Catholic and Protestant theologians in the *imago Dei* as the foundation of human rights and an inclusive approach of what human rights are.[4] Muslim scholars have expressed their suspicion about the alleged Western influence on the UDHR. Some protests also pointed out that only 48 nations agreed on the document, while the implications are said to be universal. After a lengthy process, the UDHR was followed by several binding treaties, and the implementation is measured by the international community.[5] The document also received wider acceptance after the 1968 Tehran Proclamation, which accepted the document.[6] The World Council of Churches followed the 1968 UN Resolution in Tehran and contributed to the 1974 consultation on Human Rights and Christian Responsibility that was presented and discussed at the 1975 assembly in Nairobi.

1. David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Human Rights*, 2nd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2005), 126. Conor Gearty, "Human Rights: The Necessary Quest for Foundations," in *The Meanings of Rights: The Philosophy and Social Theory of Human Rights*, ed. Costas Douzinas and Conor Gearty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 36; Daniel Moeckli and Helen Keller, eds., *The Human Rights Covenants at 50* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

2. Glenn A. Moots, *Politics Reformed: The Anglo-American Legacy of Covenant Theology* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 117. Frederick M. Shepherd, "The Political and Theological Evolution of Christianity and Human Rights," in *Christianity and Human Rights*, ed. Frederick M. Shepherd (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), ix–xxiii.

3. See further discussions on Joseph L. Allen, "Catholic and Protestant Theories of Human Rights," *Religious Studies Review* 14:4 (1988), 347–53.

4. Allen, "Catholic and Protestant Theories."

5. Maya Hertig Randall, "The History of the Covenants Looking Back Half a Century and Beyond," in *The Human Rights Covenants at 50*, ed. Daniel Moeckli and Helen Keller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

6. Teheran International Conference on Human Rights 1968; Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights 1981; Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam 1990.

The UDHR itself is not legally binding, but it inspired several international, regional, and domestic treaties. Two binding covenants based on the UDHR are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which elaborates articles 3 to 22 of the UDHR, and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which elaborates articles 22 to 28 of the UDHR. Both covenants were adopted by the UN in 1966 and enforced in 1976, with some notes from different states. The ICCPR regulates the rights that states cannot take from their citizens, while the ICESCR regulates the rights that the state should provide for their citizens. While separate, the two covenants complement each other. A covenant is understood as synonymous with a treaty and a convention, and the signatories are bound to international law.[7]

This is why the UDHR is still a declaration and is not legally binding, while the treaties following the declarations are considered binding. On the 50th anniversary of the covenants, one of the main challenges for human rights is the monitoring of the covenants.[8] How and who should monitor the implementation?

There are 167 state parties in the ICCPR, and 67 states signed and ratified the covenants. Article 2 of the ICCPR obliged each state that bound itself to the covenant to respect all individuals, regardless of their status (Art. 2.1), and to take the necessary steps according to their own law, adopt the covenant into their laws, and guarantee the implementation of the law.

The Indonesian government ratified the covenants into Law No. 39 Year 1999 on Human Rights and Law No. 36 Year 2000 on Human Rights Court. The two laws are the result of the 1998 Reformation struggle in Indonesia against President Soeharto, who ruled for 32 years with some questions about human rights violations. Both covenants are ratified into Law No. 11 Year 2005 on the Ratification of the ICESCR and Law No. 12 Year 2005 on the Ratification of the ICCPR. However, only a few of the major human rights cases in Indonesia were solved,[9] for reasons such as different interpretations of the Law,[10] lack of coordination in the implementation between the central

7. Government of Canada, "Glossary of Terms—Human Rights," https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/human-rights-glossary.html.
8. Moeckli and Keller, *Human Rights Covenants*, 1.
9. Endri Endri, "Implementasi Pengaturan Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Selat* 2: 1 (2014), 182–87, https://ojs.umrah.ac.id/index.php/selat/article/view/122.
10. Fauzan Khairazi, "Implementasi Demokrasi Dan Hak Asasi Manusia Di Indonesia," *Inovatif: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 8:1 (2015), 72–94.

