

A RESPONSE TO TIM HAILE

By Al Diestelkamp

Brother Tim Haile, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, has written a number of articles claiming the local church is the only "organization" authorized to preach the gospel. Recently he e-mailed me a copy of an article under the title, *Is The Home an "Evangelistic Organization"?* I assume that he sent it to a number of brethren as well as posting it on his website.

Brother Haile points to 1 Timothy 3:15 to try to prove his point, that the local church is the only evangelistic organization authorized by God. The problem is, the apostle's statement identifying the church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" is not limited to the local church. There are many local churches. Which local church is *the* pillar and ground of the truth? While a local church is made up of members of the "church of the living God," it is not the sum total of that which is "the pillar and support of the truth."

As a Christian, I am part of "the house of God," which makes me a pillar and support of the truth. The local church of which I am a member is a pillar and support of the truth. If I am part of a family that is made up of Christians, my home is a pillar and support of the truth. If I own a business which is made up of Christians, that business can be a pillar and support of the truth by doing business in a way that brings glory to God.

With much emphasis, Brother Haile says that "the home is a *relationship*; not an *organization!*" I've got news for him — the church is a relationship! Nowhere in the New Testament is the church described as an "organization." I'm not saying that the church is not an organization, just that it's no more an organization than is the home. Any collectivity must have organization. Otherwise there is chaos.

Brother Haile and others who have voiced opposition to "non-church collectives" teaching the truth find themselves in a difficult situation. They cannot have a publication from which to voice their opposition without violating their convictions, unless each one does it as an individual or under the direction of one local congregation. Even brother Haile has some explaining to do about his own website. He goes to great lengths to point out that his website is *his* — as an individual. However, in using articles from other Christians, unless he pays them, he has established a "non-church collective" which receives donations — in the form of work, of which the "laborer is worthy of his wages" (1 Tim. 5:18).

Brother Haile writes much in his article about what he calls absurd and irresponsible arguments made in defense of "non-church organizations" teaching truth. There is nothing more absurd than suggesting that individual Christians are restricted from joining forces to teach truth outside the direction of a local church. That is exactly what Paul, Silvanus and Timothy did under the direction of the Holy Spirit when they joined forces to write two letters proclaiming truth to the church in Thessalonica (see 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

al@thinkonthesethings.com