

By Milse Furtado

For the first time in the history of General Conference the young people got a chance to lift their voices and make their issues and opinions known at the April 24 Young People's address.

The group was formed by Jason Rathod (24), Nebraska; Kira Volkava (24), Northern Europe; Andrew Craig (16), Rocky Mountain; Rev. Annie Arnoldy (29), Rocky Mountain; Rebecca Farnum (17), West Michigan; and Mathew Lockett (20), Pacific Northwest.

Six people with very different backgrounds and points of view felt urged by God to share what's in the young people's mind about issues that distress our people.

"I thought that maybe God could use me to voice some of the needs and hopes the youth have for the UMC," said Kira Volkova.

Issues like race discrimination, homosexuality, poverty, politics, self-righteousness, war and many others afflicting our church and society were raised and vehemently applauded.

"We want to make a difference in the world but we don't want to wait," said Mathew Lockett.

A great sense of hope, love, and eagerness for the wellbeing of the church were expressed by the group, but the concern for inclusiveness and acceptance was also expressed.

"We want the church to trust our input for change, we want to stay active in the church," said Rebecca Farnum, West Michigan Conference.

After it was all said and done the lingering message to the conference was: The young people are ready! Are you?