

## Overture from the Reformed Church of Masterton Re National Diaconate Committee

Esteemed Brothers,

### Introduction

The current mandate regarding International Relief Projects reads (Office-bearers' Handbook 4-21 Section 5.1): The NDC aims to support community based development programmes which may include medical, agricultural, educational and construction projects.

There are, however, some concerns that Masterton has with regard to the method being encouraged by the NDC for the unilateral support of projects they seek to develop. We believe that it is the local churches responsibility to evaluate and support diaconal projects. It is the local officebearers calling and responsibility before the Lord to give an account of how they are using the Lord's money. Because of the character of this accountability, and the suggestion that the NDC expects all churches to support and contribute to their work (Agenda of Synod 4-74), the Session of the Reformed Church of Masterton overtures Synod 2014 to revise the mandate of the NDC regarding International Relief Projects.

### Overture

**To amend the mandate of the National Diaconate Committee Section 5.1 to:**

**The NDC aims to promote community based development programmes for the voluntary support of the churches of the RCNZ. These programmes may include medical, agricultural, educational and construction projects.**

### Grounds:

1. This recognises the authority and the responsibility of the local deacons. Rather than diaconal aid being structured in a top down approach from a committee down to the churches. This allows the churches to recognise their calling and responsibility in diaconal work.
2. This fits better with the distinction in Section 4 regarding income for the NDC. Section 4.1 states that the NDC is to be supplied with money for its basic tasks. Section 4.2 states that specific projects and/or disaster relief are funded by special collections from the churches as deemed advisable and necessary by the NDC.
3. Rather than a committee having to choose projects that match the criteria of every church in the RCNZ, this allows the individual churches to make decisions based on the information provided by the NDC that fits with their criteria.
4. The NDC would have greater flexibility based upon what they know the local churches are looking for and what they are supporting. It should increase the feedback that the NDC receives when they receive support or not. It should encourage the communication that they are requesting.
5. This means that the NDC will not have to do any more work. It means that they will be one of the very important and reliable channels for information regarding the diaconal needs that must be promoted in the local churches. We trust that the churches will give preference to the projects endorsed and promoted by the NDC as this is the committee of the RCNZ mandated for this purpose.