

## Monthly Events



Every 1st Friday night of the month. Come for a night of Fun and Fellowship! Starting at 6:30pm in the Worship Center



### BAPTISM

Every 2nd Sunday of the month. Please let us know on the Connection Card if you are interested



### BENEVOLENCE OFFERING

Please write "benevolence" on check or envelope and place offering in the boxes in back.



### PRAYER

Last Sunday of the month After the service there will be a 20 min prayer gathering in the Worship Center

## HAPPENING AT FRESNO FIRST

### WELCOME LUNCH

Sunday, September 17th @ 11:45 for new attenders in the WCC\*

### FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, October 6th @ 6:30pm In the Worship Center

### CONNECTION CLASS

Sunday, October 22nd @ 11:45am In the WCC\*

### PARTNERS BRUNCH

Saturday, October 28th @ 10am In the Fellowship Hall

\*Worship Center classroom

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS CLASS

**TODAY!** This class is to help you understand how God has gifted you and understand your part in God's plan!  
**September 10th @ 11:45** In the WCC\* the class will be 2hrs and lunch will be provided.

### WOMENS BIBLE STUDY

Thursday Morning Women's bible study will be starting back up on **September 14th, Thursday's in the Worship Center Classroom.**  
**9:30am** Refreshments **10am** study

## WAYS TO GIVE



### IN-PERSON

Tithing Envelope  
Cash, Check or Card

Please place in bags or Drop boxes



### ONLINE

Visit [www.fresnofirst.org](http://www.fresnofirst.org) or [Paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com)



### AUTOMATED



September 10th, 2017

Speaker: Manny Collazo

Scripture: Acts 17:1-15

## Welcome to Fresno First!

We are so happy you are here today!  
Please let us know that you are here by filling out the Connection Card and placing it in the offering bag.  
If you are new, we invite you to **stop by the Welcome Center in the lobby to pick up a gift.**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION, FOLLOW US ON:



## Fresno First

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email: [info@fresnofirst.org](mailto:info@fresnofirst.org) [www.fresnofirst.org](http://www.fresnofirst.org)

CONNECT TO WIFI: Ffbc-guest Password: FFBC2016

# OLD GUYS CAN CHANGE!

Rev. Gilbert Foster | Director of Recruitment

I believe in the power of reading because I've witnessed it first hand.

Let me tell you about a (sadly passed away) good friend called Rusty.

Rusty was that difficult Dutch Reformed naysayer when I reached Reedley, CA. I was warned that Rusty would be against everything. History seemed to agree. At most church meetings the loudest disagreeing voice was normally Rusty's. But, a year before I got there things were beginning to change in Rusty.

The reason – guided by God's Spirit – included a book Rusty had read. It was called [\*\*An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind @ Erwin Raphael McManus\*\*](#). (Published 2001 and now newly reprinted.) I'm unsure how this book got into Rusty's hands but it stirred him.

When I arrived Rusty's appetite for more reading had been wetted. His thirst for learning was amazing. But his honesty was the most inspiring. Rusty explained that for years, many years, Pastors had made church about being a club, exclusive to its members. That allowed the grumpiest member to get things his way. But his eyes and mind were now being opened to church being for its non-members and he wanted to know more. His honesty however caused him to ask the question– could he, at his retired stage in life, get it and be a part of the new? That led Rusty to ask me for more books to read to 'get it'. Books that would open his thinking to the more, the better, the new of what Church and The Faith were really about.

So this month I want to list 10 of the books Rusty read. I do so hoping that if you have a 'Rusty' in your church you might share this story and encourage him or her to also read these books.

## 1) [\*\*An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind @ Erwin Raphael McManus\*\*](#)

This was the one that got something started in Rusty.

## 2) [\*\*The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation @ George Hunter III\*\*](#)

Early on I gave Rusty this book. I had met George Hunter while at Northern Seminary and his grasp of cultural changes and what the church needs to do to engage with it impressed me. The book is dated now (2009) but has much insight.

## 3) [\*\*Letters from a Skeptic: A Son Wrestles with His Father's Questions about Christianity @ Gregory Boyd & Edward Boyd\*\*](#)

What needed to be challenged was Rusty's classic, closed off Christian theology. It wasn't something he had really read into. He had just accepted what he had been taught by Pastors for six generations. This book helped Rusty see that questioning was a good thing.



## 4) [\*\*Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith @ Rob Bell\*\*](#)

This one did Rusty in – in a good way! It continued his reframing of the narrative. It allowed him to see something bigger than formulas and propositions. He loved this book and the old Nooma videos Bell used to produce.

## 5) [\*\*Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in N. America @ Darrell Guder\*\*](#)

Of a deeper theology, Rusty was eager to think deep about the church and its purpose. This book, though 201/301 in its theology, was thoroughly underlined and highlighted as Rusty devoured the missional theology of the church.

## 6) [\*\*The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission @ Rick Warren\*\*](#)

Anyone remember this one? Seemed strange to read Rob Bell, McManus and Warren together – and enjoy them equally. But this one really helped Rusty see the church differently.

## 7) [\*\*The Barbarian Way: Unleash the Untamed Faith Within @ Erwin Raphael McManus\*\*](#)

McManus had started it all for Rusty – this book spoke into his own life and his role as an older leader. I think his comments after reading it were "I wish I'd read this 30 years ago!"

## 8) [\*\*Searching for God Knows What @ Donald Miller\*\*](#)

This again helped Rusty see The Faith differently. So much of what was happening to Rusty, and others, was a rethinking of The Faith. It brought him alive. The change they needed to get wasn't just about how the church should reach younger people; it was the change of what it was we actually believed and how it should be lived.

## 9) [\*\*Leading Change @ John P. Kotter\*\*](#)

The essential read that helped Rusty and my Board see the steps we needed to take to enable change to take hold.

## 10) [\*\*Death by Meeting @ Patrick Lencioni\*\*](#)

This is when Rusty threw out Robert's Rules! When he read Lencioni's book on effective meetings (and boy did Rusty have a love/hate relationship with meetings), out went Robert's Rules and in came effective, pragmatic, fluid meeting protocol. And this wet his appetite to read more of Lencioni and learn so much about teams, leadership and organizational theory.

The story of an inward focused, classic Baptist church in the small city of Reedley, CA is the story of Rusty, and others like Rusty – old guys – getting it and changing. Their change was no small thing. But as a result of their change over 700 people came to know Christ and be baptized. Their change helped birth a new type of church drawing people of all ages and ethnicities to come and meet Christ, and of seeing a big Kingdom vision being outworked.

Perhaps it's time to put new books into the hands of your older folks.

Maybe it's time to put new books at your welcome center, new books for your Sunday School to read, new books for your Board to read.

It's a leadership question I kept asking my leaders, my critics, my colleagues – "What are you reading these days?" ..... followed by "can I suggest you read this book."

Still reading. Still rethinking.