

Wherein does human equality consist?

Human equality consists in each human being's being created in the image of God, in the sense of being endowed with the capacity to enter into covenant, i.e., to accept one's having been created in certain relationships wherein one has certain rights and duties and to enter into yet other relationships wherein one also has certain rights and duties. This capacity rests, in turn, upon the capacity to understand, to use concepts and symbols to think and speak, which involves being able to understand oneself and others and having responsibility accordingly. Any being who can participate in any "form of life" and therefore also in the "language game" that is of a piece with it also belongs to the inclusive community of human beings as such and can therefore also play the "transcendental language game" (Apel). In other terms, any being who can belong to any special covenant can also belong—indeed, *must* belong!—to the inclusive covenant constituted with all other such beings as well as with ultimate reality as such.

Although we may be radically unequal to one another in all sorts of other ways, including our contribution to the cause of God's love, we are all equal to one another because or insofar as we are able to enter into covenant—to entrust ourselves to others and to be loyal to their entrustments of themselves to us, in the manifold ways in which this can be done (cf. Allen).

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