



What is a Christian Union?

"...Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations."
Matt 28:19

So, What is a Christian Union?

You may be playing with the idea of starting one from scratch,
You may have been running a Christian Union for years...
but - **what is a 'CU'?! and...**

Why do people want to start a group anyway?

What should a Christian Union focus on?

Who is the CU for?

How can you make it more than just a cozy chat with friends?

How can you glorify God!?

...How long of Christian Unions been going?

Well the name is about a century old but the idea is much older. Over the last two thousand years wherever Christian people, who worked or studied together for a longish period of time, found others in the same place, they started to meet for prayer encouragement and witness. Paul, Priscilla and Aquila were the first to do this. They were tent makers and when they all arrived in Corinth they worked and witnessed together (*Acts 18:1-3*). They got on so well that they all went to Ephesus on mission together (*Acts 18:18*) helping one another for the sake of the gospel when they arrived.



So they were doing just what Jesus wanted his disciples to do:

"..Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.." (Matthew 28 v 19)

But they didn't try and do it on their own. And this is the pattern Jesus set, he called **the 12**, he had a **group** of women who traveled with them, he sent his disciples out **2 by 2**.

So doing it the Jesus way makes sense! *Get together* in College or Sixth Form: *work* together, *pray* together, *laugh* together and *witness* together. Start up a group: a Christian Union.

...But isn't it enough that we have church/youth group?

It's brilliant if you are part of a church family, **but** you can't take church or youth group to College or Sixth Form with you, can you? And in most places there are Christians students from more than one church in town. *Christian Unions are a way of uniting everyone together from different church-backgrounds. They are a great place to encourage each other in faith, prayer and witness - making the most of the joint opportunity you all have to share your faith with other Christians and not yet Christians.*

...What should a Christian Union focus on?

Let's go back to the Matthew verse again for a moment...and look at it in greater detail:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always.” (Matthew 28 v 19)

1) MATURITY:

Jesus is talking **to** His disciples here about what it is to **be** a disciple! A disciple is someone who follows Jesus, but it's much more than that! They love Him and want to obey His teaching (v20). A disciple is someone who lives whole-hearted worship!

So a Christian Union should be a great place for you to build each other up! Being a Christian can be hard work, especially at College. So Christian Union is a time where fellow Christian students can open the word of God and listen to Him speak, encouraging you all and each other to live for Him at College! A great way to do this is to go through Bible Studies, invite in speakers and through His living word – be empowered to live for Jesus and be a disciple at College. Also, praying for each other would be key! It's a great place for you to fellowship with believers and help mature each others faith



2) MISSION:

In v.19 it says, “Go and make disciples “. Jesus’ commission to every Christian is to make disciples. *Whatever* stage of life you are in, *wherever* you are – Jesus’ commission is that you **live** for Him (maturity) and **tell** others about the good news (mission)! So as he has called you to ‘go’ to College at this stage of your life, this is a big area where he wants you to share the good news!

A Christian Union is therefore like a mini-mission team! So, “As you are all going... about College” you will have opportunities to share the awesome message of what Jesus has done with fellow students – and what a great way of doing it... as a team! This may mean that you invite people to CU, put on special events where people can have their questions answered or run things like ‘Christmas Carols’ where students can come and have fun and have an opportunity to hear the Gospel! As you are in your classes and you are trying to live for Jesus and love Him – you may have opportunities to share your own faith with the people around you.

So.. **Maturity** and **Mission**: These are the two main aims of Christian Union’s in Colleges and Universities across the Country. As a Christian Union is growing in their love for Jesus, listening to Him speak through His word – and letting that change their whole lives...they’re then encouraged and empowered to share that awesome news with those that surround them at College. So a CU should be focused on *maturing together* and *sharing together!*

“Christian UNION!?!?”

Unity is very important for the group. Remember this is a ‘Christian Union’ that is focusing on maturing each other and sending each other out to share the good news! That’s Christian’s from different Churches... ***Christians together...yes, but we all have our own ideas and ways of doing things?!?***



“I am happy praying out loud, she doesn’t like to do this and he loves to stand up and pray really, really loudly”

...who is right? No one and every one; it is part of being Christians together to learn to love one another and work hard to stick together for the sake of the gospel.

So can we do everything the way we like? Careful now, that would be anarchy and not very helpful. There are some things that are of ‘first importance’ and it is critical that these are non-negotiable. Paul sums it up like this:

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve.”
(1 Corinthians 15 v 3 – 5)

What is **not** for us to change is the gospel truth about Jesus who came to this earth to do what his name says: ‘to be God’s Saviour’. This is why it is a CHRISTIAN Union – because the focus is on Jesus Christ and not on the other things that make individual churches differ one from another.

A Christian Union then should focus on what its name says it is – ***Bringing people together around the person of Jesus.***

Leaders, therefore – should be Christian believers who want to focus on the things of first importance as understood in the **doctrinal basis**. For more help with leading a Christian Union – check out the resource about ‘Being a Godly CU Leader.’

Who then is a Christian Union for?

We all know the answer to this – it is for everyone who will come along. Whether they have known Jesus for ever or don’t know him at all.

And

How can you make it more than just a cosy chat with friends?

How can you glorify God?

...By focusing on Jesus and helping others to do the same.

Last thing

God has put you and your fellow students together in College or Sixth Form this year. He knows how many or how few there are who love him. He knows what can be accomplished with his help. ‘One life, no rehearsal’ don’t spend years wishing you had given it a go – get started.