



INSIDE THE EVANGELICALS' LAIR

My experiences with the Christian Union

INTRODUCTION

- ✱ Chris Worfolk
- ✱ Actually, it's Rev Chris Worfolk
- ✱ Great for dinner reservations



IT REALLY IS REV



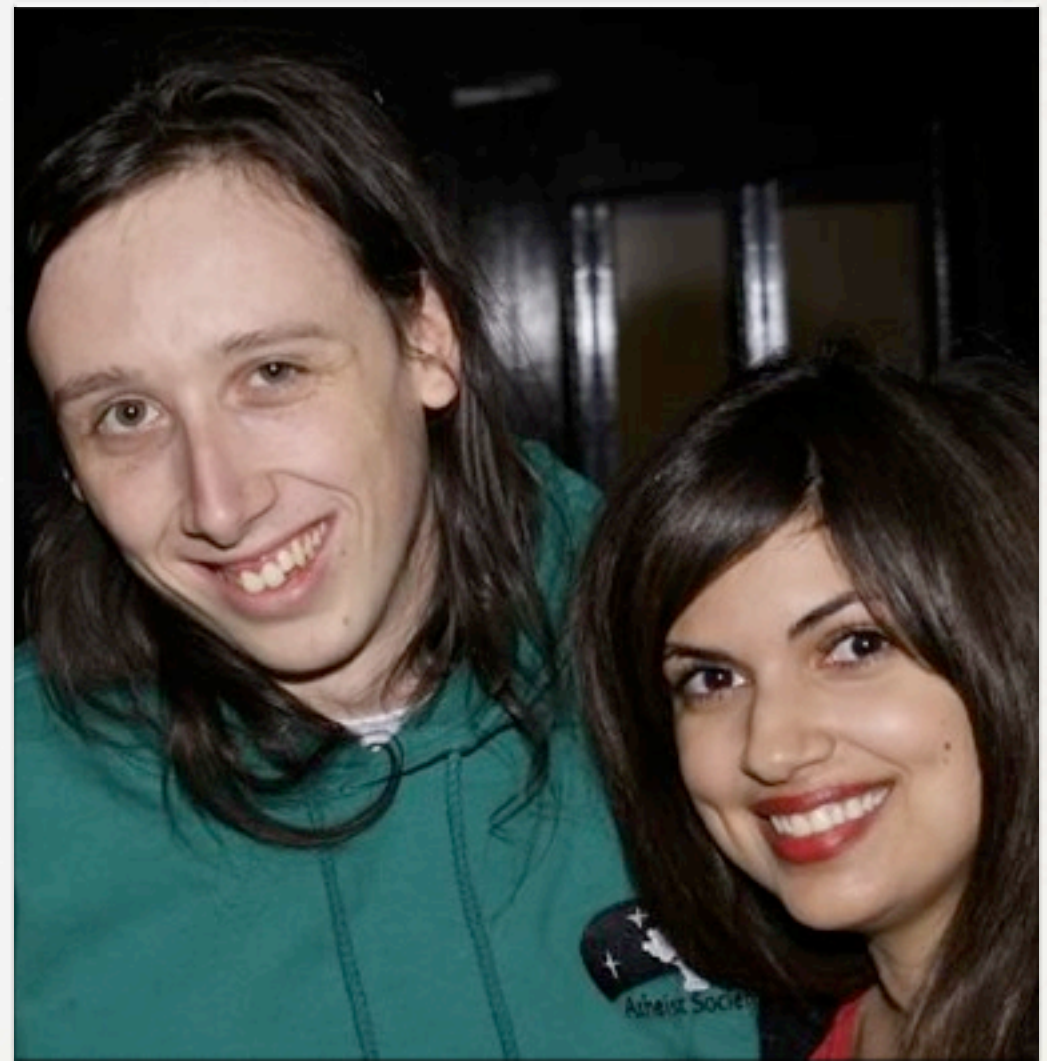
PERSONALITY

- ✿ I think it's really important to be humble enough to admit you are wrong
- ✿ Because ultimately it makes your life easier

