

## **GYC Statement of Clarification May 3, 2006**

[NOTE: *This statement has been prepared by the General Youth Conference (GYC) leadership in response to a request by Eld. Baraka Muganda, the Youth Director of the World Seventh-day Adventist Church. The intent is to facilitate understanding between the GYC and the church, especially in view of a document that was issued by the World Youth Advisory body in April 2006 (see Appendix)*]

### **A. Background**

**A Revival.** In the late 1990s, God began to move upon the hearts of a small but diverse group of young people across the United States, and He did so through their encounters with the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, sound biblical preaching, and participation in Bible-based evangelism. These young people, mostly students, were Black, White, Asian, and Hispanic, yet they were bound together by their common hunger for a deeper relationship with Christ and their thirst to be active in His service.

It was in this context that the General Youth Conference (GYC) emerged. The young leaders of the fledgling group had a vision to bring together all these youth under the common goal of taking the gospel to the whole world so that they could see Christ come in their generation. Their dynamic faith experience gave them a desire to link up with other youth who were equally on fire for the Lord and to seek mentorship from adults who shared their passion. Ambitious as they were, they still did not conceive of the explosive growth that would soon result from the Lord's blessing of their humble efforts.

**A Need.** Prior to the emergence of the General Youth Conference (GYC), a substantial number of dedicated Seventh-day Adventist young people in North America had become frustrated, and even disillusioned, by the contemporary, entertainment-oriented approach to youth ministries on one extreme and the reactionary, critical approach on the other extreme.

These young people felt that through such approaches they were not being biblically challenged nor spiritually edified in a way that would enable them remain solid Seventh-day Adventists. Often, these entertainment-oriented and critical approaches to youth ministries were being urged upon the young people by well-meaning adults who were convinced that their methods were what the youth really wanted.

**A Vision.** The pioneers of GYC, however, sought a vibrant alternative that was youth-initiated and youth-led, but one which was radically Bible-based, mission-driven, and church-supporting. These young people wanted:

- to uphold the distinctive message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church;
- to aspire to excellence in all aspects of their lives—academic, professional, *and* spiritual;
- to embrace the call to radical discipleship, including a life of missionary service; and
- to be supportive and respectful of denominational leadership, even while it remained a youth-led movement.

Even though the above vision was actively promoted in most of parts of the non-industrialized regions of the world church, such an alternative was often unavailable to a growing number of young people in North America. GYC emerged to meet this need. The rapid growth and overwhelming support GYC has received suggests that, indeed, such an alternative was not only welcome but demanded by serious young people.

Today, this vision of GYC, first conceived by dedicated students on secular university campuses, has been embraced by thousands of Seventh-day Adventist students and young professionals in denominational and supporting institutions, as well as by parents, lay people, pastors, and church leaders in North America and around the world.

**Some Challenges.** However, with the growth of GYC have come two major challenges: (1) youth leaders who are urging a more contemporary approach upon young people perceive the youth-initiated and youth-led approach of GYC as an attempt to undermine their influence and authority, or even church structure; (2) independent groups—often hostile to the church—have sought to legitimize their critical approaches by hijacking or piggy-backing upon GYC’s successes.

These two challenges have resulted in a misunderstanding, if not a misinformation, in certain quarters of the church about the true identity, mission, and operations of the GYC. This misunderstanding may have contributed to a document prepared by the World Youth Directors at the World Youth Advisory meeting in March 26 – April 2, 2006 at Mt. Aetna Camp, Hagerstown, Maryland, USA entitled: Clarification Statement Regarding General Youth Conference (GYC) (see Appendix, below).

Unfortunately, because the World Youth Advisory’s document is based on a lack of understanding of GYC, the document is likely to be misunderstood and misused by those who are not well-informed about what GYC is and how it operates, and by those who have reasons to oppose what GYC stands for.

**An Invitation.** Upon consultation with Dr. Baraka Muganda, the Youth Director of the World Church, it was agreed that the leadership of GYC should draft a “Statement of Clarification” to help facilitate better understanding among denominational leaders, church members, and youth around the world about the aims and objectives of GYC and its relationship to the church and other youth movements overseas.

