

So what's it like in Kansas City?

Kansas City is the 29th largest metro area in the United States with a population of just over 2.1 million people. The city is growing rapidly and has added roughly 132,000 people in the last two years.



From a cultural perspective Kansas City is known for its jazz, its fountains and its world famous *barbeque* – a succulent way of serving up beef and pork. Counting over 200 public fountains it is known as the “City of Fountains” and is rumored to have more of them than Rome.

In 2010, Kansas City was named by *Kiplinger* as one of the top 10 great cities for young adults. A *U.S. News and World Report* named Kansas City the third least miserable airport in the United States based on a study of crowded planes and delayed flights. Overland Park a community on Kansas City’s south side was recently ranked the number 7 place in the country to live, while three other communities on the southern edge of the city also ranked in the top 50.

At first glance, Kansas City looks like a pretty good place for CrossWorld to have landed. Though our first three weeks of residency don’t exactly make us experts, they have left a few first impressions that we’d like to share with you. Four words immediately come to mind.

“Hotter” – Just about every day I utter a prayer of “Thank you God for air-conditioning”. And I really mean it. It’s been hot and humid! Many days since

our arrival the temperature has hovered close to 100 degrees with the humidex reading about 110. But the extreme heat has not only made us think of ourselves. It has actually prompted us repeatedly to pray for our workers, many of whom live in hot climates where there is no air-conditioning. It has been a great reminder to us of the hardships that many face daily.

“Friendlier” – Compared to the big cities of Toronto or Philadelphia, Kansas City seems friendlier. Neighbors seem a bit more “neighborly”. Store merchants seem to go the extra mile to serve the customer. We have felt very welcome in our new culture. Yet at the same time we are reminded that many of our workers are living in places where they do not always feel particularly welcome. So Kansas City’s friendliness is also a great prayer reminder for us.

“Cheaper” – This has been a pleasant surprise, coming from Toronto where gasoline and house prices are somewhat closer to what Europeans pay. The house we found was less than half of what we would have paid in Toronto. Gasoline is about 30% less than Canadian prices and about 10% less than many other parts of the U.S. The safety inspection required to license our car in Missouri was \$12, and our new driver’s licenses including written test, road test and permit cost us all of \$20. As thankful as we are for this reality, it is also a reminder to us of the high cost that many cross-cultural workers pay to serve Christ, often paid in a currency more precious than dollars.

“Faster” – I’m not speaking about the pace of life, but rather about how long it takes to do things.

Things seem so much quicker and easier here than in the north-east. Forty-five minutes is plenty of time to arrive at the airport before your flight. A

five-mile drive to work takes little more than five minutes. And waiting in line? We can honestly say we haven’t seen a line yet – unless two people in a row constitute one. Yet while we rejoice in this bless-



ing, we are reminded of how slow and cumbersome life is in many parts of the world where our people labor. As strange as it may seem, the ease of daily life here has prompted us to pray more for those who serve in places where life's simplest tasks can be agonizingly time-consuming.

Oh, we thank God for bringing us to Kansas City. We believe it will be beneficial to CrossWorld in many more ways than the few we have shared. But in the midst of all of our gratitude for a few temporal blessings, we don't ever want to lose sight of the great sacrifice that many are making for the sake of the gospel. Some risk physical harm. Many face daily hardship due to climate, culture and more. One of our workers was recently shot in the crossfire of an attempted robbery. Two others were forced to flee for their lives when they refused to pay local drug lords "protection" money. An experienced female medical doctor is experiencing hardship like she has never known in over 20 years of ministry, due to the repressive laws against women in her adoptive country.

It is not common anymore to consider hardship as part and parcel of our Christian calling, especially in a culture like ours that seduces us with comfort.

When Jim Elliot and four of his co-workers were slaughtered by the Auca Indians back in the 1950s hundreds of North Americans volunteered to take their places. I have to wonder what will be the response to the recent slaughter in Afghanistan of the ten foreign workers who were all followers of Jesus. Will there be a similar surge of disciples wanting to fill the ranks? Or will we retreat into the safety of our comfortable existence, silently cursing their killers?

I was challenged this week by Paul's words to those who begged him to turn away from Jerusalem due to the threats against his life. His response? *"I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."* (Acts 20:24)

This is still our task today. And the only way it will be achieved in our lifetime is if we have the same *"my life worth nothing"* attitude. That's what we want. What about you?

Dale and Jerusha Losch & family

News Clips from the Losches...

- » We settled into our new home the end of July and thank God for His provision of such a beautiful place.
- » Joel and Jessica have remained in Ontario, Canada for work.
- » Nathan and Hannah have begun their junior and freshmen year of college at Cedarville University in Ohio.
- » Our travels over the next few months will take us to Ontario, Michigan, Atlanta, Charlotte and Europe.

Prayer Points for Losches...

- » For Dale to lead CrossWorld with wisdom, courage and skill (pray Psalm 78:70-72)
- » For Jerusha to discover the best role for her in our new ministry context.
- » For God to direct us to unbelievers who are seeking Him, and to believers who are looking for someone to help them grow.