God is <u>not</u> Finished with the Church (as an institution)

Although God is certainly finished with many local churches which have gone apostate, he is not finished with Biblical Local Churches that seek to honor Him and His Word.

We are commanded to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. When this was written, it was written to Hebrew Christians who assembled in local congregations during the "church age" That same Scripture says to assemble and exhort one another and especially so
"as ye see the day approaching" That "day" is the "day of the Lord" or the rapture. (note: the context of Hebrews chapter 10, makes mention of the Lord's return; and every reference to the phrase "the day" refers to "the day of the Lord") Therefore churches are to exist until that day of the rapture occurs.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is;* but exhorting *one another:* and so much the more, as ye see **<u>the day approaching</u>**.

The Lord's Supper (which is a church ordinance) is to be practiced until the day the Lord Jesus returns, therefore the church must be in existence until Jesus comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death **<u>till he come.</u>**

The Biblical Local church was the Pillar and Ground of the Truth in Paul's day (as he wrote his pastoral epistles of 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus); and The Biblical Local Church IS still the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. God never promises to change his program before Christ's return.

1 Tim. 3:15

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which **<u>IS</u> the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**.

The revelation that Jesus Christ gave to the Church of Thyatira is given to be helpful to churches like the church of Thyatira until the return of Christ. This fact proves that churches like Thyatira will exist until Jesus comes again.
Listen to what Jesus says to the church of Thyatira:

Rev. 2:25-29

But that which ye have *already* hold fast **<u>TILL I COME</u>**. 26And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28And I will give him the morning star. 29He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the **CHURCHES**.

This same principle is found in Christ's revelation to **the Church of Philadelphia**.

Rev. 3:10-11

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11**<u>BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY</u>**: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The Church Age has not ended; The church age will not end until Christ returns.
There is absolutely NO Scriptural Support to prove otherwise.
The work of Discipling "all Nations" through the local church will continue as long as Jesus is with us as we disciple people. And this will continue "unto the end of the world (age)"

Matthew 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, ***<u>EVEN</u>* <u>UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD</u>**. Amen.

Regarding the church that Christ builds; Not all the rulers of Hell will prevail against it. (as long as it remains a Biblical church founded upon the Lord Jesus Christ)

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; **AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.**

Without the Local Church, we do not have a Biblical Context through which to fulfill the following imperatives. Note the following imperatives were given to the church in Rome, Italy:

Our responsibility to "One Another" in the Family of God

Selected Scriptures in Romans

***We need to genuinely take care of each other in the family of God!**

How should we take care of each other?

I. **BE MEMBERS with one another (Rom.12:4-5)**
(A plea to contribute our gift to each other)

II. **HONOR one another (12:10)**
(A plea to show family honor to each other)

III. **LOVE one another (13:8)**
(A plea to pay the dept of love to each other)

IV. **EDIFY one another (14:13,19)**
(A plea to be a stepping stone, not a stumbling block to each other)

V. **BEAR with one another (15:1)**
(A plea for patience toward each other)

VI. **PLEASE one another (15:2-4)**
(A plea for unselfishness toward each other)

VII. **UNITE with one another (15:5-6)**
(A plea for oneness with each other)

VIII. **ACCEPT one another (15:7)**
(A plea for impartiality toward each other)

IX. **ADMONISH one another (15:14)**
(A plea for loving confrontation with each other)

X. **WARMLY GREET one another (16:16)**
(A plea to show loving affection to each other)

The Assembly is vitally important for the following reasons:

1. *The Church is a* **Fellowship Hall** for giving & receiving mutual Encouragement
2. *The Church is a* **Home** for weekly "Family" re-gatherings
3. *The Church is a* **Spiritual Hospital** for the Bruised & Broken
4. *The Church is a* **Worship Center** for Corporate Praise
5. *The Church is an* **Equipping Station** for Preparation for Service (See: Ephesians 4:11-12)
6. *The Church is a* **Lighthouse** for the Lost who need salvation

Two Aspects of the New Testament Church

NOTE: Upon careful study of the word ekklesia in the New Testament, it must be noticed that there are two basic concepts which may be accepted as valid expressions of the "Church." The context of each usage of ekklesia will determine which of the two legitimate concepts is to be understood.

1. The primary sense of the word - "the local church"

A body of Christ; often called the visible church; a microcosm, a smaller body of believers.

Definition:

a. An assembly of immersed believers, meeting together regularly in a particular location to fulfill God's program.

b. Scripture:
Mt. 18:17 - "Tell it unto the church"
Acts 15:41 - "Confirming the churches"
I Cor. 4:17 -"I teach everywhere in every church"
Rom. 16:1 - "A servant of the church"
Rom. 16:5 - "The church that is in their house"
I Thes. 1:1 -"The church of the Thessalonians"
Rev. 2:1 - "The church of Ephesus"

c. NOTE: This is the most ordinary, natural meaning of the word ekklesia in the New Testament. Unless some compelling reason is present to reject this meaning, the first rule of hermeneutics asserts that it ought to be accepted.

d. The local church of the New Testament is composed of those who are:
1) Saved (Acts 2:41, 47)
2) Baptized (Acts 2:41; Matthew 28:19)
3) Assembled (Particularly on the first day of the week - Heb. 10:25; John.20:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor.16:2)
4) United for fellowship and exhortation (Acts 2:42-47; Heb.10:24,25)
5) With Bishops (Pastors) and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13)
6) Fulfilling the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Mt.26:26-f; Acts 2:42; I Cor.11)
7) Carrying out the Great Commission (Making Disciples- Matthew 28:18-20)

2. The generic (general) sense of the word - "the church" (the universal church)

The Body of Christ; often called the invisible church; a macrocosm, a greater body of believers which will be in heaven.

a. Definition: All of the redeemed of this age who will one day be assembled in heaven (hence, "the Church in prospect"). This general (non-specific) use of the word "church" does not refer to an actual assembly, such as "The Church at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2), but to all who are redeemed during this present age (from Pentecost to the Rapture).

b. Scripture:

Mt. 16:18 -	"I will build my Church"
I Cor. 12:28 -	"God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."
I Cor. 15:9 -	"I persecuted the Church of God"
Gal. 1:13 -	"I persecuted the Church of God"
Eph. 1:22, 23-	"Gave Him to be head over all things to the Church"
Eph. 3:10 -	"Be made known through the Church"
Eph. 3:21 -	"Might be glory in the Church"
Eph. 5:23-32 -	"...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her..."
Phil. 3:6 -	"Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church"
Col. 1:18 -	"He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."
Col. 1:24 -	"For His body's sake, which is the Church."
Heb. 12:23 -	"To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn (ones), which are written in Heaven..."

NOTE: The general (generic) usage of the word "Church" is often described as:
"The Church" (Eph. 3:10, 21)
"The Church of God" (I Cor. 15:9)