**38. January 7 and February 26, 1672.** *A shortened version of the announcement made by the churches at the Lamb and the Tower (Document 36), recast as a letter, omitting the quotations from Valentine Hütwohl’s letter of December 17 (Document 34). Apparently a complete copy of Hütwohl’s letter was to accompany this letter, which appeals for financial aid for the Swiss Anabaptist refugees and the Mennonite churches in the Palatinate who are caring for them. The letter of January 7 was originally written for the Mennonite churches in the province of Holland only, but according to an insertion in the present letter the appeal was extended on February 26 to churches outside of Holland (including other provinces of the Netherlands).[[1]](#footnote-1) The collected funds are to be given to the committee members, who will depart for the Palatinate, or the funds are to be sent by draft.*

[folio 1 recto]

Dear friends and beloved brothers in the Lord,

Mercy and peace be to you from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

We suppose that you may have already heard some time ago rumors of the harsh persecution, which started concerning and against the Mennonites living in Switzerland, beginning a couple of years earlier; how some of them have been held in prison for a long time, others exiled from the country; in fact several also have been corporally punished, transported to Italy, and banished to the galleys as slaves and serfs. In connection with this, the Mennonites previously have been given the advice that they should leave Switzerland and establish their residence somewhere else. They have finally been able to come to this resolve with much difficulty, giving as a reason [for hesitation], among other things, that while suffering daily under the cross, they realized more growth of the congregation and, accordingly, were hesitant to leave the work of the harvest of the Lord.

Moreover, the circumstances of the people were of such a nature that it seemed almost impossible to leave the country, considering that the families or households of those who embraced the faith were remarkably divided among themselves. For in the case of so many men and women, parents and children, one of the family belonged to the Mennonites, or some were members of the congregation, while on the other hand others adhered to the large church.[[2]](#footnote-2) Finally it appears, however, that the heavy burden [of persecution] became so oppressive, and the fire became so hot that they could no longer reasonably stay in the country.

As we have understood from time to time, by means of letters sent to us by our brothers in the Palatinate, that part [of the Swiss Mennonites] leaving their homes and fields, have begun to depart and have arrived with the Mennonites in the Palatinate. And we were of the opinion that it was our Christian duty to keep an eye on this and to offer a helping hand to the persecuted as well as those who received them in the Palatinate, who also are of little means. So, although not requested by them in this matter, we have already informed our brothers in the Palatinate some time ago, by writing, that we were willing, and we offered to extend our help for the comfort and support of our persecuted brothers. And as a result this has actually occurred, and for this purpose some money has been transferred.

However, we now have received an extensive report from our brothers from the Palatinate about the arrival of the majority of the Mennonite people, who thus far had remained in Switzerland in the area of Bern. And in order to help them, as required by the great emergency, a rather large amount ought to be collected [as[[3]](#footnote-3) you easily may estimate yourself from the enclosed copy[[4]](#footnote-4)]. [We know] a shared burden can be borne more adequately by [folio 1 verso] a mutual hand, and we surmise at the same time that you also would appreciate it if the circumstances of these matters would be made known to you, although not especially being requested to do so. We have nevertheless judged it necessary, from the urge of love and pity for the oppressed, as well as [from] being members, as we trust, of that same spiritual body in which we by God’s grace also hope to partake, to request your mutual assistance in this matter.

We might have done this earlier, if we had not initially thought it more proper to restrict ourselves to the congregations in Holland and to

spare you, but since in the meantime the number of those expelled has further increased, and we have also noticed affection among the outside friends[[5]](#footnote-5) [and a willingness] to offer a helping hand to the expelled, we have decided to send this to you.[[6]](#footnote-6)

And we were commanded to remember prisoners as if we were imprisoned with them, and the ones who are badly treated as if we ourselves were ill treated in the body.[[7]](#footnote-7) [We are told] that it will also be noticed by the Lord Himself, so lofty [though He is] in the last judgment, that He first blesses, having spoken of giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, of lodging strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison, [and He] adds to this afterwards in explicit words: in as much as you have done this to one of these, the least of my brothers, so you have done it to me.[[8]](#footnote-8) And since we, at this moment, in accordance with our Confession [of Faith] and according to the nature of love may not doubt whether the presently oppressed suffer for the sake of righteousness and consequently are brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, so we do trust that you also, according to your ability, will strive to do your Christian duty in this matter, and at the first opportunity will try to collect a generous gift from among your congregation for the comfort and support of the above-mentioned persecuted persons.

So[[9]](#footnote-9) we have the intention to send some people from among us on their way, as soon as possible, in order to distribute the collected money among the expelled [people] in the best manner. We have appended to this the most recent letter[[10]](#footnote-10) that we have received from the persecuted persons themselves, from which you may learn their request and situation.

Wherewith making this short and commending you to God and the word of His grace, we remain with cordial greetings,

Amsterdam, February 26, 1672. Your affectionate brothers.[[11]](#footnote-11)

[Since we intend, with approval of you and our other, outside friends [and] after general consultation, to deliver the money, once it is collected, into their hands in the most appropriate way: either by some persons whom we might send from here to there, or by transferring the collected money directly to our brothers in the Palatinate, as already has been done by us in advance for part [of the money], in order to somewhat relieve the greatest need during this wintertime.][[12]](#footnote-12) Now furthermore—in order to provide some necessities to so many people and create opportunities that they can eat their own bread—that a rather large amount [of money] will be needed may be judged by everyone, who, as mentioned [earlier], examines the enclosed copy thoughtfully. All of this we will leave to our dear brothers in their own Christian meditations, and commending them to God and the word of His mercy, after cordial greetings, remaining your affectionate and faithful friends and brothers in Amsterdam, January 7, 1672.

1. **38** 1 This letter has two dates apparently because it was a rough draft both of letters for the churches in Holland and of letters for the other churches. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Reformed church. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The square brackets around this clause are in the original. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Apparently Hütwohl’s letter, Document 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. That is, the brothers outside the province of Holland. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This paragraph is an insertion from the upper left margin of the page. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Heb. 13:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Matt. 25: 35-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Here begins an insertion from the left margin and bottom of the page. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Apparently a copy of Valentine Hütwohl’s letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Here the insertion ends. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This square bracket and the one at the head of this paragraph are not added by the translator, but are in the original document and perhaps mark an intended deletion. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)