In March 2005, the GYC leadership had already met with the North American Youth leadership and provided it with such information in a 21-page document. Nevertheless, GYC recognizes that not all world divisions are similarly informed. Moreover, the world youth leaders may not be well-informed about the exact nature of GYC’s relationship with other emerging grassroots youth movements overseas. For these reasons, the GYC leadership welcomed Dr. Muganda’s gracious request and respectfully submits the following “GYC Statement of Clarification” with a prayer that it will help remedy any misunderstanding created by a lack of knowledge about GYC.

## **B. GYC Statement of Clarification**

### **1. Who We Are**

The General Youth Conference (GYC) is a grassroots Seventh-day Adventist movement organized and led by young adults from diverse backgrounds. Through the networking, communication, and organization that GYC provides, young people are encouraged to experience personal revival and reformation and to work hand-in-hand with the Seventh-day Adventist church in taking the Three Angels’ Messages to the world in this generation.

As an expression of these objectives, the GYC leadership drafted the following Mission Statement:

There exists, today, an army of dedicated young people within the Seventh-day Adventist church who yearn to demonstrate Nehemiah's leadership, Daniel's integrity, Mary's

humility, Paul's passion for evangelism, and Christ's love for God and humanity. It is the goal of the General Youth Conference (GYC) and its members to seek and galvanize such young people. We aim to mobilize existing youth and young adult ministries that are fully committed to the distinctive message and mission of the Adventist church towards the proclamation of the Three Angels' Messages.

## 2. What We Stand For

*The Spirit of GYC* is a set of statements that describe the core guiding principles of the movement. It is the heartbeat of the General Youth Conference and sets forth what it stands for. All GYC participants and attendees are expected to uphold and exhibit these values. It reads:

“In seeking to uphold the distinctive message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, GYC will promote among its participants:

- 1) *A respect for Scripture*—as the foundation and test of all teachings and practices;
- 2) *An appreciation for the Spirit of Prophecy*—as an authoritative source of instruction, comfort, and warning;
- 3) *A quest for Biblical holiness*—through a daily prayer and devotional experience with Jesus and a commitment to following His Word;
- 4) *A vibrant worship experience*—one that is characterized by principle, reverence, and decorum;
- 5) *A passion for lost souls*—animated by personal experience in the saving love of Jesus and a desire for His imminent return;
- 6) *A cultivation of godly relationships*—preserving purity and encouraging accountability;
- 7) *An exemplary and abundant lifestyle*—in recreation, entertainment, dress, and healthful living;
- 8) *An enthusiasm for service*—through care for the needy, service to the community, promotion of human rights, and stewardship of the environment;
- 9) *A commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's remnant church*—by supporting and upholding its principles, organization, and leadership;
- 10) *An attitude of humility and cordiality*—as we seek to clarify, articulate, and defend the Biblical teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

## 3. Our Aim

GYC seeks to equip and inspire young people to be Christian ambassadors in their respective places of work and study by:

- Providing Biblical training in the form of participatory workshops, Bible studies, and inspirational messages at its annual conference.
- Fostering and encouraging Christian fellowship among young people from diverse socioeconomic statuses, educational degrees, geographical locations, and racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Creating network opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist young people and youth-oriented ministries.
- Encouraging young people to assume leadership responsibilities in the Seventh-day Adventist Church by employing their experience and talents in planning and presenting the annual conference and other events.

## 4. Our Conference Goals

To accomplish its objectives, GYC organizes annual youth conventions. These gatherings are designed to be five-day training and inspirational events. They are held in December, beginning on Wednesday evening and ending on Sunday at noon.