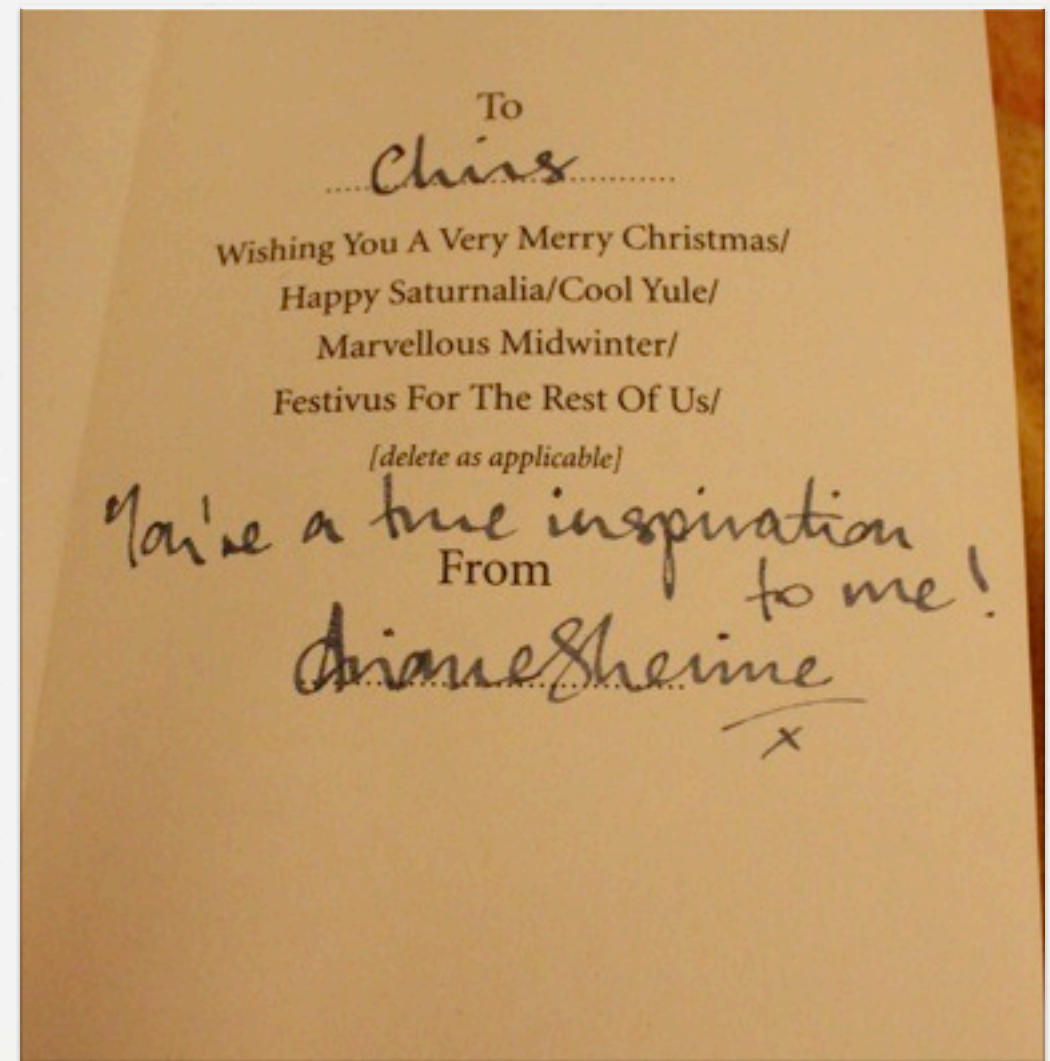
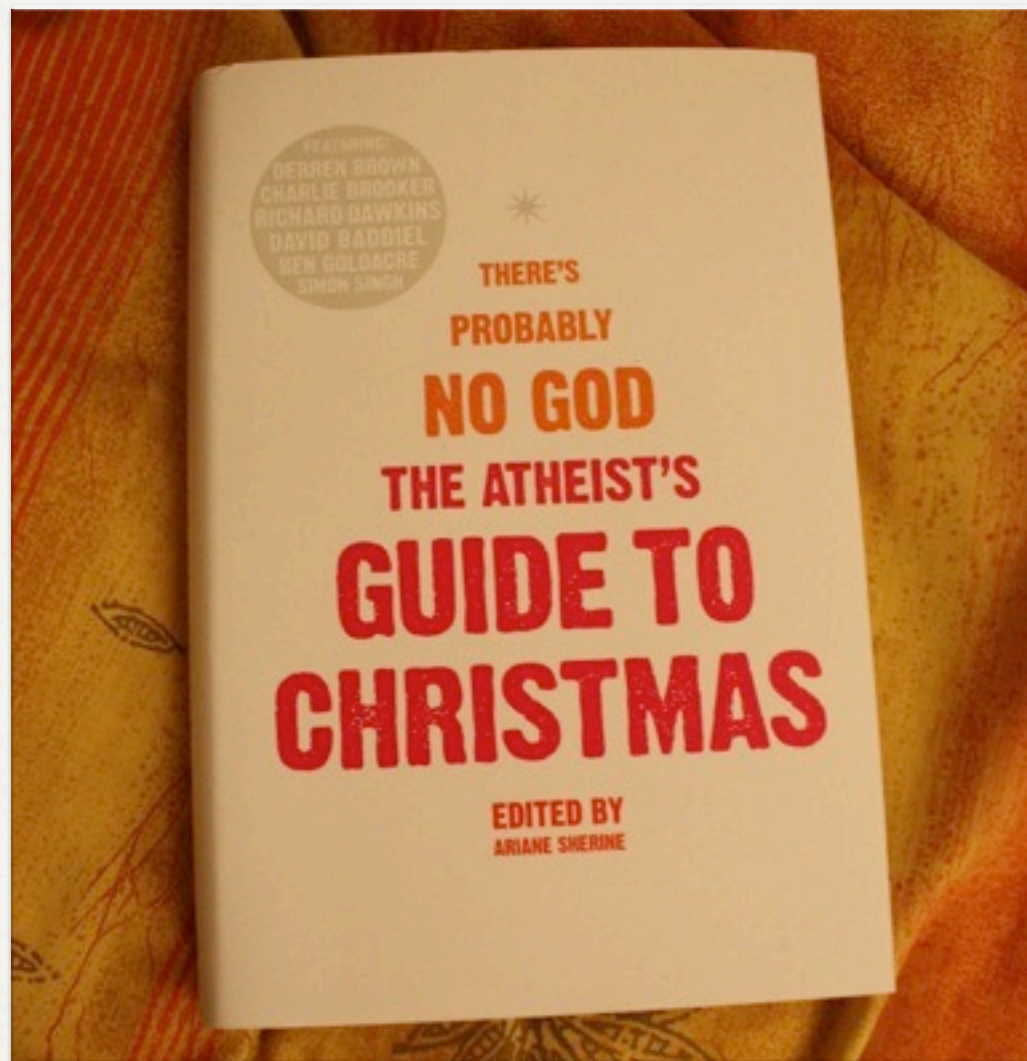