government and regional governments,[11] or lack of law enforcement.[12] Major human rights cases, such as the Timor Leste, Abepura Papua, or Tanjung Priok cases, that were internationally recognized did not get a satisfactory result. Despite the establishment of the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights and the presence of non-profit organizations that watch over the implementation, such as Amnesty International, ultimately, the willingness and seriousness of law enforcement becomes the major challenge. At the end of 2021, the National Commission on Human Rights reported that only 3 of 15 major cases are being processed in court. They also reported that violations due to agrarian conflicts, intolerance, and freedom of speech, expression, and assembly are the major reported violations in 2021.[13]

Indonesia is not alone in the lack of implementation of the covenants at a domestic level. In his report on the influence of the ICCPR in Asia, Tyagi writes:

> While some of the Asian States played a decisive role in the finalization and adoption of the ICCPR, these States have not played an equally effective role in determining the interpretation of the Covenant. Except for a few experts, not many members of the HRC from Asia have distinguished themselves as active members of the Committee. Similarly, not a single Asian State (except Pakistan) made a statement during the negotiation of the April 2014 Resolution of the UNGA regarding the reform of human rights treaty implementation procedures.[14]

One of the challenges that Tyagi mentions, which is also one of the difficulties in accepting the UDHR in the beginning, is the lack of acknowledgement of the collective moral dimension. Culture and religion play an important

11. Dwi Resti Bangun, "Pembangunan Hukum Nasional: Implementasi Pemenuhan Dan Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia," *Jurnal Cahaya Keadilan* 3:2 (2015), 42, https://ejournal.upbatam.ac.id/index.php/cahayakeadilan/article/view/963.
12. "Penegakan HAM Di Indonesia Belum Mengalami Kemajuan—Komnas HAM," 13 July 2020, https://www.komnasham.go.id/index.php/news/2020/7/13/1480/penegakan-ham-di-indonesia-belum-mengalami-kemajuan.html.
13. "Catatan Akhir Tahun: Menyoroti Penyelesaian Pelanggaran HAM Yang Berat Dan Kasus Papua—Komnas HAM," 28 December 2021, https://www.komnasham.go.id/index.php/news/2021/12/28/2049/catatan-akhir-tahun-menyoroti-penyelesaian-pelanggaranham-yang-berat-dan-kasus-papua.html .
14. Yogesh Tyagi, "Influence of the ICCPR in Asia," in *The Human Rights Covenants at 50*, ed. Daniel Moeckli and Helen Keller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 210.

role in the formation of the collective society and of the collective moral formation in most of Asian society.[15]

Asian Society and the Collective Moralities

In a collective society, such as in Asia, moral responsibility is a collective matter. Isaacs argues that there are two levels of moral responsibility: individual and collective. Collective moral responsibility places the collective as the safeguard of morality; the collective, not only individuals, is also responsible for any breach of the violations.[16] He defines collective moral responsibility as "the blameworthiness and praiseworthiness of collectives for their actions. No differently from human moral agents, collectives warrant praise when they do the right thing, blame when they do the wrong thing."[17] Following the theory of Karl Jaspers, Isaacs argues that the collective moral responsibility understands collective guilt even as individuals within the society do not have guilt feelings.[18]

Building on that argument, I would say that in a collective society, guilt should not be separated from shame. Honour and shame are considered human emotions.

Recent studies have shown that shame and guilt are used differently in different types of society: that is, between the interconnected community and the individualistic society. Most research about the topic has been done in the United States, and as a result, the mainstream models of the relationship between shame and guilt are mostly individualistic. The primary model considers that shame is when a person is evaluated by others, while guilt comes from the self, and is usually followed by retribution. This means that

15. Tyagi, "Influence of the ICCPR in Asia," 185; Adnan Buyung Nasution and A. Patra M. Zen, eds., *Instrumen Internasional Pokok Hak Asasi Manusia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2006), 20; Samantha Besson, "The Influence of the Two Covenants on States Parties Across Regions: Lessons for the Role of Comparative Law and of Regions in International Human Rights Law," in *The Human Rights Covenants at 50*, ed. Daniel Moeckli and Helen Keller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 258.
16. Tracy Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility in Collective Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199782963.001.0001.
17. Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility*, 53; Compare with David T. Risser, definition as "collective moral responsibility refers to arrangements appropriate for addressing widespread harm and wrongdoing associated with the actions of groups." In "Moral Responsibility, Collective," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, https://iep.utm.edu/collective-moral-responsibility/.
18. Isaacs, *Moral Responsibility*, 72.

a moral decision that came from shame is a result of societal pressure, while guilt comes from the self.