We expect the participants to leave the conference with:

- A sense of God’s call for their life and a commitment to live daily for Him
- A deeper understanding of the Word of God and the distinctive message of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and effective approaches for communicating this understanding
- Practical methods for witnessing in their respective places of work and study
- Networks and contacts with other dedicated Seventh-day Adventist young people and youth-oriented ministries
- An on-site experience in an evangelistic outreach to impact the local community
- Opportunities to become involved in some ministry

## 5. Our Conference Speakers

Consistent with the mission and objectives of GYC, those who are invited to be speakers and presenters at GYC conventions are bonafide Seventh-day Adventist members, scholars, and leaders who are known to share the ideals of GYC and who are well-qualified to address biblically specific issues of concern to young people. Past GYC speakers and presenters have included well-known and respected Seventh-day Adventists from diverse walks of life. Among these are the following denominational thought leaders and speakers:

- David Assherick, *Director*, ARISE
- Doug Bachelor, *Director & Speaker*, Amazing Facts
- Shawn Boonstra, *Speaker & Director*, It Is Written
- C.D. Brooks, *Speaker Emeritus*, Breath of Life
- Chester Clark, *General Vice-President*, ASI
- Ron Clouzet, *Dean*, Religion Department, Southern Adventist University
- Mark Finley, *GC Vice-President for Evangelism*
- Jay Gallimore, *President*, Michigan Conference
- David Grams, *Former Religion Professor*, Weimar College
- Michael Hasel, *Professor*, Religion Department, Southern Adventist University
- Elaine Kennedy, *Associate Director*, GC Geoscience Research Institute
- Miroslav Kis, *Head*, Theology Department, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University
- Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Director Public Campus Ministries*, Michigan Conference
- Denzil McNeilus, *Former President*, ASI
- Jerry Moon, *Head*, Church History Department, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University
- Nick Miller, *Director*, Andrews University International Religious Liberty Institute
- Ekkehardt Mueller, *Associate Director*, GC Biblical Research Institute
- Alan Parker, *Vice President of Evangelism*, Amazing Facts
- Jan Paulsen, *President*, General Conference
- Ron du Preez, *Pastor* Michigan Conference
- Humberto Rasi, *Director Emeritus*, GC Education Department
- Ed Reid, *Director*, NAD Stewardship Department
- Philip Samaan, *Professor*, Religion Department, Southern Adventist University
- Randy Skeete, *Evangelist*, CAMPUS, Michigan Conference
- James Standish, *Associate Director*, GC Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department
- Wolfgang Stefani, *Music and Religion Scholar & Pastor*, New South Wales, Australia
- Louis Torres, *Director*, Missions College of Evangelism
- Cindy Tutsch, *Associate Director*, Ellen G. White Estate
- Janice Watson, *Former Chair*, Communication Department, Andrews University

## 6. The Fruits of GYC

A GYC meeting is not simply an annual event, but also a life-transforming experience. Lives are radically changed, decisions are made for baptism, and commitments are made for mission service. Examples from the last two GYC meetings underscore this fact. For example:

- At the 2004 GYC meeting, GYC youth knocked on the doors of more than 5,000 homes, prayed with nearly 300 people, and enrolled over 800 in Bible studies. Additionally, 200 youth responded to an appeal to give six to eight years of their life as a career missionary.
- At the 2005 GYC meeting, 27 busses took attendees to the surrounding community for outreach, resulting in over 1200 Bible study requests to be followed up by Mark and Ernestine Finley's evangelistic meetings later in 2006. Hundreds of young people responded to God's call to preach at evangelistic meetings before the 2006 GYC meeting, and 50 attendees decided to be baptized or rebaptized. The Sabbath morning divine service offering was about \$120,000!
- Finally, among the crowning jewels of the annual conferences are the hundreds of young people who recommit their lives to the Lord.

These tangible fruits of GYC's meetings suggest that, indeed, young people want to be taken seriously, are capable of making spiritual sacrifices and commitments, and are disappointed when their adult leaders simply entertain them or expect little from them.

In addition to the Lord's blessings, such results also demonstrate the benefits of the grassroots-nature of the GYC movement and its unique relationship with the church. This fact is best understood by briefly describing the history of GYC and its method of operation.

## **7. Our History**

In 1999, Adventist young people on public university campuses decided to conduct an experiment. Desiring a unique, life-changing movement, they sought to make a difference by taking seriously the claims of Biblical Adventism. These young people embarked upon a movement committed to serious Bible study, intense prayer, uncompromising lifestyle, and boldness in sharing Christ with others.

