

# *The Mike Leonard Family*

*Shining Light Baptist Church  
Belize, Central America*



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**SERVING WITH:**

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Missionary #104*



Dear Praying Friends,

June 2009

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*

John 12:32

Erika, a single mother of five children, had been letting her children come to church with us every Sunday since the beginning of our services in February. Erika was too busy to attend with her children because softball season had just started. Finally, after pleasant persistence on our part, Erika promised that she would come to church on a Wednesday, and she kept her word. About a week later one of her children became very sick with a 109° fever. Late at night she left her other four children at home and walked to the hospital about two miles away carrying her six-year-old daughter. My wife and I found out about this situation a day and a half later. We went to visit her and apologized that we hadn't found out sooner, encouraging her to call us if she ever needed our help. One week later we received a phone call from Erika in which she told us that her four-year-old was now sick with the fever. The doctor had prescribed some medication, which she could not afford. My wife and I took her to buy the medicine and some groceries. That day Erika was at her wits end. My wife realized that what Erika really needed was Jesus. After a presentation of the Gospel, with tears in her eyes, Erika was sweetly born again. Erika quit her softball team so that she could be faithful to church and has since brought another family with her. She is also working to bring other neighbors to church as well. Lately other things seem to demand her attention during church time. This, of course, is a common attempt on Satan's behalf to stunt spiritual growth.

Please pray for this family that they will continue to put God first. Both children have fully recovered with no adverse affects from the fever. Erika gives God the glory for their recovery.

Yolanda, another single mother, heard from her sister and brother-in-law how much they enjoyed learning the Bible at the new church which they were attending (Shining Light Baptist Church). Yolanda, only 24 years old but very frustrated with life, brought her two children to church one Wednesday night. After the service she told my wife that she had attended several churches, but she

had never heard the Bible taught in such an understandable way. Yolanda vowed to be back every service, and she has for the past six weeks. She has told everyone in her village how wonderful it is to be taught the Word of God. Yolanda has brought Emerita and her two children. Yolanda and Emerita both have received the assurance of their salvation. There are several other families from their village that want to come, but we do not have enough transportation to bring them. Many of the people speak only Spanish, and even though we do not have a Spanish interpreter (yet), they still attend from time to time.

It was Saturday afternoon, while I was making some final preparations for Sunday, when I received a phone call from a lady who lived near Belize City, which is about an hour and a half away. She told me her name, Patricia, and said that her cousin, who attends our church faithfully, gave her my number. With a quiver in her voice, as if she was about to break down and cry, she very briefly informed me of her distraught and said that she needed someone to talk to. I told her that my wife and I would be there in about two hours. The root of Patricia's problem was confusion. She had asked Jesus to save her when she was 15 years old but backslid away from God for several years. Now in her 30s, she knew how much she needed God but didn't know how to get in touch with Him. After being "infected" by various other religious doctrines of heresy, she was extremely confused. After about an hour and a half of the Truth, she was confirmed in her heart and mind that Christ was her Saviour and Heaven was her home. At the end of our visit, she smiled and said, "Now I can sleep at night." Patricia told her cousin that she was ready to pack up her house and move to our district so that she could learn more about the Bible.

Fernando, one of our most faithful men, has said to me several times, "Pastor Mike, I wish I had a bus so that I could go all over my village and bring everyone to church." Kenroy, another faithful man, and his family have invited several people from their village, and some of them have received Christ as a result.

No wonder our Sunday morning attendance has grown from 18 to 93 in just 16 weeks. We have had as many as 56 on Sunday evening and 55 on Wednesday. There are about 30,000 people within approximately a 30-mile radius of our church. There are numerous "churches" of every kind but very few changed lives. The bottom line is—GOD'S WORD CHANGES LIVES!

Needless to say, we have had to move out of our 400-square-foot building. A local businessman heard of our church and offered us the use of his 50' x 100' tractor shed at no cost to us. This same businessman has offered to sell us a prime piece of property at about half of the market value. He has offered us five acres of land right on the main highway for US\$75,000. He has allowed me to draw up my own contract, and he has agreed to carry the note for payment of the land. The details are quite incredible. He has allowed me to set the payment terms with no time limit to pay off the note. The only stipulation is that we must build a church, and he is to receive 7% interest on the balance of the note each year. We can pay off the note at anytime without any penalties. Once the land is paid for, he said that we could have another five acres at the same price if we needed it. We just signed the contract this past week, and we are now beginning to clear the property to have it surveyed.

Please pray that God will continue to provide. Not only do we want to pay of this property as soon as possible, but we also need to begin construction on a church building there. This property will also facilitate housing and our future Bible college.

By the way, this man is not saved yet, so also pray that God will continue to work on his heart. I say continue because evidently God is working already. This man heard that we were looking for property and called me offering us this opportunity. His wife, professing Christ, and his children have been attending our Sunday morning services faithfully. His mother and father, who only speak Mandarin Chinese, attend faithfully as well.

We have not yet advanced in regards to putting our services on television, but they do want to come and video our puppets, which we do for Children's Church; so please continue to pray about this opportunity.

Please continue to pray about our work visas. This 3- to 4-week process is now going on 4 months. If we continue to renew our tourist visas every month, we will spend US\$2,400 per year plus exit fees of \$640 per year. We are only allowed to extend our tourist visas for 6 months, and then we must leave the country for at least 48 hours. Once we obtain our missionary visas, it will only cost us US\$400 per year. Pray that this matter is resolved so that the money can be put to use elsewhere in the ministry.

We are in serious need of a bus or two. It will be more cost-effective to buy one here, but the problem is finding one that is not worn out. They do have nice buses here; we just have to find the right one at a price that we can afford.

Thank you for all of your prayers and faithfulness. We do not take for granted the effort that each of you put forth in order for the Lord's work to be accomplished here in Belize. May God continue to bless you as we strive together to lift Him up.

Making Much of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Leonard".

Missionary Mike Leonard