

## **The Lord, Meets His People**

Each new Lord's Day we come together for worship. What are the characteristics of this gathering together? Nowadays the emphasis is often on fellowship as the key to worship service. Yet a worship service is not primarily an occasion where believers meet; it is even less a meeting of the congregation and the minister of the Word.

It is God meeting with His people; God confronts His people with Himself. This God centered character of worship is seen right at the beginning of each service- in the votum and salutation. Each service is begun with the declaration: "Our help is in the name of Jehovah, the Lord Who created the heavens and the earth". And right after we have confessed our dependency upon God, we receive the greeting of the Lord: "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, through the gracious fellowship of the Holy Spirit". This greeting can only be given within the gathering of God's people. The same is true for the benediction. A minister may dismiss the congregation with the Lord's benediction. He may do this only within the boundaries of the official worship service, the place where God meets with His people. During Canada's Centennial Year I was invited by the government of British Columbia to officiate at the blessing of a park in Vernon, the place where I had my first pastorate. But as a Reformed pastor I was not able to raise my hands in blessing. So I did offer a prayer of intercession.

But doesn't the Bible say that where two or three are gathered together in my Name, the Lord shall be in the midst? (Matthew 18:20)? Can't we worship together as a family, or in the park in the summer? Yes. But the point of Scripture is; On the Lord's Day, the Lord Himself calls His people to meet with Him. The church is instituted by the Lord. And it is our calling to reveal the reality of the Church.