ATHEIST CV

- ✱ Founder of Leeds Atheist Society
- ✱ Trustee of the AHS
- ✱ Head of Leeds Skeptics
- ✱ Co-founder of the Humanist Action Group
- ✱ Head of CWF



ME AND ARIANE



THE TALK

- ✿ Christian Union
- ✿ Their activities on campus
- ✿ How they operate

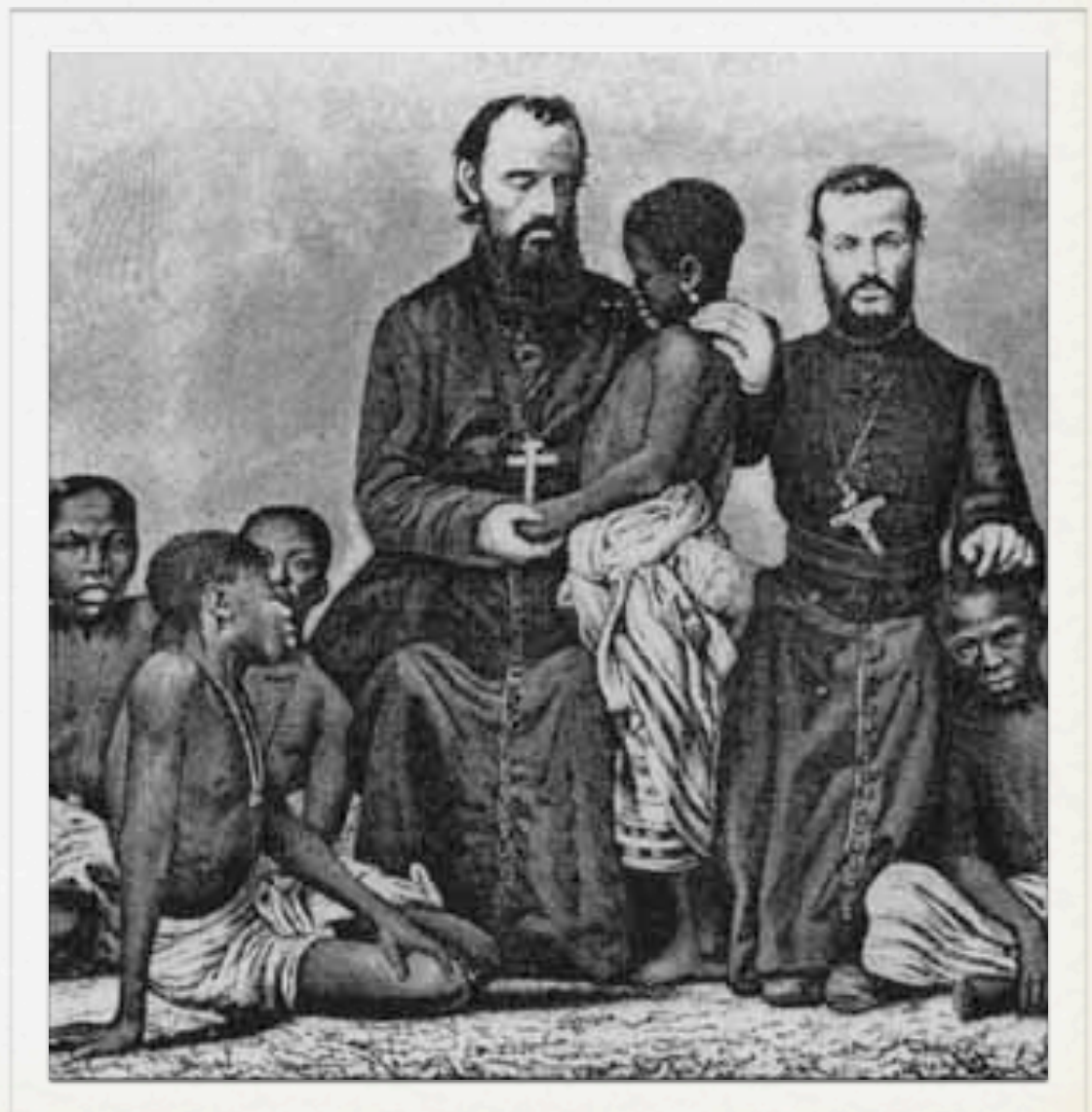




A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN UNION MOVEMENT

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- ✱ SCM of GB was founded in 1889
- ✱ 6 years later the WSCF came into existence
- ✱ And the movement prospered



NATURAL SELECTION

- ✱ Nature is a cruel mistress
- ✱ The more evangelical Christian Union movement came along
- ✱ And that was the end of that



CU ON THE CU

- ✿ Back in the day at Cambridge University
- ✿ In 1919 Norman Grubb got a message
- ✿ God told him to go out and witness to other students on campus



