

Christians Flocking to Nashville from Hollywood and All Over America for 'Faith, Family and Freedom'

Nashville, Tennessee, is known as the home of country music, but in recent years, it has become just as popular with Christians and Christian ministries.

Kelsey Cooke and Chris Guerra were both born and raised in California. They fell in love on stage while pursuing their acting careers, got married and never dreamed they'd one day leave Hollywood.

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"So, I was one of the artistic directors at the Groundlings Theater in Hollywood. That's where Will Ferrell started, Christian Wig, all those things. Kelsey has a ton of improv and sketch background also, but I will say it was kind of a toxic environment," Guerra recalled.

During the Pandemic, when everything shut down, they visited a friend in Franklin, a popular suburb outside of Nashville. Even as Christians, they couldn't believe what happened.

"We had people praying over us in downtown Franklin. Literally, we were walking in downtown Franklin, going into a shop, and just the owner going, 'Hey, I need to pray for you guys right now.' We don't even know who she is, and she was like, 'Lord, whatever they're going through, they have big decisions to make.' We just were like, what is happening? What is going on? We were just along for the ride," they recalled.

After trying to make it work in both L.A. and Franklin, they decided to put both feet in Tennessee. They started Oddity Improv, a clean comedy theater and training center at the Franklin theater.

They even opened recently for one of the hottest Christian comics on the planet, Nate Bargatze.

"We have worked more than ever in our industry here than we ever did in L.A., and I've had an agent since I was seven years old," Cooke said.

"We pray before shows, which is unheard of. You wouldn't do that in L.A.," Guerra added. "People wanted to rub crystals on me in LA and they're like, is this, okay? But if I pray over this group, it's not okay. But the crystals are okay. Anyway, so yeah, it's Oddity Improv. We used to call it 'cleanish comedy,' we thought, oh, we need to appeal to both sides. And then we had enough people go, 'Well, why don't you just call it clean comedy again?' Both feet in, both feet in," Guerra said.

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Long-time Nashville realtor Kellie Seboa with eXp Realty told CBN News the trend of more Christians and Christian ministries feeling called to Nashville and the surrounding areas is real.

"I heard, I think it was Kirk Cameron the other day, he said three things I thought were real important for people to consider anywhere a conservative state is faith, family, and freedom. And I said, Wow, that's really the theme of a lot of transfers here," Seboa said.

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According to recent census data, more than 130,000 new residents have moved to the Nashville area since 2020, bringing the total greater metro population to over 2 million. In 2024, the region grew by 6.4% compared to the U.S. growth rate of about 3%. And although international migration plays a part, most are moving here from other states.

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