In a more collective culture, one sometimes finds that the two emotions are closely connected. This gives us another type of relational insight. In a society where people are more connected to each other, such as in Japan and South Korea, shame is used to point out mistakes rather than guilt.[19] Meanwhile, in individualistic societies such as European and North American, guilt is more effective as a moral regulatory. The reason for this difference is that other people's approval is needed in a shame-based society, while in a guilt-based society the values have already synced internally.[20]

Shame is used more often in a collective society than in an individualistic culture, where guilt is more often instilled in the character education of the children. For instance, if a child makes a mistake, the parents in a shame culture will be more likely to employ shaming techniques than guilt. Another example of moral values based on shame is that when people do make a mistake, they will most likely think about the honour of the family rather than being afraid of being guilty. Shame produces moral measurement for actions.

To be sure, both guilt and shame are present in a culture or person, and sometimes they cross each other's path. In an interconnected society, we cannot always separate guilt from shame. Research on the Chinese vocabulary of shame and guilt has shown that some Chinese terms that mean shame are shown with a "guilt" symbol in writing.[21] Meanwhile, in Western society, shame is considered more negative than guilt because it attacks the personality and not the action. Moral value should come from the self and, according to the standard model, guilt brings the individual moral value.[22] Shame is important in forming moral decisions based on the self, while guilt is important in distinguishing right from wrong based on an agreed-upon set of rules.

19. Ying Wong and Jeanne Tsai, "Cultural Models of Shame and Guilt," in *The Self-Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research*, ed. J. L. Tracy, R. W. Robins, and J. P. Tangney (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 209–23, at 212–14.

20. Young Gweon You, "Shame and Guilt Mechanisms in East Asian Culture," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 51:1 (Spring 1997), 57–58.

21. Wong and Tsai, "Cultural Models," 212–14. This shows that to the Chinese culture, guilt and shame are considered as coming from the same root.

22. Ilona de Hooge, "Moral Emotions in Decision Making: Towards a Better Understanding of Shame and Guilt," PhD diss., Wageningen University, 2008, 72, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/44481884.pdf.

In their research on communal guilt, for example, Nyla R. Branscombe and Berjan Doosje, editors of an international research group on emotion and social interaction, say, "Reminders of group history can have important consequences for present-day emotional experiences."[23] Communal guilt can arise when one group realizes that what they are doing has hurt another group. A person can feel guilty for what their group did to another group in the past even when he or she did not personally do it and was not involved in the act. For example, Germans still feel guilty for what they did to Jews in the concentration camps in the Second World War. As a result, Germany is still paying reparations to the State of Israel. Communal guilt can also be associated with motivation to repair damaged relationships as compensation for past mistakes.

Brian Lickel, Toni Schmader, and Marchelle Barquissau said that people feel guilty only if they perceive that their group has caused actions that are to be blamed, thus requiring an assessment of the causes of an event. [24] However, feelings of guilt do not automatically arise if the actions taken can be justified because of certain situations. For example, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States army did not necessarily make the American people at the time feel guilty toward Japan because they felt justified by the situation at that time. However, the Japanese felt guilty toward other nations for trafficking women as sex slaves during the war.

A person's assessment of the importance of his own group makes him more active in feeling communal feelings. The individual's position in the community also affects their assessment of their own actions.[25] If someone perceives that the group is indeed at fault, this feeling prompts them to make reparations. According to empirical research conducted by Lickel et al., communal feelings of guilt uniquely encourage a group to make reparations for the group they have injured. The group that made the bigger mistake would compensate. Another example is that the group will punish the guilty offender for showing their request to the injured group.

