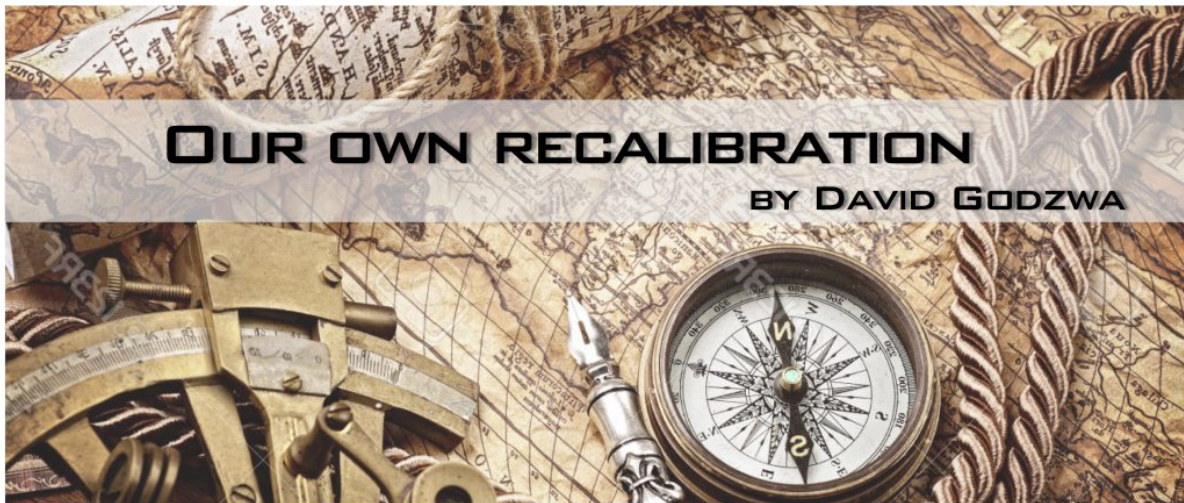


Our Own Recalibration



by David Godzwa

Life lends itself to a certain routine. Nature has its seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Communities come together at prescribed dates to celebrate, to worship, and to remember. Individuals search for balance and productivity through rituals and habits. When things function well, there's benefit. For the community, it may be a sense of identity reinforced. For the individual, it may be an increased level of health and fitness or a reduced stress level. Nevertheless, even the best routines and rituals, left unconsidered and unevaluated, can lead, in time, to loss of meaning, underperformance, or ineffectiveness.

This is the struggle of any individual or community—to rightly interpret the current situation, to regularly evaluate routines and structures, and to make the necessary adjustments to insure continued relevance and effectiveness. This was the invitation that the ACLAME Leadership Team made to the participants of our most recent Summit, "Recalibrate." I'm not going to repeat all that went on there in this article. For that, you can read the summary published in May's Bulletin and download the notes from the respective sessions on the website. Suffice to say, we encouraged our participants to make the adjustments necessary to reengage physically, mentally, relationally, and spiritually to fulfill their God-given purpose. Of course, this invitation would have rung hollow unless we were willing to apply this same process to ourselves, the leadership of ACLAME.

To that effect, we invited the attendees of the Summit to fill out an online survey related to their experience at the Summit and their impressions of our work as a Leadership Team. Granted, even before reviewing the results of the survey, we were aware that changes needed to be made. ACLAME, as an organization, had been formed in a different time, when international collaboration of missionaries was relatively infrequent. Now, with the implementation of the system of initiatives and the increase of activities related to the organization and function of those initiatives, missionaries are having to pick and choose from several, sometimes competing options. A case in point was this very Summit. While we were meeting in Orlando, Florida, the Compassion Initiative was holding their own conference in San José, Costa Rica. The need, then, to add value to our events and to ensure that we are meeting or exceeding the expectations of our members has never been more keenly felt. We're thankful then to those who responded to our questions and have given us the valuable feedback that I'll summarize below.

To be honest, our Summit participants are largely committed to the process of ministerial formation and regular participants in our ACLAME functions. Still, their comments provided valuable insights that deserve to be repeated in this article. Regarding the Summit, our participants lauded us for:
providing them an opportunity to connect with fellow educators,

creating an atmosphere within the event in which participation is appreciated and encouraged,
supplying the context to enable them to understand how their ministry fits within the LAC ministry landscape,
giving them the opportunity to discover that they are not alone in their challenges,
and

furnishing them the place to discover new ideas to meet those challenges.

At the same time, they also pointed out certain weaknesses. One such area respondents mentioned was our ability to connect with the day to day ministerial reality. There was a sense that ACLAME has yet to tap the potential of its international organization to intentionally deliver actionable, applicable content that consistently met our participants felt needs. In addition, there was a general feeling that ACLAME should move beyond the Summits and the monthly Bulletin to strive to become what our members look to us to be: a forum for missionaries involved in ministerial formation, a clearinghouse for resources involved in the ministerial formation task, and a champion of the LAC ministerial formation model.

To those who responded to our survey, thank you! Your evaluation has been received and you can be confident that we are responding. In fact, the groundwork for change was being laid before the Summit. To increase connection, we introduced the role of Support Missionary. As an advocate for and facilitator of ministerial training in each LAC country, the promise of the Support Missionary role is to not only represent the complexity of task before us but to also bring the diversity and richness of thought available from each missionary and their specific context to address those complexities. We were pleased to have the participation of 15 such Support Missionaries at our Summit and look to see their influence increase in the coming months and years.

Moving forward, we're taking additional steps to meet our members' expectations and to ensure the completion of our mission—connecting and encouraging LAC missionaries as they disciple, teach, mentor and train, others for ministry:

We're reducing our Leadership Team membership to 10 people from the previous 14 to promote teamwork and participation among all its members.

We're broadening the scope of the Bulletin, starting with the October edition, introducing a dynamic format that will include discussion of new and classic resources, feature insight into LAC educational ministries, and discuss trends in ministerial formation in addition to the monthly article and calendars of events. We're expanding the website with space to catalog those additional resources, which will be highlighted in the monthly Bulletin.

We're offering additional online opportunities for learning and interaction starting with our first ever ACLAME webinar, "Augmenting Classroom Teaching with Technology" on October 17, 2017. Be sure to save the date!

We'll also be soon at work on our next ACLAME Summit scheduled for 2019. Our goal? To provide focused objectives and compelling content within an appreciative, uplifting, and participative environment. We hope to see you there!

Yes, routine is good, but we know that, to respond to the changing environment in which we work and to meet the needs and expectations of our fellow missionaries that we serve, ACLAME as an organization must recalibrate. So, we embark on these transitions with the belief that we will emerge a more effective organization as we seek to serve LAC missionaries as we disciple, teach, mentor, and train others for ministry.

Why not participate with us in the transition?

Does this article correspond with your feelings about ACLAME? If it does, we'd appreciate your advice or affirmation as we make these changes. You can write those in the comments section. If not, you can write there too and tell us what you'd like to say. If you'd like those comments to be private, you can email them to team@aclame.net