

URBAN CURRENT

10 Largest Cities ... and who cares?

Tracking urban population can be tricky. Some numbers reference the city proper, others the entire metropolitan area. Also, there is the matter of people who are residing illegally, therefore remaining invisible and uncountable.

#10 New York

While New York City proper is counted at **8.6 million** people, the metropolitan area numbers 18.6 million. Of course, this includes counties in New Jersey, Connecticut, & Pennsylvania.

#9 Cairo, Egypt

Teeming streets, crowded tenements, soaring high rises, the ancient alongside the modern, this historic city boasts **19 million** residents.

#8 Osaka, Japan

Known for delicious food and a top spot for trending family destinations in a recent survey conducted by Air B&B, Osaka has a population of **20.3 million**.

#7 Mexico City, Mexico

Terrible traffic, great street food, in addition to 40,000 restaurants, are all part of this sprawling metropolis numbering **21.2 million**.

#6 Beijing, China

21.2 million people. Here you will find the largest palace in the world and Tiananmen Square, the largest public square in the world.

#5 Sao Paulo, Brazil

Bustling and hustling for sure with **21.3 million souls**, the city never sleeps. It is chock full of arts, culture, nightlife, and shopping.

#4 Mumbai, India

One of the cheapest places to live in the world, this urban center is home to **24.4 million**.

#3 Shanghai, China

This city is China's shopping capital and boasts Disney's newest park, Shanghai Disney.

24.5 million residents comprise this stacked and sprawling urban center.

#2 Delhi, India

With **26.5 million people**, it is no surprise there are many languages emanating from its many ethnicities. The great diversity of this vast city makes it a world unto itself.

#1 Tokyo, Japan

Do you know what a subway pusher is? Railway operators employ them to jam and cram rush hour commuters into subway cars in the world's largest city. Can any of us even imagine a population of **38.1 million human beings** in one metropolis?

So, does this matter and who cares? We should.

First, these cities represent what God has been doing in His world in the last century. "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it." (Psalm 24:1). This is the world He loves sacrificially. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16).

We know God is always behind the headlines. The headline has been "The World Urbanizes." God has used various forces to move masses of people all over the globe to urban centers. The world God has planted us in is organized around its major urban centers. These cities represent 235.1 million souls.

It should matter to us what God is doing in His world. He has charged us to make sure every soul in His world hears the Good News.

Secondly, this list reminds us of how cities function. These cities run the world's politics, business, education, entertainment, culture, and arts. The reach of these urban areas is far beyond regional boundaries. They influence the world.

How? Cities are amplifiers and distribution engines. The voices sounding in these cities reach the rest of the world. The good, bad, and ugly, are distributed throughout the world via cities.

Thirdly, these cities challenge our awareness and alertness. Nine of the ten are outside the United States. Read, far away. Do we equate *foreign* and *far away* with irrelevant? Are we oblivious to the fact that they represent millions of lost souls? Are we out of touch with the potential these cities have as basis for worldwide Gospel outreach?

These cities challenge our alertness to the world evangelization strategy found in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit dispatched Paul to the cities of the Roman Empire to sow the Gospel so the voice of truth and the power of the Gospel would not only be heard and felt locally, but flow in the currents of the influence of these cities beyond their boundaries.

The New Testament church was astonishingly fruitful without the tools we have today. Don't you think we should pay attention?

Remember, there are believers already in these modern cities, people who have been evangelized, baptized, and united with local churches. They have amazing stories of conversion, service, and faithfulness. We will meet these brothers and sisters one day in glory. They are painfully aware that they are a sliver of a sliver of a minority. They agonize and pray for the millions surrounding them who have yet to hear the gospel. I'm sure they wonder, "Does anybody care? Would any of our brothers and sisters be willing to support us or come labor alongside us?"

These cities challenge not only our awareness, but our engagement. How many of these cities are represented in your mission giving? Are any of these cities on your personal prayer list? How about your church prayer list?

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