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23. Nyla R. Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje, eds., *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.

24. Brian Lickel, Toni Schmader, and Marchelle Barquissau, "The Evocation of Moral Emotions in Intergroup Contexts: The Distinction between Collective Guilt and Collective Shame," in *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*, ed. Nyla R. Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 38.

25. Lickel, Schmader, and Barquissau, "The Evocation of Moral Emotions," 41.

Meanwhile, feelings of communal shame lead a group to distance itself from the most responsible perpetrators. The group is trying to show that the perpetrator "isn't us." Thus, they want to show that what they are doing is not the true nature of the group. The most extreme act of communal shame is removing the person from the group with a sentence of exile or the death penalty. Therefore, Lickel, Schmader, and Barquissau state that generating communal guilt produces more positive reactions than communal shame.

Their research reflects the culture of Asian communities that connects the concepts of shame and respect. In fact, in defending communal or personal honour, a person may commit an act that is punishable by law but feel that they have done a good deed that brought honour. For example, a person can kill another person to defend the honour of their group or family (honour killing). On the other hand, there are also those who are considered to have brought shame to the family even though they did the right thing, such as someone who refuses to bribe a judge to defend a detained family member.

Honour and Shame in Covenantal Stewardship

Christianity is familiar with the concept of covenant and covenantal stewardship. Honour and shame are used in the concept of covenantal stewardship. However, we do have different ideas of covenant and what it entails.[26] The words used for covenant are תִּיְהְב (Hebrew: *berith*) in the Old Testament; the translation in the Septuagint (LXX) is διαθήκη (Greek: *diatheke*).[27] *Berith* is comparable with the word "binding" (see Ezek. 20:37), as in an oath between two parties, and usually followed by a sacrificial act in a ritual.[28] Scholars such as Gerhard von Rad and Irvin A. Busenitz have argued

26. For further examination of the word "covenant," see E. W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), and Lothar Perlitt, "Covenant," *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 709–11. Webster's Dictionary states that covenant is "a binding and solemn agreement made by two or more individuals or parties to do or keep from doing a specified thing; a compact." The Latin word for "covenant" is *covenire* (to convene, meet together, to assemble for a common purpose).

27. There was a strong debate on whether *diatheke* should be properly translated as "covenant" or "testament," as in the New Testament, for a number of reasons, i.e., *berith* or "covenant" is an agreement that is unchangeable, while "testament" could be changed until the moment when the person involved dies. See Roger T. Beckwith, "The Unity and Diversity of God's Covenants," *Tyndale Bulletin* 38 (1987), 93–118, as he was discussing the approach of Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

28. See Norma H. Thompson, "The Covenant Concept in Judaism and Christianity," *Anglican Theological Review* LXIV/4 (1982), 502–24.

that we will not be able to understand covenant completely from etymological discourse. Instead, we have to understand the covenant from its usage.[29]

In the Old Testament, the first covenant is an agreement between two mutual parties that has a legally binding obligation (such as Jacob and Laban in Gen. 31:53; David and Jonathan in 1 Sam. 18:3-4; Israel and the Canaanites in Ex. 23:32; 34:12, 15; a married couple in Prov. 2:17; nations in trade (1 Kings 20:34). The second use is an agreement between a superior and an inferior that also has binding consequences and is non-negotiable. In the second type, a covenant is usually a promise from the inferior to obey the superior or by the superior to protect the inferior. In the New Testament world, the Hellenist understands *diatheke* as "the last will and testament"[30] which challenges the notion of validity. It seems that the use in the Old Testament represents our use of the covenant, which is a binding agreement between two parties with consequences.

The idea of covenant was an important factor in the forming of social organization or even society in a West Asian context, where Israel first gathered as a particular group.[31] We can also say that covenant is the binding identity of society at the time. Another important factor in the making of the covenant is the role of honour and shame. The notion of covenant is very closely related to the concept of honour and shame.

Olyan thinks that honour and shame play a significant role in the ancient Israel worldview. The inferior will honour the superior and show a kind of hierarchy and social status.[32] Honour can be achieved through good works and success, while it will be lost through defeat and failure, resulting in shame.

