



Overlooking Anyone?

by Rodolpho Carrasco

When the prophet Samuel got a look at David's older brother, Eliab, he was convinced this boy was The New King: "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord," Samuel said (1 Sam. 16:6). But he was dead wrong. The Lord said no. So Samuel went down the line, looking over the sons of Jesse and exhausting his options. Then he had the wit to ask if there were other sons. The littlest brother, whose name ends a book of the Bible (Ruth), remained: "This, then, is the family line of Perez: ... Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David." You know the rest of the story.

Samuel's task of anointing Israel's next king was a clear mission from God. But even he missed some details. The Lord had to remind him not to look at size or height. Left to himself, Samuel would've overlooked David. We know that God is sovereign, so David would've been chosen another way if Samuel had failed. Yet the prophet would have missed the joy of partnering with God by anointing a man "after God's own heart."

How about you? You may believe you know God's plan for your life, the task to which you are called, your five-year plan or your strategic plan. But are you overlooking anyone?

I ask, because for years I did.

When I graduated from college, I

thought I was God's gift to Mexicans. I was on my way to East Los Angeles to help my people in the barrio. Problem was, I didn't know anybody there. When I was six, my mother died, and my sister immediately pulled our family out of our dangerous East L.A. neighborhood. During my college years, I lived in four different cities, but always harbored the dream of returning to the place where I was born. I became a Christian at age 10, because I believed God would do biblical miracles on the streets that I both feared and missed.

Because I didn't know anyone, my plan was simple. I would rent a room a block from my favorite restaurant,

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Manuel's El Tepeyac. I would get a job at the local high school. And I would be a Christian. That was it. It was enough for a mission as focused as reaching my own people.

That's when I met Dr. John Perkins, the founder of Harambee Ministries. He inspired me. When he said he needed a writer, I thought, *Cool, I can help my hero.* He was black, and his ministry was in a mostly black neighborhood. Neither detail fit in my plan. But I reasoned that two years with Perkins would be like grad school, after which I could enter East L.A. better equipped for barrio-based community ministry.

Once embedded at Harambee, I began using every relational ministry

trick I had picked up from my days with Young Life and InterVarsity. My target—my Master Plan of Evangelism as InterVarsity calls it—was a group of four young Mexican boys who came to our after-school program.

At first, I felt like I was in my zone, in my niche, walking in my call. But a problem soon developed: The boys weren't that interested in spending time with me. As time passed, I had to increase the effort it took to pursue them, with diminishing returns.

One day, I stood outside Harambee, pondering the dilemma. I felt a tug at my shirt, but I ignored it and kept troubleshooting in my mind. Another

tug. *Go away,* I thought as I looked down.

"Hey Rudy, watch this." It was a little black boy. He did a jump, or a flip, or something. Then he climbed up on the fence. He carried on: "Rudy,

watch me!"

In that moment, I had an epiphany: There's what you think you're supposed to be doing, and then there's who God sends you. I thought my holy mission was to reach Mexicans like myself. God showed me that He cares about everybody. He cherishes Mexicans, but He also loves little black boys, and so many others whom He calls His children.

So I ask again: Are you overlooking anyone?

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