SECULAR HISTORY

- ✱ Norman Grubb disaffiliates CICCUCU from SCM
- ✱ Oxford and other groups soon follow
- ✱ In 1928 the Inter Varsity Fellowship arrives



LEGACY OF THE CU

- ✿ In 1947 it became a founding member of the International Federation
- ✿ 350 CUs in the UK
- ✿ 20,000 students involved (10-15 according to Wikipedia)





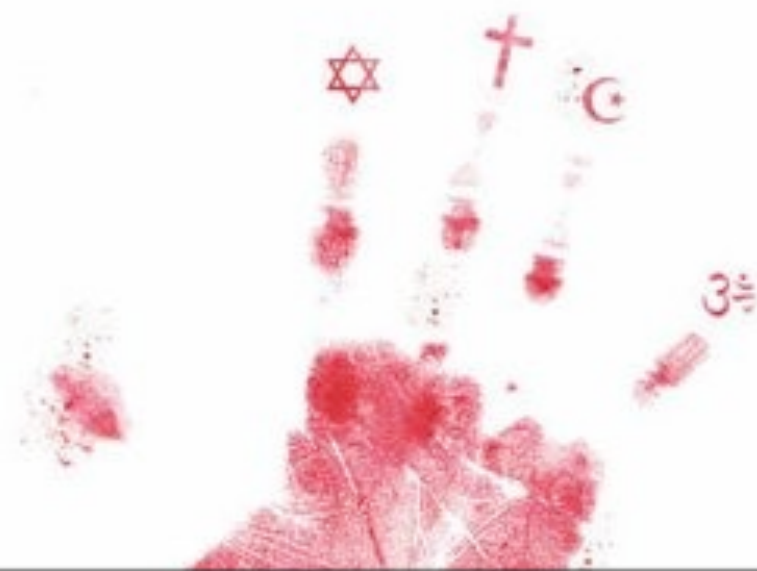
MEANWHILE, HERE IN
THE CURRENT DAY

MEANWHILE

- ✿ Back in my life...
- ✿ Religious experiences that just didn't click
- ✿ Sam Harris's The End of Faith

THE END OF FAITH

**RELIGION, TERROR, AND
THE FUTURE OF REASON**



SCIENTOLOGY

- ✱ Filing lawsuits against anyone who disagrees
- ✱ “We’re not a bend over and take it religion”
- ✱ Unlike the Catholics



SOME TIME LATER

- ✿ In 2005 I enrolled on Computer Science at University of Leeds
- ✿ And tried to found the World Domination Society



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

- ✿ Russell Group university
- ✿ Ranked 99th in the world
- ✿ 33,000 students
- ✿ Best student union



LEEDS UNI UNION

- ✿ Hundreds of societies
- ✿ J-Soc and ISoc run the student politics
- ✿ And control the voting blocks
- ✿ The CU has 300 members and 5 churches to fund it



ATHEIST SOCIETY

- ✿ Founded in December 2006
- ✿ Launch party held in January
- ✿ We began running regular meetings



GROWTH OF LAS

- ✿ By the end of 2008 we had 100 members
- ✿ We run 4-5 events per week
- ✿ Most active free thinking student society in the UK
- ✿ Founding member of the AHS



PIONEERING EVENTS

- ✿ One Life, Perspective and Answers
- ✿ Galileo Day holiday
- ✿ Weekend Away and summer camping
- ✿ Reason Week



INTERFAITH WORK

- ✿ Interfaith panels
- ✿ Perspective course
- ✿ Debates
- ✿ Socials



MEETING THE CU

- ✿ The CU were very receptive to the idea of interfaith events
- ✿ It gave me a unique relationship with them
- ✿ Other societies were not quite as nice



THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY

- ✿ Things were rocky from the start
- ✿ I'll Mock Muhammad If I Want To
- ✿ We tried to ban their meat, and they finally started talking to us...
- ✿ ...which didn't end well



FIRST DATES

- ✿ We had lots of debates with the Christian Union
- ✿ I did Christianity Explored, twice
- ✿ Mission Week, lunches
- ✿ Bible study, church
- ✿ Even House Party





SO, WHO ARE THE CHRISTIAN UNION?

LUUCU

- ✱ Big, organised and well funded
- ✱ 300 members, 8-10 strong committee
- ✱ At very least they are working on five figure budget



A WEEK IN THE LIFE

- ✿ Monday: Ignite
- ✿ Tuesday: Prayer
- ✿ Wednesday: Cells
- ✿ Thursday: Intercessory
- ✿ Friday: First Contact,
Street Lights



JUST IMAGINE

- ✿ It's freshers' week, first time away from home
- ✿ It's scary, there are lots of new people
- ✿ You're an academic and therefore not outgoing
- ✿ If only someone would offer you a cup of tea



A WORLD AWAY

- ✿ Even more, imagine if you are an international student
- ✿ Luckily the university have an international freshers' week
- ✿ And the CU run The Living Room cafe, jazz cafe, trips and more



HOME AWAY FROM

- ✿ Everyone is just too friendly for it to be real
- ✿ Your local hall with have a “Cell”
- ✿ Everyone has personal relationships and meetups
- ✿ Not to mention the buddy system



EVANGELISING

- ✱ Christianity Explored
- ✱ First Contact
- ✱ Streetlights
- ✱ Lunch bars
- ✱ And of course Mission Week...



