

6-17-1963

From: Charles L. Brown (6/17/63) - papers
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Charles L. Brown

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TOMS RIVER CHURCH OF CHRIST

TEMPORARY MEETING PLACE
Community Center Building
Lakehurst, New Jersey

CHARLES L. BROWN, Minister
1021 Bell Street
Toms River, New Jersey
Diamond 1-1739

June 17, 1963

Mr. John Allan Chalk
c/o Broad Street church of Christ
Cookeville, Tennessee

Dear John Allan:

I am enclosing some mimeographed material concerning the new work with which we are associated. It tells something of our need for a meeting place of our own. Will you pass this request along to any individual, church or churches which you feel might possibly be interested and able to help?

It is hoped you and your family are well and happy in your work. We have heard some good reports of your labors. I was real sorry that we could not accept your Mother's invitation to take a meal with her last summer, for I know we would have enjoyed getting to be with you again.

We have really enjoyed our work in the Northeast. The enclosed material will tell you something of our work. Jane and the children are fine. The boys, Steven and Timothy, are now in Tennessee visiting with their Grandparents. They returned with relatives who visited us last week and will remain until we are there the first part of July.

Any suggested contacts which you feel might be profitable for us to make while in Tennessee would be greatly appreciated. My best wishes are with you.

In Christian Love,

Charles L. Brown

Charles L. Brown

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P.S. Would it be possible that the church there might consider sending you for a "mission" meeting in the future?

Introducing the Toms River church of Christ

New Jersey has a population of more than 6,000,000 souls making it the eighth largest of our fifty states. It is the most densely populated with an average of more than 800 people per square mile of land area. The state has six cities with populations of 100,000 or over and 127 communities having 10,000 or more.

In this populous Northeastern state there are only 25 congregations of the churches of Christ with a total combined membership of approximately 1600. The average membership per congregation is 65. There are only 15 men devoting full time to the ministry of Christ in the state and only 8 of the 25 churches are self-supporting and able to carry on a full program of work. Only 2 of the 25 churches have selected and appointed elders. The oldest congregation in the state is at Tabernacle, having been established in 1914. For 22 years there were no others. The second was begun in Trenton in 1936 and the third in Newark in 1937. At least 15 of the 25 churches were started in the past 13 years, since 1950.

Breaking down the above figures we find: There is one congregation in the state for each 240,000 inhabitants; there is one full time preacher for each 375,000 souls; and there are more than 100 communities of 10,000 or more population without a congregation of the church of Christ.

If Tennessee had no more churches and members in proportion to its number of people than does New Jersey, the figures would look something like this: Tennessee would have but 15 congregations with a total membership of around 900 and only 9 men spending full time in the ministry. This would mean that each division of the state, East, Middle and West, would have but 5 congregations with total memberships of 300 and only 3 men serving full time in the ministry. Can you imagine either Middle or West Tennessee with only 5 churches? With only 3 full time gospel preachers? If you can, then you can better understand the problems faced by those working in the Northeast.

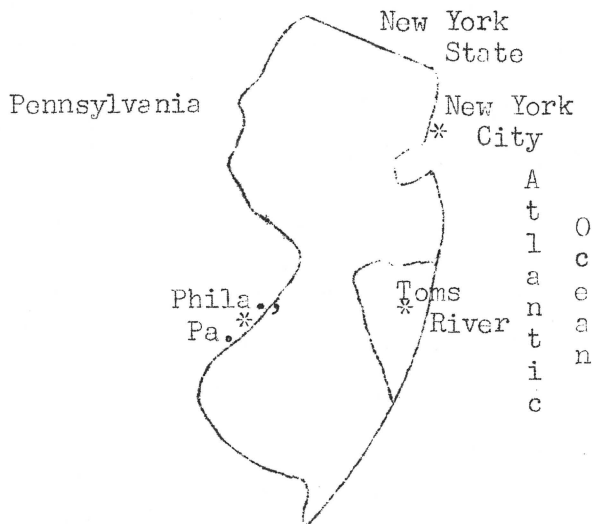
The Toms River, New Jersey congregation was organized in April, 1962. About twenty Christians, most of whom had formerly worshipped at Eatontown and New Egypt, 25 or 30 miles away, started meeting regularly in our present meeting place, the Lakehurst Community Center building. Most of these were military families connected with the Lakehurst Naval Air Station. The Charles Brown family began work with this new group in June, 1962, being completely supported by the North "A" and Tennessee congregation in Midland, Texas. The Texas church supported the Browns in their work with the Red Bank congregation from 1958 until 1962 when that church became self-supporting in its fifth year.

During the first year of the Toms River work, there were fourteen souls baptized into Christ, three to make confession of errors and a family of six who formerly worshipped with the Christian Church took their stand with us. Our Sunday morning attendance averages more than seventy and evening attendance is around 40 to 50. Our weekly contributions have consistently averaged \$90.00 or more. The present membership is 38 with about half of these military families. Four of these military families, composing seven adult members of the church, will leave within the next few weeks for assignments elsewhere.

Ocean County, of which Toms River is the county seat, has a population of over 100,000. Since 1950 it has about doubled its number of people and in proportion to its size has been one of the fastest growing counties in the entire nation. It is estimated the population will be nearing the 200,000 figure by 1970. This tremendous growth is due primarily to the great overflow of people from the New York City metropolitan area.

Like any congregation that is forced to meet in rented quarters, our most urgent need is to acquire a meeting place of our own. Toward this end, land is now being purchased. A well located one acre tract is being bought for \$6,000.00. This corner lot has 200 feet of frontage on Hooper Avenue, one of the main thoroughfares of the area.

We have saved \$3,500.00 and expect to borrow the additional \$2,500.00 from a local bank. Our immediate needs are to repay this as quickly as possible so we can become financially able to finance a building program.



New Jersey has 6,000,000 people and only 25 churches of Christ.

Toms River, New Jersey is in Ocean County on the Jersey Shore. It is 75 miles south of New York City and 60 miles east of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.