

## **UCCF Statement on Women speaking in Christian Unions.**

Many hundreds of churches across the United Kingdom have a policy of not having women preachers. The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) - the umbrella group of the UK's 200+ student Christian Unions (CUs) - has no such policy.

The UCCF employs women and men in leadership positions on an equal basis. They all receive training in public speaking (for all types of meetings) and many of the women on our staff have thrived and developed their speaking gifts in the context of CU work - which might not have been possible in their local churches. UCCF employs women and men to lead the regional teams of staff workers and has women speaking at our regional and national conferences.

The CUs are not churches. They are student led and student run societies, whose aim is to make the authentic Christian message accessible to other students. CUs have a Basis of Faith - which is a 'mere Christianity' - around which Christians from all denominations and flavours can gather. The issues that comprise the Basis of Faith focus on the core truths about God and Jesus, recorded in the Bible, not matters of local church order.

CU members belong to local churches which may have strong views (in various directions) on particular issues - such as women speakers - but students are urged to deal with such matters in a spirit of generosity and realism when coming into the CU.

CUs are at liberty to invite speakers (male or female) who will maintain the unity reflected in the Basis of Faith, but it would be wholly against the spirit and intention of the UCCF Basis of Faith and the advice of UCCF staff if an individual CU devised a policy not to have women speakers for some or all of their events.

The Bristol CU is utterly committed to reflecting the core biblical truth of the fundamental equality of women and men as they resolve this matter. This is a sensitive issue and the recent email exchange has revealed the internal processes of an undergraduate CU trying to think their way clear on a subject that Church denominations around the world have struggled with. For now they need to be given the space to resolve this matter and will issue a statement in due course.

UCCF: The Christian Unions

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