MISSION WEEK

- ✿ A week long massive evangelism event run every year
- ✿ They erect a marquee opposite the union and invite everyone in
- ✿ Luring people in with free food and drink

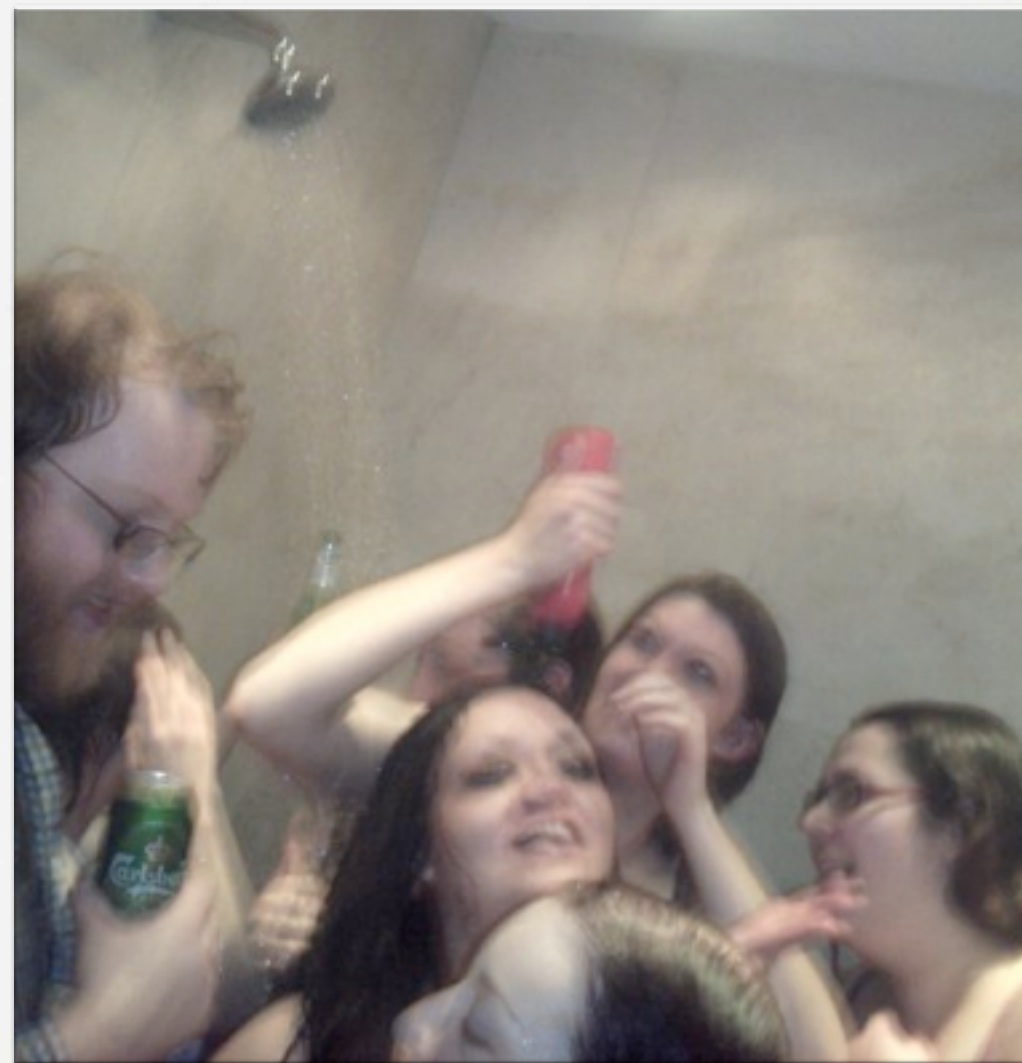


HOUSE PARTY

- ✱ A weekend away in the border of Wales
- ✱ In the middle of nowhere
- ✱ No chance to escape - from the fun!
- ✱ Group hysteria



