The Love at Work concert on Sabbath afternoon was a first-time performance featuring 16 recording artists singing original songs based on the 10 Commandments.
Can you imagine a congregation where 100 percent of its members return 10 percent of their income to God every month? Until Pastor Dennis Tello met Leslie Meyer, a former treasurer of a Central California Conference church, he couldn’t imagine it either. What he learned changed his ministry.

Convinced that God wants to bless those who trust in Him, Meyer, who owns a financial company, began visiting the church families to get to know them. On the second visit, she asked about their finances. On visit number three, she shared the promise in Malachi 3:8,9 & 11: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

And then she added a challenge to those members that were struggling: Tithe for one month and, if the Lord does not bless you, I will give your tithe back with a 30 percent bonus.

Shocked, Tello asked, “How can you afford that?” Her answer was direct. “You’ve missed the point! There was no risk. God is faithful to those who trust and obey Him.”

As the new pastor for the Cambrian Park Church, Tello began to visit his members. He met John and Clara Martinez, a family that was struggling financially. For a year John had been out of work while also dealing with some health challenges. As a result, they had not been returning tithe and offerings faithfully. Tello gave them his challenge: Tithe for three months and if God does not bless you, I will give it back to you. He did not offer a 30 percent bonus. “I don’t have that kind of money, but then I really didn’t need to. God is so faithful!”

The blessings began almost immediately. John had worked for FedEx for many years. Three days later, he learned he would receive a monthly pension of $900. Then Clara was promoted at work. “I got a $2,000 bonus and a brand new car!”

John had not been baptized, but after this experience he made the decision to fully surrender his life to Jesus.

“We are always so willing to say ‘God will provide,’” Tello says. “This experience is a way for new members to have a tangible way to see how the Lord operates. I don’t think God is dishonored when He Himself challenges us to test Him.”

The Tello family can speak from personal experiences. “God has been blessing with every need and sometimes wants, too. It’s not so much about finances. It’s about faith, belief and spirituality.”
New to the area, Pastor Rob and Olga Benardo were exploring the back roads of Squaw Valley when they encountered a cow standing in the road. Looking around, no herd was in sight. Concerned the cow or travelers might be injured, the Benardos drove on looking for houses. Turning down a dirt road, they drove for about half a mile and only saw bee hives. Thinking this could be a divine appointment, they continued on. When they met a field worker, he spoke no English but pointed up the road. Thirty minutes and a mile later, they saw an old farmhouse.

A woman answered the door. Her heavy accent reminded Olga of her own homeland and learned they were from the same Slavic area. Olga from the former Yugoslavia and the lady from Russia and Poland. Though their native languages were similar, the ladies struggled to understand each other.

“Just 20 minutes ago, I was on my knees praying for someone to visit. I am so lonely. I didn’t know God would answer my prayer so quickly,” the lady shared. “I need a friend,” she added. Olga understood and was more than happy to form a friendship with her.

Rob and Olga have visited as much as possible, aiming for once a week. While Olga visits with her new friend, Rob joins the husband on trips across his land. It is on his mountain that the 3ABN satellite resides.

Rob is grateful that he slowed down enough to “Be Still and Know...” God’s voice.
Camp Meeting Evangelism Exceeds $1 million for the 10th consecutive year

At the close of the final meeting, members had given $1,040,617 in gifts and pledges. As of August 12, the Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering total has grown to $1,106,980.

“This offering is a result of individuals stepping into a sacred journey of test and trust with the Almighty. Immersed in united prayer, the Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering has become one of the vehicles God has chosen to demonstrate His God-size love and blessings to His people. I see a huge warehouse in heaven with a sign saying, ‘Blessings!’ And God standing by, just waiting to open the gates to flood our lives” says President Ramiro Cano. “Participating is like entering into the very presence of God.”

NEW INITIATIVE

Bridges: Bay Area for Jesus

Seventy percent of the world’s population lives in large cities, nearly 8 million live in the San Francisco, Oakland and surrounding communities. A study of the largest metropolitan areas in North America shows the Bay Area with the lowest ratio of Adventists to population, 1004:1. As a result, two conferences, Central (CCC) and Northern California (NCC), have joined together for a multi-year project to boldly address this statistic. Central’s first year focus is San Francisco.

San Francisco is tough! Student literature evangelists (LEs) couldn’t sell one book for years, that is until recently. Summer 2012 Ricky Camacho took his team into the city for one day and a student discovered a congregation that was keeping the Sabbath!

San Francisco and Oakland One Week Summer Blitz with CCC & NCC LEs

- 35 literature evangelists
- 18,000 homes visited
- 2,890 Books and DVDs distributed
- $18,923 Donations Received
- 38 Requests for Personal Bible Studies

Jessica Minton, a 22-year-old young adult presented a proposal to leaders of both conferences. Picture 30 volunteers spending one year teaching church members how to pass out literature, go door-to-door, give Bible studies, become medical missionaries, and assist in other church-planned outreaches. “Seeking people who are hungry for God inspires growth in their own walk with God,” Minton explains. Called CROSS Trainers, 26 have come from four countries and the United States. Their pay is food and lodging and, in twos, they will assist the 14 city churches. The first year of work culminates with a city-wide evangelistic series next April. (CROSS is an acronym for Churches Reaching Out to Serve and to Save.) “It reminds me of the transcendental words, “They were all with one accord in one place,” says Cesar DeLeon, director of ministerial and evangelism. (Acts. 2:1) Stay connected at ccc.adventist.org.