Welcoming newcomers to church

This is a very important ministry and can make all the difference to whether newcomers will return to the church.

There are three main approaches to newcomers:

A. The Frosty Approach.

This approach involves the following:

- 1. Thrust a dilapidated Prayer Book into his hands without looking at him.
- 2. Tell him he's sitting in the place old Mrs. Bloggs' family have sat in for decades.
- 3. Walk up the aisle until you can see who he is and then obviously sit elsewhere.
- 4. Ensure that the service is so complex that he can't find the relevant pages. (This is especially good for Non Conformist visitors).
- 5. After the service, if he smiles in your direction, assume he's looking at someone behind you.
- 6. If he walks towards you with his hand out assume he's probably wanting something and turn smartly to engage in a long conversation with your friend.
- 7. When out of the corner of your eye, you see he's gone you can relax and ask if anyone knew who he was.

B. The Lukewarm Approach.

- 1. Give him the books with a pleasant, smiling "Good Morning."
- 2. Make room for him in your pew and smile.
- 3. Watch him fumbling over the pages and wish he'd ask you what the number was.
- 4. After the service smile and say "Cheerio" and shake hands if he offers to.
- 5. Tell the vicar about him at the door and hope he got his name.

C. The Heartwarming Approach

- 1. Give him the books with a pleasant smiling "Good morning" and welcome.
- 2. Make room for him in your pew, smile and greet him and quietly introduce yourself asking his name or go and sit by him giving him the same welcome.
- 3. If he is unfamiliar with the service, without seeming condescending, tell him the page numbers or give him your book.
- 4. After the service, ask him where he lives and memorise his address.
- 5. Talk to him and find out something about him. Give him a magazine and information on the church. Introduce him to the vicar if he has not already been introduced. If possible, invite him to coffee, or go and visit him yourself.

- 6. Then, when he's gone, after giving the vicar his address, go and talk to your friends.
 - At all times we must show people the love of Christ when they join us. St. Paul commands us, "Welcome one
 - another therefore as Christ has welcomed you." (Rom.15:7). I can hardly imagine the Lord showing the frosty or lukewarm approach, can you?

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