124. February 2, 1711. A letter from the Committee for Foreign Needs reports to Bendicht Brechtbühl and his brethren the Committee’s agreement that neither settlement in Prussia nor draining the Swiss marshlands is desirable. They hesitate to send the martyrologies until Brechtbühl has a more settled dwelling place, with a hint that there has been a request for a German edition. The Committee requests that the exiles do not hazard a secret visit to Switzerland and so nullify the efforts the Dutch Mennonites have made to rescue them.

[recto]

Bendicht Brechtbühl February 2, 1711, Amsterdam

Respected friends and dear brothers in Christ,

We have received your welcome letter from Mannheim dated January 4 and communicated the contents to our fellow ministers. They have

requested that we respond to it.

First of all, thank you very much for the Happy New Year’s greeting. We return the greeting, praying that the Lord will take you and all the dear brothers and sisters into his holy protection and preserve you from accident.

Regarding our imprisoned fellow believers in Bern, we have remitted for their support another 300 rixdollars to Mr. Runckel. And we are willing to supply the friends with more if necessary.

Concerning your ministers and elders in Switzerland writing that their desire is not inclined toward being transported to Prussia, our response is that it is not at all our thinking either. However, whereas we perceive from all Mr. Runckel’s advice that the Bern government is holding immovably to its position, you yourselves can see from the enclosed quotations received a few days ago, that the brother Samuel Räber has again been imprisoned and already sentenced.

The result is that our friends think it wholly inadvisable to release you from your promises but instead request that you write to the brothers in Switzerland that they prepare themselves for departure and transportation to this country before the harsh Bern government commits the sin of taking the lives of our dear friends or bringing them to the French galleys.

You will very likely find your request to the government of Bern to [be allowed to] take your children with you a useless effort, but to deceive [the government] would provide a reason to get you under their control. When the brothers are here, no one will be sent to Prussia against his will, but a way will be found to support everyone.

[verso]

We hope to hear in the next post that Mr. Runckel will have achieved the release of the prisoners, and that those who are hiding may come out of it in order to prepare for their departure from the country. However, this hope

has been dashed many times. It was intended that, when we have certainty and know the number [of emigrants], someone from here should be sent there and the friends transported here at our expense. We prefer that you are able to earn a living yourselves, but if there is someone who requires support, we are willing and inclined to fulfill that need.

The marshlands plan is abandoned.

It has been reported to us that Melchior Zahler is in Neuchâtel. We would very much like to know where Hans Bürki is.

Our friends are willing to send the martyr books, but it seems to us that there is no rush with this as long as it is unknown where you will be living. [Sending] them to Switzerland will serve no other purpose than angering the government of Zurich. Printing [them] in German is problematic.

I have passed on the general greetings to the known friends to whom you have again sent warm greetings and in particular to the friends from the Committee and the friends Christopher van de Walle, Harman ten Cate and their wives, with my children.

We recommend to you once again, if you sincerely value our untiring work and help, not at all to put yourselves at risk by venturing to go up [to Switzerland]. Your children can be brought by someone of your friends, in this we are trusting.