In 2002, this vision gave birth to the organization of the first General Youth Conference. Since then, there have been four GYC conventions. A summary of each appears below, along with a prospectus of the 2006 convention.

- GYC 2002 – Pine Springs Ranch, Southeastern California. Theme: “Pentecost: He Will Do It Again” – With its emphasis on spiritual revival, the first conference anticipated 200 attendees, but registered 400 and had to close registration because the facility was filled to capacity. Its theme reminded young people that what God had done in the past, He would do again.
- GYC 2003 – Ann Arbor, Michigan. Theme: “Higher than the Highest” – Expecting 700, the conference registered 800, and had over 1000 attended. This conference underscored the necessity of excellence in every sphere of a young person’s life and resonated with the idealism of youth.
- GYC 2004 – Sacramento, California. Theme: “Carry the Light” – Having registered 1200, attendance exceeded 1800. The subject of evangelism was not merely preached, but pragmatically implemented when 600 young people knocked on the doors of over 5,000 homes and enrolled over 800 people in Bible studies in preparation for ASI’s approaching evangelistic effort.

- GYC 2005 – Chattanooga, Tennessee. Theme: “Now is the Time” – With more than 2500 registered and attendance of about 4000, the theme was designed to call attention to the signs of Christ’s soon return and to encourage attendees to prepare their hearts and earnestly work for His coming.
- GYC 2006 – Baltimore, Maryland. Theme: “By Every Word” – We expect at least 5000 young people to attend this year’s meeting which will focus on the authority of the Bible in every aspect of the Christian’s life.

Having been in existence for a short time, GYC has experienced exponential growth. It has also received encouragement from dedicated parents, adults, pastors, and church leaders at the highest level and welcomed satellite broadcasting from the Three Angels’ Broadcasting Network (3ABN).

## **8. Our Inspiration**

Three notable institutions inspired the vision that would later result in the establishment of the General Youth Conference. Foremost among them is CAMPUS (the Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students), based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, near the University of Michigan. CAMPUS provided the vision of challenging young people to spiritual, academic, and professional excellence.

In addition to changing the lives of the University of Michigan students, CAMPUS was influential in shaping the lives of others including:

- Students from Boston University, Brandeis, Brown, Harvard, Princeton, Rutgers, and others; these students formed SPARC (Students Preparing Adventists for the Return of Christ) and began impacting the lives of their friends and classmates.
- Graduates from Michigan who moved on to Loma Linda School of Medicine and La Sierra University to help found and organize Advent HOPE (Helping Others Prepare for Eternity), a student Sabbath School and outreach ministry.

These students formed a network of young people, which would later become the foundation for the GYC organization.

The two other institutions that greatly inspired GYC and shaped its outlook were: Adventist-Laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) and Ouachita Hills Academy (OHA), based in Amity, Arkansas. These two institutions provided the vision of youth evangelism, the passion for sharing Christ, and the example of young people holding evangelistic campaigns. ASI and OHA continue to challenge young people with the principles of true education and encourage them to give their lives in sacrificial service as soul-winners, not only in church settings, but in professional environments as well.

## **9. Our Name**

The “General Youth Conference” name was carefully chosen to reflect the true nature and mission of GYC:

- “General” depicts the broad appeal of GYC to young people. From teens to young adults, from students to professionals, people from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life are included. All are united by love for their church and a desire for a Bible-based revival, demonstrated by true Seventh-day Adventist teaching, godly living, missionary commitment, and excellence in every facet of life.

- “Youth” not only emphasizes that the movement was conceived by young people themselves, but also captures the qualities of idealistic vibrancy and spiritual boldness of young people. The “youth” points to the prophecy where youth in the last days will be Spirit-filled and commissioned to proclaim God’s message (Joel 2:28-29).
- “Conference” – describes the convocation/gathering of like-minded young people who seek to be trained and networked so they can do God’s work.

