



March 2013

I wonder if you ever think about why you are where you are. I mean, why do you attend the school you go to rather than another one nearby? Why do you live in the area that you do with the neighbours that you have? Why do you go to the church you go to?

I work for a church in East Belfast and each week I sit down with my minister and delve into God's Word; together we have been looking through the book of Jeremiah. Chapters 1 to 28 are full of gloom but Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in chapter 29 God tells them to "*seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare*".

The LORD was sending the people of Judah into exile in Babylon yet he was telling them that he was still in control of their lives despite the turmoil and uncertainty around them.

Not only was the LORD in control but he was telling the people to work hard where they were, to pray for it, to be the LORD's people in the land in which they would find themselves.

Well...you are not randomly living where you live; it is not by chance that you study or work where you do. God has placed you in that school, that office, that family for His glory and to work out His purposes there.

You are to seek to be a blessing to those around you in your church and your church is to try to be a blessing to the community around it. You are an important part of your church family, every

Grow Your Own SPUDs

This year at SPUD we have been running our 'Grow Your Own SPUDs' programme. As a Working Group it is our prayer and our desire to see young people actively participating in their churches, to understand that they belong as an integral part of their church family, that without them participating in it their church family is incomplete.

The Working Group has enjoyed the chance to go out to various churches this year to run the 'Grow Your Own' programme and we hope that more churches will invite us to come to them over the next number of months.

Our aim is that through the 'Grow Your Own' programme conversations will begin in churches as to how more and more members can play an active part in their congregation. We hope that as young people become more and more involved in their own congregations they will begin to understand that their church is part of a larger church throughout this island, which in turn is part of the worldwide church, with Christ as its head.

One way we hope young people will glimpse the larger picture is by attending our Blue Book Overnight in April where we will be discussing some of the issues that come up in this year's Blue Book reports. We know that the General Assembly is ready and willing to listen to young people; and this overnight, and then potential involvement at the General Assembly, will show young people that their church cares about their voice.

Please get in touch with the YAC office if you or a young person you know would be interested in this opportunity!

Remember, the LORD tells us "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you". You are where you are because it is God's

God bless,

Andy Downey

SPUD Convenor, on behalf of the SPUD Working Group