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**Date:**  March 1672

**Sender:**  Lam, Congregation of the

**Sender Place:**  Amsterdam

**Receiver:**  Palatinate, delegates to

**Receiver Place:**  Palatinate

**Language:**  English

**Translation:**

**40. March 1672.**[[1]](#footnote-3) *This is a copy of a letter of introduction given by the Church at the Lamb in Amsterdam to the committee members going to the Palatinate. The* Martyrs’ Mirror[[2]](#footnote-4) *mentions this delegation of March 1672, sent to take the money for the Swiss refugees and to survey conditions, but this letter is of special interest since it actually gives the names of the delegates.*

To the elders, ministers, and brothers, who have been driven out of Switzerland recently and have arrived in the Palatinate, we, the elders, ministers and brothers, signed below, of the churches which are called the United Mennonite churches in Holland,[[3]](#footnote-5) wish much grace and peace from God our heavenly father through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Worthy friends and beloved brothers in the Lord, on various occasions, through letters sent to us from the Palatinate, we have learned of the physical suffering you have experienced for the sake of righteousness. In addition we have seen in your welcome letter of February 2/12[[4]](#footnote-6) your request that a helping hand be extended to you in this piteous condition. At our own impulse we had already made some preparations for your support, and thus we felt ourselves so much the more moved to expedite matters. Because we are inclined to aid you as best we can, we consider it useful to send several men from our midst to you. For this purpose we have asked our dear brothers and fellow ministers Frans Beuns,[[5]](#footnote-7) Johannes Andrissen van Aken,[[6]](#footnote-8) Antony Rooleeuw,[[7]](#footnote-9) and Dr. Joannes de Bakker[[8]](#footnote-10) to go. At our request and from Christian love, they are undertaking this difficult journey in the present winter season. We ask, then, that you kindly acknowledge and

receive these persons as representatives from us. And further, frankly disclose to them the state of your affairs, and besides in complete confidence talk over with them everything which would contribute to the success of your affairs.

After we became acquainted with the love and sympathy which they bear for you, we have given them complete authority to carry out whatever might be beneficial for your welfare and to manage the funds which have been collected in our churches up till now according to their wisdom and discretion for your best advantage. We do hope that our brotherly sympathy and their love and benevolence toward you will be received with such warm sympathy as is demonstrated by us toward you in this matter.

Remaining, after our warm greeting, your sympathetic,

willing servants, brothers, elders, and

ministers of the church as stated above.

**41. ca. March 1672.** *Copy of a letter, unsigned and undated, but very likely from Jacob Eberling at Obersülzen in the Palatinate about four representatives from the United Flemish and Waterlander Mennonite church who have come[[9]](#footnote-11) to learn of conditions among the Swiss Anabaptist refugees, and about three points of disagreement between Mennonites in the Palatinate and those in Holland—about justification, about requirements for communion, and about the marriage of church members with non-members.*

[recto]

Copy

Here is how matters stand: Some friends have come to us from the United Flemish and Waterlander congregations at Amsterdam, namely, Frans Beuns, Johannes de Bakker, and Anthony Rooleeuw, and from Utrecht Johannes Andriessen.[[10]](#footnote-12) They bring along some official statements and letters of recommendation from their congregations at Amsterdam and elsewhere. In them was indicated the cause of their coming, specifically, to investigate the condition and provisions of our banished Swiss brothers in their distress and at the same time to offer help. Also [the letters] requested simultaneously that we should be helpful to these friends. We have also in no way wanted to refuse this, nor could, but according to our ability we gladly want to help them to be able to carry out their plan, to guide them around our land and to take them from place to place as efficiently as we can.

They have made observations and listed what they have encountered as suitable for meeting the needs and wants of the above-mentioned banished brothers with an offer of help according to what the situation required.

Meanwhile as we got into discussion with them, they asked us what hindered us from recognizing them as brothers. We indicated that we heard that they had deviated from the foundations of the Baptism-minded [Mennonites]. Since they desired to know in what way, we indicated that among other matters, in the first place, especially, they were not correct on the issue of the justification of man before God. We had heard that they teach a doctrine that Christ has not suffered for us in our place, but rather as an example for us, that we likewise by suffering should follow him to become saved. In the second place, they allowed those who had not yet received baptism upon their confession of faith to partake in communion. In the third place marriage with non-members was permitted by them without punishment.