## 10. Our Logo



The GYC logo emphasizes the young people’s role working *within* the Seventh-day Adventist church. It conceptualizes Seventh-day Adventist young people working together and supporting the church, uplifting its message, and fulfilling its mission to spread the gospel around the globe.

Prominence is given to the “Y” holding a book to emphasize that this spontaneous, grassroots movement was initiated by the youth themselves, is youth-run, and is committed to upholding the authority of the Bible.

## 11. Our Organizational Structure

As a supporting ministry within the church, GYC is fully committed to the message and mission of the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church. It encourages its members to support the Biblical goals and objectives of the General Conference and its subsidiary branches and departments.

GYC is registered as a non-profit organization in the state of Michigan, and is currently headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It is governed by its board of directors and supported by its official sponsors: Adventist-laymen’s Services and Industries (ASI) and The Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students (CAMPUS) – a division of the Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministries department.

In its role as an official sponsor, ASI has given counsel, encouragement, and general convention format, as well as financial contributions to assist GYC in its efforts towards evangelism in Sacramento, Chattanooga, and Baltimore. On its part, CAMPUS continues to provide GYC with a biblical vision and methodology, a philosophy of excellence, and a model of courageous leadership.

The GYC Board of Directors consist of trained professionals, church leaders, and young people who command respect among the youth for their leadership skills, their commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to the ideals and mission of GYC. These individuals provide guidance to and oversight over GYC.

### 2006-2007 Board of Directors

- Israel Ramos, *Chairman*  
Director of Resources, C.A.M.P.U.S.
- Timothy Arakawa, *Vice Chairman*  
Student, Loma Linda School of Medicine

- Andrea D. Oliver, *Secretary*  
Student, Washington & Lee School of Law
- Tom Owiti, *Treasurer*  
Senior Financial Analyst, Kellogg Company
- John Chung, MD  
Dermatologist & Skin Cancer Surgeon, Dalton, GA
- Chester V. Clark III  
General Vice President, Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries
- Jay Gallimore  
President, Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
- Ray Hamblin  
President & CEO, The Hamblin Company
- Justin Kim  
Youth Pastor, Detroit Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, PhD  
Director, Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministries
- Justin McNeilus  
Student, Southern Adventist University
- Christine Neall  
Teacher, Ouachita Hills Academy
- Michael J. Orlich, MD  
Physician, Weimar Institute
- Alan Parker  
Vice President of Evangelism, Amazing Facts
- Randolph Skeete  
Evangelist, C.A.M.P.U.S.
- Janice Watson, PhD  
Professor of Communication, Andrews University

The Executive Committee Officers run the daily responsibilities of the organization. They comprise of a diverse group of Seventh-day Adventist young people, committed to the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### 2006-2007 Executive Committee

- *President:* Israel Ramos  
Director of Resources, C.A.M.P.U.S.
- *General Vice President:* Timothy Arakawa  
Student, Loma Linda School of Medicine
- *Executive Secretary:* Andrea Oliver  
Student, Washington and Lee School of Law
- *Treasurer:* Tom Owiti  
Senior Financial Analyst, Kellogg Company
- *Vice President of Communication:* Joelle Damsteegt  
Student, Andrews University
- *Vice President of Logistics:* Alistair Huong  
Student, Ouachita Hills College
- *Vice President of Resources:* Justin Kim  
Youth Pastor, Detroit Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church
- *Vice President of Evangelism:* Justin McNeilus  
Student, Southern Adventist University
- *Vice President of Networking:* Yamil Rosario  
Director, Radiant Living Ministries
- *Vice President of Programming:* Luke Whiting  
Student, Southern Adventist University

## 12. Our Relationship with the Church

GYC sees itself as complementing and supporting the youth work by the church organization, not competing with the denomination. Though youth-initiated and youth-led, like ASI, GYC maintains an excellent relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is to be expected, for several reasons:

- 1) GYC was birthed and is sponsored by Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministries department, whose offices serve as the current headquarters of GYC.
- 2) GYC's board of directors include trained professionals and qualified individuals who command respect among the youth for their leadership skills, their commitment to the SDA church and to the ideals and mission of the GYC.
- 3) From time to time, GYC seeks advice from individual denominational youth leaders—past and present—who are known to embrace the vision of GYC.
- 4) It has always been GYC's desire to work in harmony with church leaders. A recent indication of this occurred on March 30, 2005, when GYC leadership, at its own initiative, met with the North American Division youth leadership to explain in a detailed 21-page document how GYC operates and to solicit counsel from the NAD youth leadership. GYC continues to be open to wise guidance from the NAD youth leadership.
- 5) At the suggestion of the NAD Youth Director, the GYC leadership has invited a current Conference youth director to attend all GYC Board of Directors' meetings to give counsel;
- 6) GYC does not support any youth movement in NAD or overseas that does not uphold Point #9 of *The Spirit of GYC*, namely: "A commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's remnant church—by supporting and upholding its principles, organization, and leadership."
- 7) The speakers who are invited to participate at GYC meetings are all individuals who are known to be bona fide Seventh-day Adventist church administrators, scholars, and members.

## 13. Our Future Outlook

Consistent with the desire for energetic evangelism, spiritual and professional excellence, and individual Christ-like sacrifice, GYC aspires to accomplish the following in the next five years:

- To be active partners in the General Conference Evangelism initiative "*Tell It to the World*" and the "*Elijah Project*," the initiative for youth evangelism;
- To continue to work closely with Eld. Mark Finley, GC Vice President for Evangelism, in the training of young people for evangelism;
- To establish GYC chapters
  - on Seventh-day Adventist and public university and college campuses, and
  - in the North American Division (NAD), along the denomination's Union boundaries;
- To develop electronically-available resources for young people;
- To encourage young people to assume leadership responsibilities in both local church and professional settings;

- To stimulate young people to become actively involved in evangelism, missions, and service; and
- To continue being financially self-sufficient in its operations, and to encourage young people to sacrificially support the mission of the world church.

#### **14. Our Relationship with Youth Ministries Overseas**

With the rapid growth and enthusiastic support of the GYC in North America, several young people in overseas countries—notably Australia, Europe, New Zealand, and Asia—have come to embrace GYC's ideals and mission. Much of this has occurred by virtue of GYC's website, 3ABN's airing of GYC's programs abroad, and internet communication between youth who have been impacted by GYC and their friends overseas. Many of these young people outside North America seek to start similar youth movements in their parts of the world.

Because GYC is a movement based in the United States, it has not established chapters or organized any meetings overseas. (It has only responded to inquiries, requests, or invitations from locally initiated youth groups or youth conferences overseas.) Should it be deemed necessary in the future for GYC to establish chapters outside North America, GYC will work with the Division Administration to establish such chapters.

As increasing numbers of godly young people begin to take ownership of youth programs and activities in different parts of the world, and as they seek to be biblically challenged, spiritually edified, and mission-driven, it is inevitable that some groups will seek to duplicate the ideals of GYC. When this happens, GYC will support, cooperate, or even affiliate or establish ties with these grassroots youth movements around the world, provided these overseas groups:

- are youth initiated and led by the young people themselves;
- work closely with their local church and/or invite some church leaders in their field to sit on their boards;
- specifically request guidance or assistance from GYC;
- embrace all points in *The Spirit of GYC* statement; and
- invite to their meetings only speakers who are known to be bona fide Seventh-day Adventists.

While establishing close ties with grassroots youth movements and ministries overseas, GYC will under no circumstances encourage or support any local youth movement in the North American Division or in an overseas field if that youth group is not committed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's remnant church by embracing or upholding its principles, organization, and leadership.

#### **15. Our Invitation to Denominational Youth Leaders**

To facilitate a better understanding and good working relationship between GYC and the church's denominational youth leaders, GYC will:

- Continue to welcome timely counsel from any denominational youth leader.
- Where finances are available, waive registration fees and provide room and board to all denominational youth leaders who are willing to attend GYC meetings.

We believe that such an open communication between GYC and denominational youth leadership, together with their attendance of GYC meetings and events, will offer excellent opportunity for dialogue and understanding.