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29. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology I* (New York: Harper, 1962), 132; Irvin A. Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10:2 (1999), 173–89.

30. See Walter Bauer, William F Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 182.

31. See Saul M. Olyan, "Honour, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115:2 (1996), 201–18.

32. Olyan describes the hierarchy of honour as follows: "Honour, generally speaking, is owed by an inferior to a superior: by the young to the elderly (Lev 19:32; Isa 3:5; Lam 5:12); by the worshiper to his or her deity (ARM 2.77.14; KTU 1.17 V 20, 30; Exod 20:12//Deut 5:16; Hag 1:8; Mai 1:6); by a child to a parent (Exod 20:12// Deut 5:16; Ezek 22:7 [cf. Prov 19:26]); by the living to the dead (Isa 14:18); by a dishonoured or diminished person to an honoured person (Isa 3:5). Minor deities honour Yhwh (Ps 29:1-2), just as a hierarchy of honour is evident among the gods of other West Asian pantheons (KTU 1.3 III 10; VI 19-20; 1.4 IV 26; VIII 28-29; Enuma elish 4.3)." Olyan, "Honour, Shame," 204.

In such a context, recognition and acknowledgement of honour and shame are very public. Rituals and public happenings are ways of showing, gaining, or losing the public recognition of one's honour and shame.

There are two types of covenantal relation. The first is the covenant made by equals where reciprocal honour binds the parties involved. One will be bound to return the honour that she receives from the other party or to return humiliation when she was humiliated. God is also involved in reciprocal honour with God's people in 1 Samuel 2:30: "But now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honour me I will honour, but those who despise me shall be treated with contempt." However, Olyan also thinks that even in reciprocal honour, the Israel and West Asian context had hierarchical dimensions in the setting of covenant relations. Olyan shows that in 1 Samuel 2:29, God accuses Eli of honouring his sons more than he honoured God. Israel believed that God should be the highest rank in the hierarchy of honour. In the text, we will receive honour from God only by placing God in the highest order of honour.

The second type of relation is where one party is superior to the other. This covenantal model shows that the superior will protect the inferior and the inferior will offer loyalty and obedience. The honour for the superior is in their ability to protect the inferior. When the protector fails, shame will be applied to them, while for the inferior party, they are bound to offer loyalty and obedience. They will gain honour by being loyal and lose it for being unfaithful to the covenant.

Honour and shame are emotions and are relational and communal. The concept has received very little attention from Western theologians, probably because of its communal factor, compared to their more individualistic culture. Surprisingly, as Olyan puts it, scholars have paid little attention to the role of honour and shame in covenantal agreement. Olyan correctly states,

> Just as covenant love and covenant loyalty were reciprocal, even between suzerain and vassal, so was honour in a covenant setting. To love one's treaty partner was to conform to covenant stipulations, as W. L. Moran and others have shown; to honour an ally, suzerain, or vassal was to demonstrate in the public sphere—often in a ritual setting—conformity to covenant. To honour was the public means of demonstrating covenant love, and rites were frequently the setting in which such demonstrations occurred.[33]

33. Olyan, "Honour, Shame," 217.

Departing from the Old Testament worldview, Bruce Malina investigates what honour means for the New Testament context. He thinks that honour is the public recognition of the value of a person to the community.[34] Honour is a positive value as a result of a social construct and only works in relation-based society. Honour can be achieved through several actions that will be done in a ritual or publicly acknowledged, such as faithfulness to the covenant or the group, purity, and cleanliness. Preserving the community's covenant is important to make a person valuable and honourable to the group. On the other hand, the failure to do so will result in shame.

