

1                   **TASK FORCE ON PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION**  
2                   **FINAL REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
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7    If you have any questions about the attached report, please email me at  
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37   [NOTE: This cover page is included on the PCA Strategic Planning web page, but will be  
38   removed from the final report for inclusion into the GA *Commissioner Handbook*.]  
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1 [NOTE: The blank lines at the top of this page are included in order to align this excerpt with  
2 the printed report in the *Commissioners Handbook*, i.e., the report begins on line 26 in the  
3 *Handbook* and so these lines were added so that this web file would also begin on line 26.]  
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## 26 **VIII. Task Force on Preparing the Next Generation**

### 27 **The PCA and the Rising Generation**

28 The PCA, as a biblically reformed Church, has a particular perspective on the Church and  
29 the kingdom. Being Reformed in doctrine requires a strong commitment to Covenant  
30 theology, and Covenant theology gives special attention to the rising generation in its  
31 implementation. God has instructed us to make kingdom disciples by teaching all that He  
32 has commanded, and those to be taught include our children and grandchildren, “*that the*  
33 *next generation might know them, and the children yet unborn.*” (Ps. 78:6).

34 Though much of the PCA’s ministry to the rising generations is done locally, five Assembly  
35 Committees and Agencies have ministries that reflect God’s commands regarding the next  
36 generation. Ministry to the rising generations has and continues to be a high priority within  
37 the PCA. The Committees and Agencies both work together and individually in this  
38 ministry.

1 Recognizing the need to carry out God’s command regarding the next generation and  
2 because they are tomorrow’s leaders in the Church, home, community, and world, the  
3 purpose of this task force is twofold: 1. to evaluate the present ministry to the rising  
4 generation, especially looking for areas that need to be addressed; 2. to set direction for the  
5 future that will enable the Committees and Agencies to improve and expand the PCA’s  
6 Committees and Agencies working together, as well as individually in ministering to the  
7 rising generation. *The Committees and Agencies agree that closer contact with practitioners*  
8 *in ministry to the rising generation should be a regular source of information and input to*  
9 *them.*

## 10 **The PCA’s Present and Future Ministry to the Rising Generation**

11 **At the present—The Christian Education and Publications Committee** in one sense  
12 begins with covenant children through its Sunday School, teacher training, and commitment  
13 to help churches and parents in discipling children and youth. More than 60% of PCA  
14 churches are using our Sunday school curriculum (Great Commission Publications). CE&P  
15 regularly trains and assists teachers and church leaders in developing their Christian  
16 education program. Leaders of children’s ministries, as well as youth leaders, meet  
17 regularly for training opportunities conducted by the CE&P staff. CE&P offers counseling  
18 and consulting to churches and individuals involved in this ministry. CE&P focuses on  
19 intensive, in-depth training for selected teenagers with leadership potential from across the  
20 denomination, helping them develop a kingdom framework with a biblical world-and-life  
21 view.

22 Resources are supplied from CE&P’s staff, regional trainers, bookstore and electronic  
23 media, to help local churches disciple the rising generations. Conferences on Christian  
24 schooling are an ongoing part of CE&P’s ministry as well. A major focus under the mission  
25 of “*discipling God’s covenant people*” has been training older men and women to disciple  
26 the younger generations. CE&P makes available to local churches and presbyteries on a  
27 regular basis training and resources to assist in making kingdom disciples. One example:  
28 through its women’s ministry, the spiritual mothering concept has been foundational.  
29 Producing resources and training define CE&P’s role in equipping for this task. CE&P  
30 works with several other PCA Agencies sharing a common commitment to make kingdom  
31 disciples.

32 **For the future—Christian Education and Publications** will continue to expand its  
33 training and resources. Specifically, CE&P will intensify efforts:

- 34 • to bring together the Church, home, and school as they minister to the rising generation  
35 to work more closely with the College and Seminary to develop quality training for  
36 those involved in local church ministries;
- 37 • to coordinate areas of ministry to the rising generation, especially in training leaders and  
38 providing resources, with the College and Seminary;
- 39 • to coordinate with the other Committees and Agencies strategies to communicate a  
40 biblically reformed world-and-life view for the rising generations;

- 1 • to cooperate and collaborate regularly with other Agencies in planning and  
2 implementing training events to train for those involved in this vital ministry;
- 3 • to study, along with the other Committees and Agencies, the trends relating to the  
4 culture of the rising generation in order to better assist churches in their ministry to  
5 them;
- 6 • to give attention to the multi-cultural needs in the PCA, relating to training and  
7 resources;
- 8 • to help local churches and presbyteries address these needs;
- 9 • to more intentionally partner with Covenant College in training teenage leaders in local  
10 churches (this will be a high priority for CE&P); and
- 11 • to facilitate more effective ministries among women and men, as they relate to the rising  
12 generation.