SHOWER PARTY





PERSONALITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN UNION

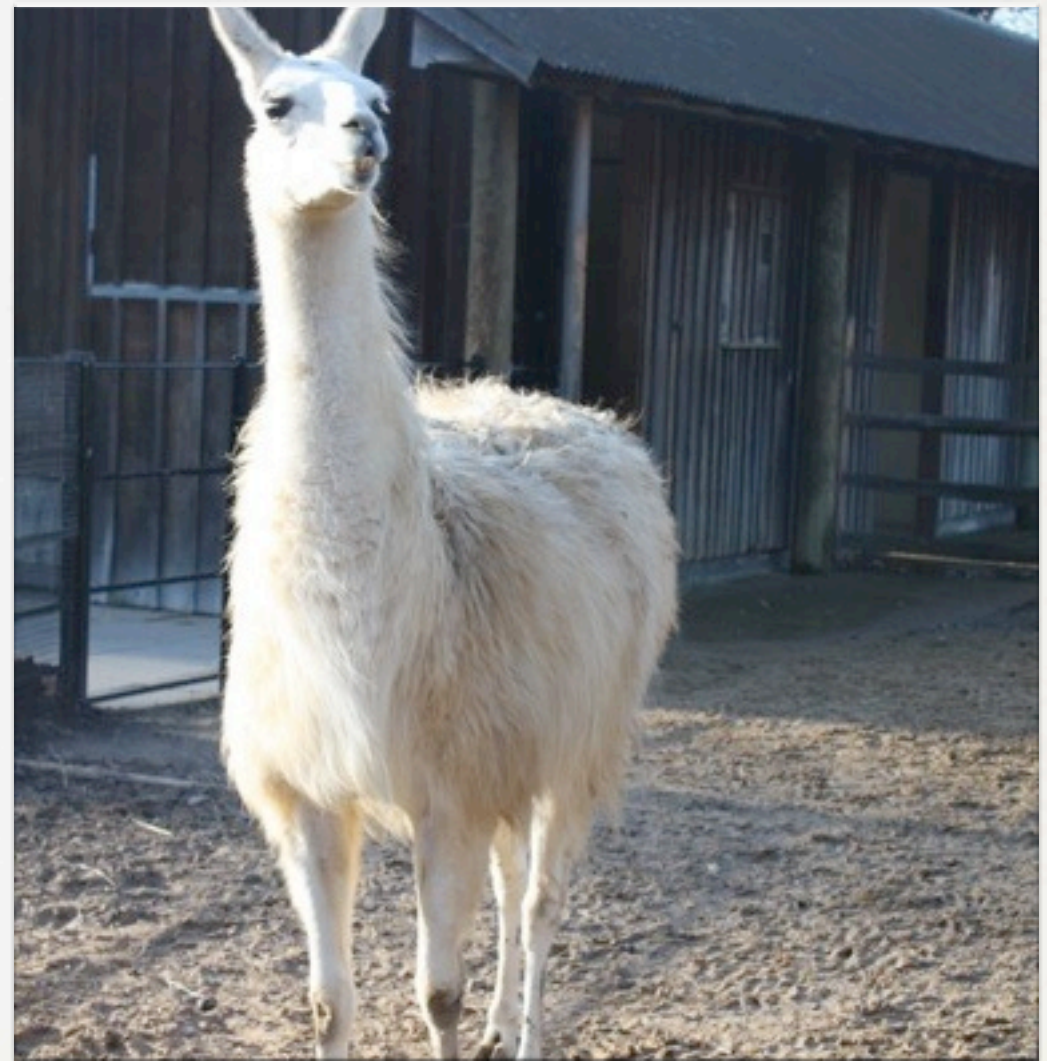
JENNIFER

- ✿ My best friend
- ✿ Used to be such a goody two-shoes
- ✿ Then we got to her...



