

Grand Prairie church ministers to people on the edge of survival

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GRAND PRAIRIE—Pastor Julius Bamibe takes the Golden Rule seriously, and it serves as the guide for Comforter Christian Center International.

A couple of years ago, Bamibe and his wife, Jizell, saw a need in their community and felt God leading them to respond to it.



Pastor Julius Bamibe and his wife, Jizell, welcome people in need to receive assistance from Comforter Christian Center International in Grand Prairie. (Photo courtesy of Julius Bamibe)

Comforter Christian Center International serves people who live on the streets—veterans, recently released ex-offenders, single mothers, teens who have aged out of foster care and others who are homeless or living on the edge of survival.

The Bamibes believe so deeply in caring for people in dire need, they have taken money from their own retirement account to help fund it.

Twice a month, between 700 and 900 people receive food and other basic necessities at the church. Volunteers serve meals to those who walk in seeking help. Bamibe also delivers food to places where the homeless gather in Grand Prairie.

During the summer, children who receive free or reduced meals at school eat at the church—often with their parents.

Texas Baptist Hunger Offering

Baptists throughout the state help support the church's ministry to the homeless and underprivileged in Grand Prairie—along with 133 other ministries in 30 countries and 37 Texas communities—through their gifts to the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#).

“All the funds come from Texas Baptist churches and individuals who care about people impacted by hunger and poverty,” said Ali Corona from the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. One hundred percent of the offering goes directly to hunger relief and development ministries, she added.

Bamibe wants to meet both physical and spiritual needs of people who live on the streets or on the edge.

“Although the people who are served by Comforter Christian Center International need food, housing and clothes, they need something much more,” he said. “They need Jesus. They need to know there is hope and that their Heavenly Father loves them, just as they are.”

Comforter Christian Center seeks to honor the dignity of homeless people and restore their self-respect by providing them with new or gently used

clothing and a place to shower.

Aging out of foster care

Among other groups, the church helps young women who have aged out of the foster care system at age 18.

With little formal education or job skills training, the girls frequently turn to men for support. Often these girls are abused and end up pregnant. One 21-year-old girl has six children, Bamibe noted.

“We rent a room for six months and provide food and clothes” for the young women while they receive basic job training at a discount store or fast-food restaurant, Bamibe said. “As they complete the training, they are able to become self-supporting and care for their children.”

Jizell Bamibe takes a personal interest in the young women.

“Often these young girls need a woman to discuss personal issues with,” she said. “They need to see things from a woman’s perspective. Maybe the issues are child care, food preparation or health. I put myself in their place and ask, ‘What would I do?’”

Her husband worked as a physical therapist before he eventually followed God’s leadership and entered the pastorate.

“I resisted God a long time, until he put his hand on me, and I surrendered,” he said. “That’s when I knew I was going to do the work of God.”

Need for partners

Bamibe hopes other churches will come alongside them in ministry to the

disadvantaged.

“We need other churches to become involved and realize the homeless population that comes to us are God’s children. Yes, some of them have made wrong choices, but with God’s help, there is hope for them,” he said.

Comforter Christian Center also recognizes it needs more space to accomplish greater ministry. Currently, the congregation and its leaders are praying about a 30-acre lot near the church facility. One idea under consideration is providing transitional housing for recently released ex-offenders.

The church also would like to purchase a van to provide people in need transportation to job training opportunities.

Comforter Christian Center averages about 100 to 125 people in worship on Sundays.

“We are a small church, but we can do big things for God,” Bamibe said, citing the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

“When Jesus is there, it’s a big church,” he said.

This is part of an ongoing series about how Christians respond to hunger and poverty. Substantive coverage of significant issues facing Texas Baptists is made possible in part by a grant from the Prichard Family Foundation.

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