13 **At the present—Covenant College** plays a key role in the PCA’s ministry to the rising  
14 generations, educating college students to become more self-consciously kingdom oriented.  
15 All of Covenant’s career paths are focused on preparing students to see the totality of the  
16 Christian life and how to integrate their faith in all that they do. Not only does the college  
17 aim to disciple its students with a kingdom perspective and a biblically reformed world-and-  
18 life view, it intentionally equips them to apply that faith to all of life both in the Church and  
19 the broader kingdom. Covenant’s education and training impacts the rising generation as  
20 the students understand the challenge to serve Christ in all of life after graduation. Covenant  
21 College assists students in developing a holistic perspective on the Church and the kingdom  
22 from a wholesome, spiritual, as well as intellectual understanding of truth. Covenant College  
23 cooperates with other PCA Committees and Agencies in training and producing resources to  
24 those involved in children and youth ministries as well as Christian schooling. Many  
25 graduates are teaching in school systems in churches and communities. A major emphasis  
26 of the college’s impact is to challenge students to understand the opportunities in global  
27 areas of service. Covenant College is a valuable resource to other Committees and Agencies  
28 as well as local churches in jointly ministering to the rising generation. Consistent with the  
29 PCA’s philosophy and theology, Covenant College demonstrates a commitment to help  
30 students see the reality of the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life plus the need for them to  
31 serve Christ in all things.

32 **For the future—Covenant College** through its faculty and staff is committed:

- 33 • to work cooperatively with PCA Committees and Agencies in expanding the ministry to  
34 the rising generations;
- 35 • to offer and expand its programs in order to extend Covenant’s resources “out to the  
36 world in coherent, mission-minded ways”;
- 37 • to expand its bridge building to communities and ethnic groups, churches and schools;
- 38 • to spawn, through its students and graduates, solidly biblical Reformed thinking in all  
39 areas of life;
- 40 • to help produce a generation who not only knows how to evangelize and minister in the  
41 church context but also knows how to live as salt and light in the world as well;

- 1 • to interact with schools, churches, and communities in a continuous way in order to
- 2 realize their goal; and
- 3 • to discover more effective ways of training students both spiritually and academically to
- 4 represent Christ in all of life.

5 **At the present—Covenant Theological Seminary**, in training pastors (as well as men and  
6 women for other Christian ministries) has seen the need to challenge and equip their  
7 students to consider fulltime ministry to children and youth. Opportunities to study today’s  
8 youth culture both in urban and rural context are part of students’ training. The seminary  
9 makes the students aware of the unique challenges for ministry to the rising generation. The  
10 curriculum, both elective and required courses, includes opportunities to equip students to  
11 know how to minister to the rising generation. The seminary demonstrates a strong  
12 commitment through the youth ministry track to train people for this ministry and has  
13 worked with the other Committees and Agencies in this task. Through its commitment to  
14 ongoing training for seminary graduates, ministry to the rising generations is a part of  
15 Covenant Seminary’s strategy for biblically influencing the present culture.

16 The seminary integrates into its education and training biblically oriented pedagogical  
17 techniques proven to be effective with the rising generation. They work with other PCA  
18 Committees and Agencies often serving as a catalyst and facilitator of joint ministries to the  
19 rising generation. Many courses in the seminary’s curriculum are oriented to a variety of  
20 ministries to the rising generation. Offering many different opportunities such as lecture  
21 series, the Youth in Ministry Institute, local think tank groups, the Francis Schaeffer  
22 Institute, the seminary addresses today’s postmodern culture and the challenges facing the  
23 rising generation. A number of PCA people involved in children and youth ministries have  
24 been trained at Covenant Seminary.

25 Another area of significance highlights the opportunities of both a multi-cultural and a  
26 multi-generational ministry within the rising generations. Exposing the students to those  
27 with expertise in the area of children and youth, as well as general culture, are regular parts  
28 of Covenant Seminary’s training role.

29 **For the future—Covenant Theological Seminary** will rise to the challenge and  
30 opportunity:

- 31 • to add additional faculty and staff to reflect its commitment to the rising generation from
- 32 the multi-cultural environment;
- 33 • to work more intentionally with other Committees and Agencies in this ministry;
- 34 • to increase efforts to strengthen the ties between the churches and the Seminary in
- 35 training students for ministry;
- 36 • to expand continuing education for graduates in local ministry positions, especially those
- 37 who work with the rising generation;
- 38 • to help the Church realize the resources available from all the Committees and Agencies
- 39 in their ministry to the rising generation;
- 40 • to help develop a better communication network among the Committees and Agencies
- 41 regarding this ministry;

- 1 • to help create biblically reformed youth ministry materials;
- 2 • to help persuade senior pastors and other Church leaders of the legitimacy of children
- 3 and youth ministries; and
- 4 • to continually interact with students from the rising generation.

