

ABSTRACT

In a combination dialogue and exposition format, the presuppositionalism of Cornelius Van Til is subjected to careful scrutiny. In *An Introductory Essay* the author "collaborates with Lucy Van Pelt" to clarify the *metaphysical role* (rather than a presumed epistemological role) that the concept of analogy plays within Van Til's apologetics. The fundamental conclusion of the *Essay* is that Van Til's account of human knowledge is not a theory that explains *the acquisition of knowledge*, but a metaphysical characterization of the *status* of knowledge if one should happen to have it. Since apologetics is fundamentally concerned with *acquiring* knowledge (of God), Van Til's contribution is seen to be irrelevant to the central issues of apologetics. Moreover, in the absence of an account of *how* we come to know what we know, presupposing cannot be introduced to make a *methodological* contribution. Van Til destroys all cognitive links with the world by his doctrine of analogy, thus making any act of presupposing cognitively blind. He thus, in effect, confuses presupposing with learning.

In *The Defeasible Pumpkin*, the (now) middle-aged characters of Charles Schultz's well-known *Peanuts* comic strip are reunited at the behest of Charlie Brown for the purpose of disabusing Linus of his belief in The Great Pumpkin. While Charlie is a Christian, he finds himself in a dilemma, for his method of defending the Christian faith is essentially identical to the method that Linus uses to defend the Pumpkin. They are *both* presuppositionalists (of the Van Tillian sort), and in faithfulness to their common method they find their views equally vindicated. The setting of the dialogue is an all-night vigil in a pumpkin patch.

As with the *Essay*, an especially developed issue in *Pumpkin* is the dubious but vital role that analogical reasoning plays in Van Tillian apologetics. It is argued that although "analogicity" is *required* for presuppositional success, the very logic governing the introduction of "analogicity" into Van Til's system forbids its having any *epistemological* function at all. And this does not bode well for either the defense of Linus's