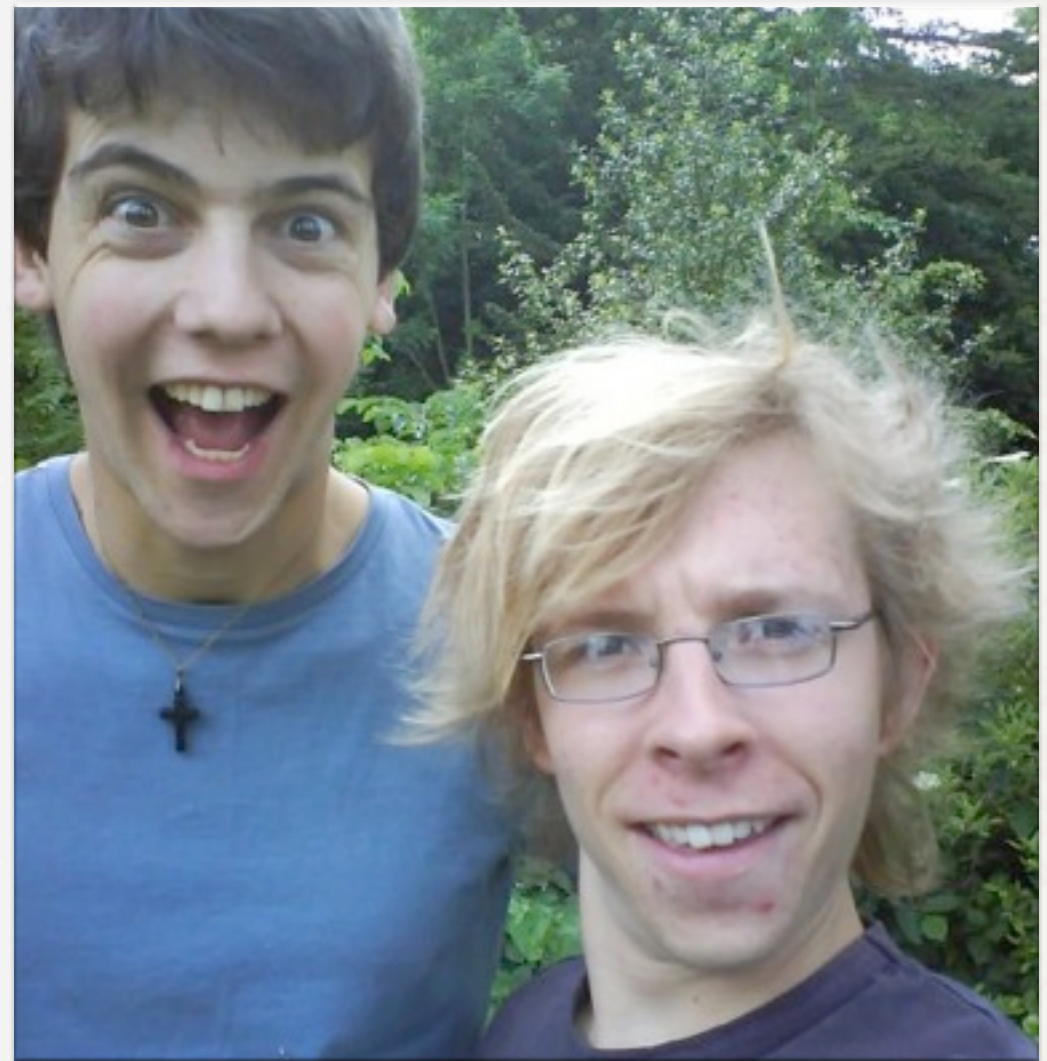
JENNIFER

- ✿ Used to be depressed, then the CU at her 6th form found her
- ✿ By the time she was at uni she was doing CU 6 nights a week
- ✿ But it didn't last



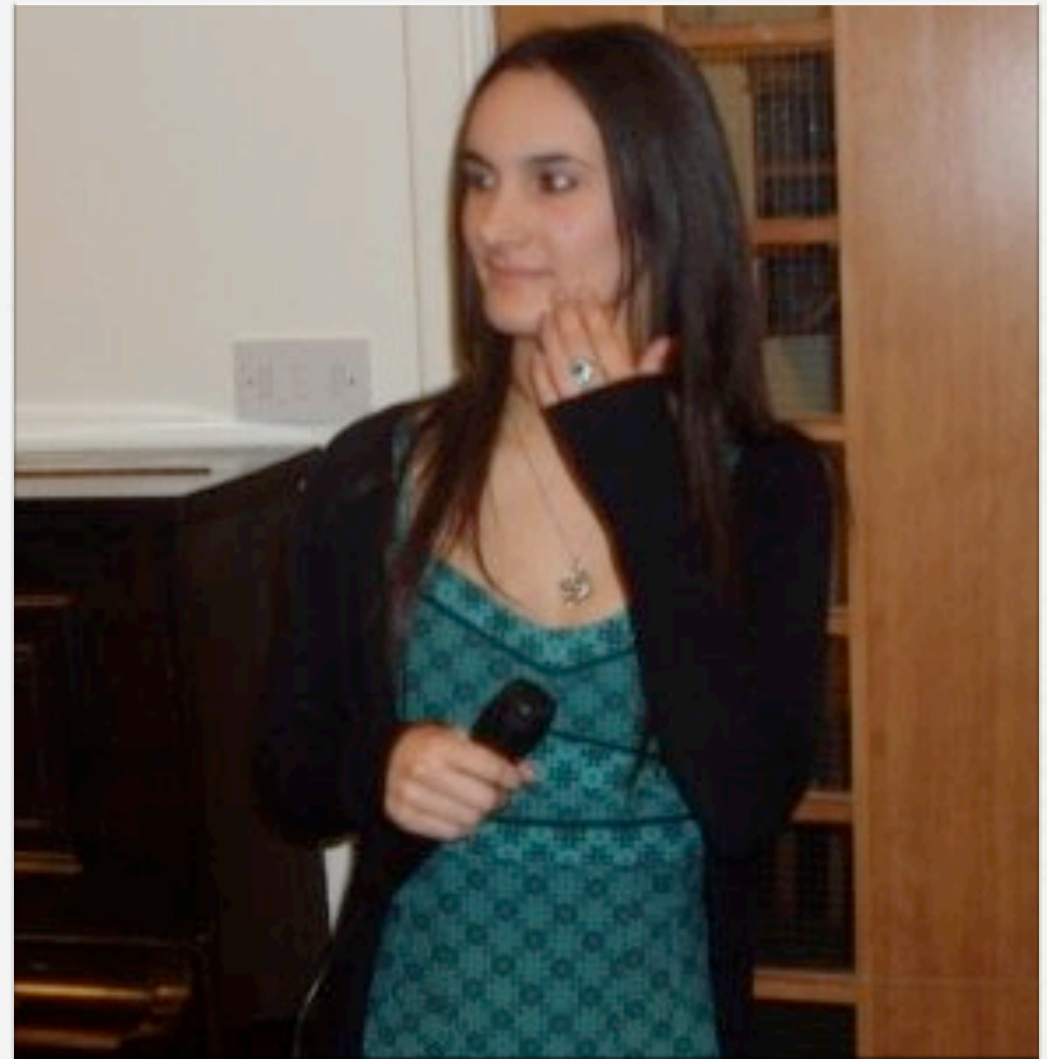
CARL

- ✿ Former evangelical sec
- ✿ Who is now married - there is no justice
- ✿ Interestingly God gave him his wife's name before he met her
- ✿ He also gives very interesting exam answers



LAUREN

- ✿ Faith healer
- ✿ She told us she could show us God's work in action
- ✿ And boy, does he work in an interesting way



CHRIS

- ✱ Really nice, down to earth guy
- ✱ Studying geography
- ✱ Physical geography
- ✱ You know, the kind that is basically about how old the world is





SO, WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CHRISTIAN UNION?