5 **At the present—Reformed University Ministries** is another indication of the PCA’s  
6 commitment to the rising generations. RUM is a ministry of outreach and discipleship  
7 focused on the college and university campus. RUM establishes ministries to college  
8 students in their environment. Their ministry is designed to help students, at this important  
9 stage of their lives, to think through what it means to be a kingdom disciple, seeing all of life  
10 under the Lordship of Christ. They develop opportunities through both corporate and  
11 personal ministries to students, some of whom are struggling with a variety of things such as  
12 postmodernism, the rugged individualism of Western thought, and the need to be involved in  
13 ministry either in the local church or other areas of opportunity. RUM’s unique approach to  
14 making disciples relationally has given them opportunity to expand to many college and  
15 university campuses.

16 Working with young men and women students as well as expanding their international  
17 ministries and developing their multi-cultural approach is part of RUM’s strategy to reach  
18 the rising generation on those campuses. RUM sets forth a clear message and ministry that  
19 seeks to connect the rising generation with solidly biblical and Reformed theology with  
20 special emphasis on the place of the Church in their lives.

21 **For the future—Reformed University Ministries** plans:

- 22 • to increase their number of female staff workers to work with female students;
- 23 • to be more intentional in their ministry to Hispanics and African American students;
- 24 • to disciple students to know the Lord and to understand their role in the Church and
- 25 kingdom, as kingdom disciples; and
- 26 • to expand the RUM ministry by focusing on “how our understanding of Reformed
- 27 theology prepares us to reach the rising generation or any generation. Covenant
- 28 theology is cross-generational. A Reformed ecclesiology embraces every generation.
- 29 This understanding lays a foundation for RUM’s fixed theology and flexible
- 30 methodology.”

31 **At the present—Ridge Haven Conference Center** serves the PCA’s ministry to the rising  
32 generation in a variety of ways. The conference center provides an effective setting for  
33 many camps and conferences for children and youth. Ridge Haven provides and hosts  
34 events for the rising generation. Working with local churches, presbyteries, and other  
35 Committees and Agencies, Ridge Haven provides numerous opportunities for ministry to the  
36 rising generation. Along with other Committees and Agencies, Ridge Haven shares a  
37 commitment to make kingdom disciples. They design their programs to help participants  
38 “grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, toward a Christian world-and-life view,  
39 with a full and unreserved commitment to his Lordship.”

1 Ridge Haven is committed to minister to the rising generation through its facilities and  
2 programs by bringing together cooperative efforts with other PCA Committees and  
3 Agencies in this task. Ridge Haven especially cooperates with churches and presbyteries in  
4 events focused on the rising generations. Their camp counselors are trained to minister to  
5 their rising generation in a camp and conference setting.

6 **For the future—Ridge Haven plans:**

- 7 • to think more regionally as it works, not only with churches and presbyteries, but with  
8 PCA Committees and Agencies to develop and expand their training programs, utilizing  
9 their facilities;
- 10 • to participate with the plans of other Committees and Agencies in coordinating efforts to  
11 minister to the rising generation as well as to those who serve them;
- 12 • to work more closely, especially with Christian Education and Publications, in  
13 developing training for children and youth, through camps and conferences; and
- 14 • to minister to leaders involved in local ministries to the rising generation.

15 Note: **Mission to the World** offers opportunities to the rising generation for involvement in  
16 short term missions projects, and through some of its missionaries, conducts ministries to the  
17 street children in several countries.

18 **Collective Commitment**

19 In all these ways and more, the PCA reflects a priority to continue its present commitment to  
20 minister to the rising generation. The future offers a multitude of opportunities. Each  
21 Committee and Agency demonstrates two main things: one, the growing challenge to  
22 minister to the rising generations; two, the need to work together to expand present efforts.

23 Clearly, the PCA Committees and Agencies are presently highly focused and doing some  
24 strategic things in their ministry to the next generation. There is definitely a shared  
25 awareness of the importance of more joint planning and implementation of that ministry.  
26 Growing out of this strategic planning process, each Committee and Agency has agreed that  
27 more coordination and cooperation, as well as the sharing of resources, will better facilitate  
28 their efforts to reach the rising generation with even greater effectiveness.

29 **For Recommendation to the 2006 General Assembly**

- 30 1. That the GA direct Christian Education and Publications, Covenant College, Covenant  
31 Theological Seminary, Reformed University Ministries and Ridge Haven to meet  
32 annually to evaluate, plan, and share information on how the PCA can better  
33 demonstrate its commitment to disciple the next generation with greater effectiveness.
- 34 2. That relevant information be shared on a regular basis through various events, websites,  
35 and publications with the presbyteries and local churches within the PCA in order to  
36 continue to demonstrate a clear and strong denominational emphasis on ministry to the  
37 rising generation, as well as a commitment to help local churches in their ministry in that  
38 task.