The first two issues these friends have flatly denied. Concerning the first (being the issue of justification, etc.) they had the doctor’s own confession [of faith][[11]](#footnote-13) in handwriting with them, which they read aloud. Along with other statements, it said that Christ suffered not only for our good and advantage, but also in our stead and place. Accordingly we are saved not because of, or by, our works, but only by grace. Thus we had no difficulty about that issue since we cannot see otherwise than that this confession agrees with the Holy Scripture and the sentiments of the Mennonites.

[verso]

Concerning the second issue—that they would admit persons not baptized on confession of faith to partake in communion—they claimed to know of no example. This appeared strange to me, since I had heard at different times, and indeed from such persons whom I trusted, that they had knowledge of the matter and [yet] would not tell me anything other than that they really knew it was an actual fact. Yet I remembered that someone told me of a certain person who was Danish who previously used to commune with them (and yet now had some objection against it for reasons which were relevant to him) who had received no other baptism than in his young years. So I asked them if they had no knowledge of this. The friends said no, except for Anthony Rooleeuw (then not present with us), who indeed knew about it, which they afterwards told me happened without their knowing it, because the congregation is large and they did not know all the members. This I could find reasonable, and whatever happens unknowingly I could not blame on anybody, as could certainly be experienced by others.\*[[12]](#footnote-14)

Concerning the third issue, the punishment of marriage outside the

congregation, they openly rejected this, and flatly said there was no Scripture for such a practice, and that our Confession of Faith itself mentions no punishment for such a matter. But since we could not find such a view reasonable, we rather understand that such[[13]](#footnote-15) ought to be punished, in that God the Lord has had displeasure in that at all times and has severely punished such, as is to be seen in Genesis 6, Deuteronomy 7, Nehemiah 13,[[14]](#footnote-16) and other places. The Apostle in I Corinthians 9:5 expressly says [a member ought] to have a sister for a wife. I do not know otherwise than that such has been taught and practiced at all times among the Mennonites. Then the aforesaid friends contradicted this and told us that this point has already become freely accepted in the congregations where Samuel Apostool, Hans Vlamingh, etc. are. Among those of the same kind[[15]](#footnote-17) they bring up for a proof the example that at Utrecht a certain deacon from our [their?] congregation had married out of the church, but he was not punished because of this. In fact, he only abstained for a few weeks from his duties and then resumed his service again. We considered this rather strange, and I said that I thought I should write the friends about this, just as I do on this occasion, inquiring in a quite friendly manner.

What I also write and request the friends, Apostool, Vlamingh, and their fellow ministers, I do not think necessary to set down here differently. What is stated above I have also written to them word for word.

Where[[16]](#footnote-18) this \* is above, continue reading as follows:

As long as the matter was not accepted as permanent [policy], to which the friends said, no.

1. **40** 1 Both a Dutch and a German version of this letter exist in the Municipal Archives in Amsterdam, but the German version is given and translated since it was made in Holland to present to the German-speaking churches in the Palatinate. The Dutch version has a heading which says, “In Amsterdam March 1672.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
2. *Martelaers Spiegel,* (1685) II, p. 829; *Martyrs’ Mirror*, p. 1127. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
3. Instead of Holland the Dutch version says, “Amsterdam.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
4. This gives the date in both old and new style. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
5. *DB* [=*Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*] (1900), p. 4; Zijlstra, *Om de ware gemeente*, p. 412. All four of these men are also named in Document 42 from the Palatinate dated April 1672. Cf. Van der Zijpp, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. Johan Andries van Aken (1623-1706) was a very wealthy Mennonite preacher at Utrecht. *DB* (1874), pp. 77 ff.; *ME* I, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
7. Anthony Rooleeuw, deacon in Amsterdam, died in 1700. *ME* IV, 354-355. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
8. Physician and preacher at the Toren church in Amsterdam 1673-1691 and 1695 on. *ME* I, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
9. **41** 1 *Martelaers Spiegel* (1685) II, p. 829; *Martyrs’ Mirror*, p. 1127. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
10. These four are named in Document 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
11. This is probably the *Nineteen Articles* of Dr. Galenus Abrahamsz of 1657. *ME* II, 432, 433; H. W. Meihuizen, *Galenus Abrahamsz 1622-1706* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1954), pp. 57, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
12. See insertion at end of document. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
13. That is, members who marry non-members. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
14. Gen. 6:1-7; Deut. 7:3-4; Neh. 13:23-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
15. The conservative Amsterdam congregation of the *Zon* (the Sun), generally the Zonists. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
16. The following two lines from the bottom of the verso are to be inserted where the asterisk is above. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)