CONSEQUENCES

- ✱ Praying on vulnerable students
- ✱ Controlling the lives of their members
- ✱ Mixing social interaction with religion (as churches do already of course)



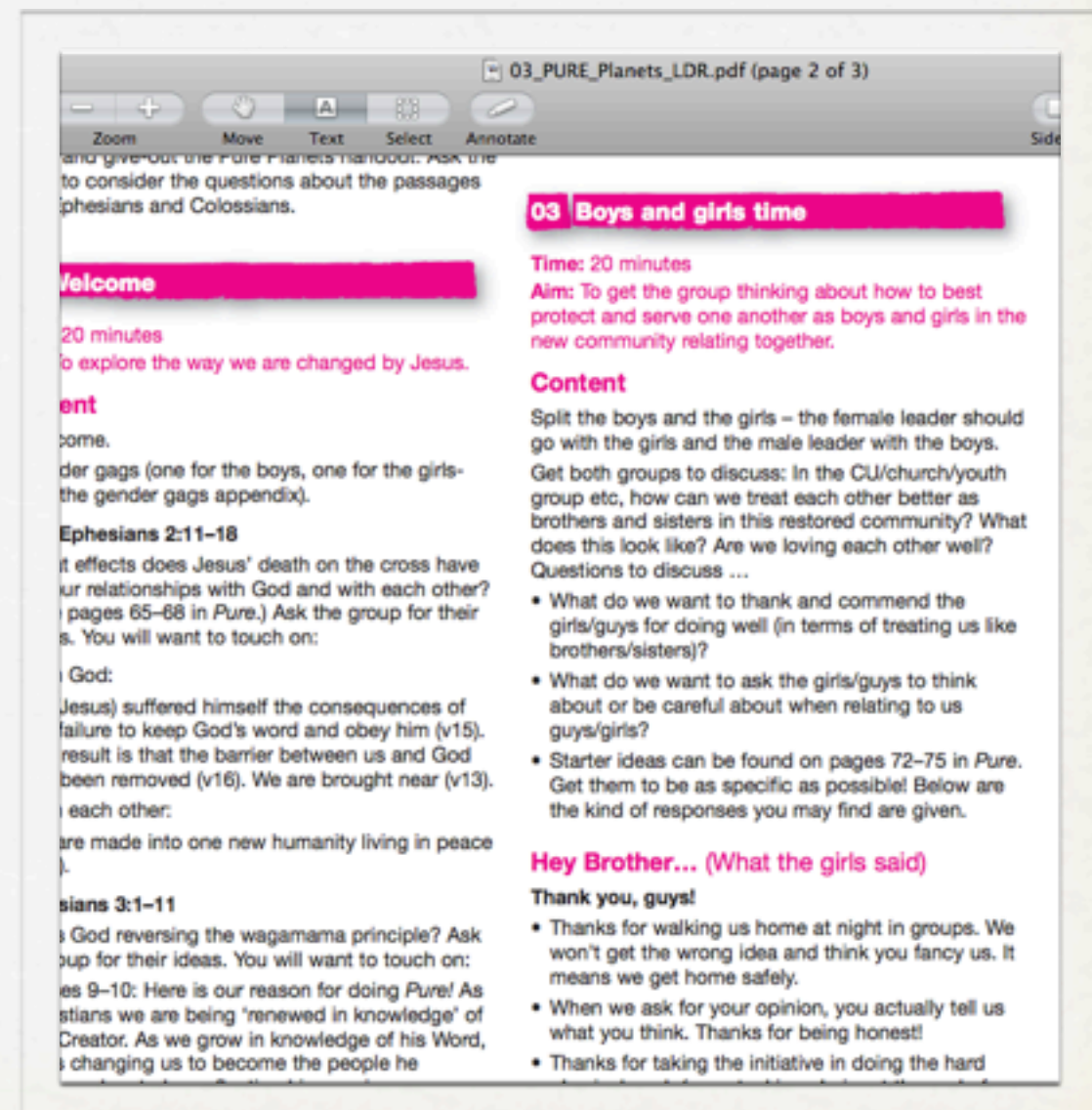
DEMOCRACY

- ✿ I was told I couldn't sign up because I had to sign the "statement of faith"
- ✿ Many CUs have been disaffiliated because they won't let anyone run for election



THE PURE COURSE

- ✿ A course about sex and relationships
- ✿ Tells you who you should and shouldn't go out with
- ✿ Openly talks against homosexuality
- ✿ And has all the answers already written down



WHAT THE GIRLS SAID

- ✱ Thanks for walking us home at night. We won't get the wrong idea and think you fancy us. It means we get home safely.
- ✱ When we ask for your opinion, you actually tell us what you think. Thanks for being honest!
- ✱ Thanks for taking the initiative in doing the hard physical work (e.g. stacking chairs at the end of a meeting).

WHAT THE BOYS SAID

- ✱ We love it when you make us any manner of food or cake!
- ✱ Be careful how you hug us – we find a side hug much more helpful for our thought lives than a front hug!
- ✱ Be careful how you dress. Guys are often more turned on by sight, so it doesn't help us to live Christianly if you wear short skirts, show us your midriff or shoulders. Please don't have your bra straps on show, either. They might just be unexciting bra straps to you, but to us, they're a whole different kettle of fish!

UCCF INFLUENCE

- ✿ Massive support from the top
- ✿ And massive policy too
- ✿ Committee training in which people are told “you will drop a degree classification doing this”



CONCLUSION

- ✿ Christian Union's have been evangelising for decades
- ✿ And they have it down to a T
- ✿ In recent times it has started spreading to other groups too