## 16. A Summary

This “GYC Statement of Clarification” has highlighted the following important facts:

- GYC is the result of a revival among young people—a revival that occurred through the young people’s encounters with the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, sound biblical preaching, and participation in Bible-based evangelism;
- GYC is a serious attempt by godly young people themselves to express what they really need in youth ministries—namely, instead of being entertained or critical, they want to be biblically challenged, spiritually edified, mission-driven, and solid Seventh-day Adventists;
- As a supporting ministry that was birthed by Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministries department and officially sponsored by Michigan Conference’s CAMPUS and the ASI, GYC does not work independently of the organized church but works in harmony with it;
- Though youth-led, GYC regularly seeks guidance from its dedicated Board of Directors and, from time to time receives counsel from some of the best trained Youth Ministries Professionals who share the values and mission of GYC;
- As an organization based in North America, GYC does not have chapters in other locations around the world, nor has it organized any meetings overseas; should it be deemed necessary in the future to establish GYC chapters outside North America, GYC will work with that Division’s Administration;
- When requested, GYC will seek to establish ties with similarly-established grassroots youth movements overseas or those who desire to duplicate the Bible-based ideals of GYC, provided such overseas groups share “*The Spirit of GYC*” and work closely with their local church and/or invite some church leaders in their field to sit on their boards;
- As a supporting ministry working within the church, GYC will continue to encourage its members to be loyal members within the Body of Christ, His Church, as they aspire for biblical excellence in all aspects of their lives—academic, professional, *and* spiritual.

## 17. Our Appreciation

We greatly appreciate the gracious invitation from the Youth Director of the World Church for us to submit this “Statement of Clarification,” and his promise to pass it on to all the division leaders. We take this opportunity to invite him to personally attend this year’s GYC meeting in Baltimore, Maryland (December 27-31, 2006), and to say a few words of encouragement to some 5,000 of his young people. His presence will be the greatest statement of support from denominational youth leadership to the youth of GYC.

*[This “GYC Statement of Clarification” was submitted to Eld. Baraka Muganda, Youth Director of our World Church, on May 3, 2006, with a request that it be disseminated among youth and church leaders]*

## **C. Appendix**

[NOTE: *The following document was issued on April 2, 2006 by the World Youth Directors. It is the document which has occasioned the above "GYC Clarification Statement" (dated May 3, 2006)*]

### **General Conference Youth Ministries Department**

***Clarification Statement Regarding General Youth Conference (GYC)  
(Statement prepared by World Youth Directors at the World Youth Advisory, March 26 – April 2, 2006, which met at Mt. Aetna Camp, Hagerstown, Maryland, USA)***

In recent days, several divisions and other entities within the church have enquired about a group called the General Youth Conference (GYC). Although this group is based in North America, it has encouraged its members to establish chapters in other locations around the world. For this reason we feel it necessary to make a statement to the church.

The General Youth Conference is an independent group of Seventh-day Adventist young adults based in North America. GYC is committed to involving its members in evangelism and other activities as planned by its leadership. While we salute their efforts nonetheless, we are concerned that local church youth leaders and some college students are under the impression that this group is authorized by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department because of its close name association. They are independent of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Ministry.

The General Conference Youth Ministries Department is committed to operating within the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We work in relationship with all divisions, unions, conferences, and local Seventh-day Adventist Churches. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has the best trained Youth Ministries Professionals on all levels of church governance, and we encourage organizations to stay within the church structure when it comes to leading our children and young people. This is something we do not take lightly.

The General Youth Conference (GYC) has no Seventh-day Adventist Youth Ministries Professionals within its leadership structure. They have chosen to operate independently of any local conference, union, division, and General Conference youth departments.

Any group operating as an independent supporting ministry should work with and through the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The youth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church should be encouraged to allow God to use them to evangelize the world as promised. We should also encourage them to work within the Body of Christ, His Church.

The General Conference Youth Ministries Department supports youth organizations that are involved in the mission of the church and committed to the high standards and ideals of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole, and operating within its structure.