## Visiting the Candidate’s Church

Now that the Committee has agreed to move forward in the process with the candidate, they will make preparations to go hear him preach. The Chairperson will contact the candidate and apprise him of the feelings of the Committee. “Bro. So & So, our Committee felt very positive about our initial meeting and we are prepared to move to the next step. When would be a convenient time for us to come and hear you preach?”

Some committee members have wondered about the wisdom of calling in advance of a visit to hear a candidate preach. What if he pulls out one of his candy sticks? Well, there is, of course, that possibility, but the advantage of calling ahead outweighs going unannounced. For one, you have already established contact with the candidate and you have conducted a meeting that was based on trust. It is important to maintain that level of trust by being above the table throughout the process. Slipping in and slipping out may mitigate the atmosphere of openness that has been set.

As soon as possible after hearing the candidate, the committee members should come back together to debrief. Each member of the Committee should be prepared to share his/her impressions. It is important to hear from each member. The Chairperson has the responsibility of encouraging and engaging each member to express her/his feelings. What did you like; what did you not like? Were there any red flags? Does the Committee feel positive enough about the candidate’s performance in the pulpit to proceed to the next step? All concerns should be resolved before moving to the next step. If that cannot be done, the Chairperson should contact the candidate, thank him for the privilege of being in his worship service, but inform him that the Committee feels God is leading them in a different direction. In that case, the Committee will go back to the second choice and renew the process. If, however, the Committee feels positive about the initial meeting, they are ready to move ahead with this candidate.