The Noahic Covenant

Covenant is a relational bond between God and the people. One of the covenants that we will use as a foundation of human rights is the Noahic covenant. The Noahic covenant is the place where God made a reminder for God-self to protect God's creation. Allen notices the importance of Noahic covenant to the idea of human dignity.[35] The idea of the covenant is the bond between God, the people, and other beings.[36]

The Noahic Covenant is unique because of its universality. Thompson sees that God made this covenant unconditional (Gen. 9:11), and it is for every living creature (Gen. 9:10). She later states, "It is the universality of the Noachian covenant which allows Jews to perceive of the Gentile in a covenantal relationship with God, even though they are not within the special covenant God made with Israel."[37]

The Noahic covenant takes place in two recorded events in the Bible; the first is Genesis 6:18-19. God regretted the wickedness of human (Gen. 6:5-6) and wanted to "blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen. 6:7). Since Noah and his family are in God's favour, they were asked to build an ark with precise measurements. God tells Noah what is going to happen and then declares God's covenant:

34. Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey, "Honour and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 26.
35. Allen, "Catholic and Protestant Theories of Human Rights," 384; see also John D. Carlson, "Rights versus Right Order: Two Theological Traditions of Justice and Their Implications for Christian Ethics and Pluralistic Polities," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 36:2 (2016), 86–87, https://doi.org/10.1353/sce.2016.0032.
36. Beckwith, "Unity and Diversity," 107.
37. Thompson, "Covenant Concept," 507.

"But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you" (6:18). Not only that, but God also asks Noah to bring two of every kind into the ark, of every living thing. Noah's main task is "to keep them alive with you" (6:19). God set the covenant, initiated by God, and Noah is given a task to do.

And the flood came. Noah and the others who are chosen by God, and by Noah, are in the ark. The ark is not a kind of household; every creature is there for their survival. Noah's part in the covenant is in the preparation and the protection of the species that were entrusted to his care. The situation in the ark reminds us of the situation back in the garden when animals were living side by side. Noah becomes a steward who was asked to take care of other creatures.[38]

God expanded the covenant after the flood. What was a covenant between only God and Noah turned out to be the most extensive of the covenants. In Genesis 9:12-13, God says, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark."

God modified the covenant and promised that God would never again destroy the earth; God then made a rainbow as a sign of the covenant. The modification did not cancel the earlier task. God added new responsibility from God's side and still expect humans to fulfil their part of the covenant, which was to take care of other creations. God gave a sign of the covenant, which is a rainbow, a sign that was taken from nature. Busenitz notes that while other covenants' story demands human action as a sign of the binding agreement (that is, circumcision and the Sabbath), the rainbow is a sign to remind God.[39] And since Noah's family are the only humans left, the extended covenant now covers every living creature on earth. The earth that received God's wrath is also part of the extended covenant. The covenant also lasts forever.

38. See the discussion about what Noah was thinking in Varda Fish, "Noah and the Great Flood: The Metamorphosis of the Biblical Tale," *Judaica Librarianship* 5:1 (Spring 1989–Winter 1990), 74–78, when she lists the questions children ask about what happened in the Noah story. However, we have more questions. What about the ones who are not in the household? Why are the others excluded? Did Noah try to save the people outside of the ark? Did he feel compassion toward others? These are the questions that need to be explored further.

39. Irvin A. Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10:2 (1999), 185.

The Noahic Covenant is the first and the most extensive covenant. It also becomes the foundation of the following covenants. Busenitz says,

> Furthermore, the impact of the Noahic Covenant on other covenants should not be overlooked. The certainty of other covenants is, at times, anchored in the order of nature promised in this first covenant. In Jeremiah 33:20-21, God employs the unfailing regularity of the natural order as a guarantee of the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) and the covenant with Levi (Numbers 17; 25:10-13). Even God's covenant of unfailing kindness and peace toward Israel is hereby assured (Isa. 54:9-10).[40]

We have to consider the importance of the Noahic Covenant for a couple of reasons. First, it is extensive and covers all creatures. While other covenants speak about a particular group of people, or person, or task, the Noahic Covenant is global. God made a timeless covenant to every living thing that comes out of the ark and on earth. Second, humans' task to take care of the creation was never cancelled. Third, it is the basis for other covenants since the absence of a great extinction is the foundation of other covenants.

Honouring the Covenant

The Covenant is implemented in a collective society where honour is considered the highest norm in keeping the covenant. As God's people, Israel views shame as the result of God's rejection and punishment. Jerusalem was often warned by the prophets on their failure to be loyal to God; this resulted in public humiliation,[41] which in turn is God's punishment (see Jer. 23:40; Ezek. 16:36-54; Hos. 2:10; Nah. 3:5).[42] God's rejection is the ultimate shame, inasmuch as even other nations that failed to protect them will also be shamed. Isaiah 30:3-5 describes shame and disgrace as coming "through a people that cannot profit them, that brings neither help nor profit" (Is. 30:5).

40. Busenitz, "Introduction," 186.

41. Public humiliation, in Malina's theory, belongs to female shame since most of the ancient Mediterranean cities were considered female. Jerusalem was shamed because of her fidelity.

42. See Malina and Neyrey, "Honour and Shame," 98–99. See also the discussion of Malina's theory of male and female honour and shame in Zeba Crook, "Honour, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128:3 (2009), 591–611, https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/sblpress/jbl/article-abstract/128/3/591/179825/Honor-Shame-and-Social-Status-Revisited?redirectedFrom=fulltext. Crook concludes that Malina was describing the rule of social status in ancient society but does not necessarily correctly portray what happened in reality. For Crook, in reality, both female and male can contest and acquire honour and shame in ancient societies through their public court of reputation.

Israel will receive its honour back once God returns to them (see Is. 61:7).

Jesus introduces new values about honour and shame to the disciples. First, he teaches that loyalty to him is an honourable virtue (Mark 8:38). Second, in a discussion of who is the greatest of all, Jesus says that "the least among all of you will be the greatest" (Luke 9:48; see also Luke 22:26; Matt. 23:11-12). It seems that honour is now achieved through exemplary servanthood. We can see that Jesus' new idea of honour is later implemented during the passion. Since the Jews understood that honour can be shown by God's blessings and accompaniment, Jesus' public humiliation and death is the clearest example that God is not with him, which made him shameful. However, the resurrection shows God's approval of Jesus' values of honour and shame. What the people saw as humiliation and a sign of God's abandonment became seen as the approval of Jesus' honour precisely through his humiliation.[43]

The first Christian communities are more connected with the idea of honour, which is something they have to gain from the new family of Christian community itself and not from the larger society that has cast them out.[44] The Christian communities did not consider the larger society's valuation as important to their concept of honour. For them, the virtues of Jesus are considered higher than the norms of the society at large. In the later development, Stephen Pattison notes that the Western Christian tradition has focused more on guilt and sin.[45] In the later society, the covenant is now kept with certain laws and regulations.

Closing Remarks

The implementation of regulations that are seen as foreign to the communal-based societies in Asia could be well the reason that Asians still consider defending their honour based on cultural understanding as being more important than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also noted gross human rights violations to defend one's honour in some honour killings. When honour is at stake for a collective society, the UDHR will be difficult to implement.

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43. See Malina and Neyrey, "Honour and Shame," 102–103.

44. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 39–42; David F. Watson, *Honour Among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 147–49.

45. Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 44–45, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/shame/90F8C3189EEDE3A75A4AC4D138C78D67.

After exploring the notion of covenant in theology, in particular the Noahic covenant, and how covenants were formed and kept, we could see that the idea is collective, relational, and even connected with God as the initiator of the covenant. The idea of God is indeed missing in the UDHR and in both of the ICCPR and ICESCR covenants. However, for most Asian nations, where culture and religion are very influential in public life, bringing back the idea of God as the initiator of the covenant could be beneficial. That is why common ground and collaborations are needed to strengthen the idea of the covenant of the UDHR from Asian society's perspectives of honour. How could we raise the idea that it is honourable to implement the UDHR from the understanding of Asian societies instead of bringing it to them with the threat of legal consequences? Further research in the field of honour and shame is needed to understand more about covenantal stewardship.

Covenantal theology gives insight into the implementation of human rights covenants. Instead of only using the language of tribunal, court, or law, theology offers a new concept of a spiritual view of the covenant from a perspective of honour. Honouring the covenant means respecting human dignity because we are in a binding covenant—not only to other humans but to God. Meanwhile, violating the covenant will bring shame and lead to alienation from God's grace and from the community.