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The Furnace and the Feast: How God Shapes Us for the Nations

This past month, two powerful events highlighted how **God forms His servants to take the Gospel across cultural boundaries**—from intensive language immersion in Central America to vibrant indigenous celebrations in Southern Mexico.

On **August 12th**, we gathered in San José, Costa Rica, for the graduation of new missionaries from **CINCEL**—the language, culture, and missiology school for the Latin America Caribbean Region. Among the graduates were new members of our **Northern Triad Area team: Jennifer and Aldo Wajajay** (assigned to Oaxaca, Mexico), **Danny and Kayla De Los Reyes** (Mexico City), and **Haylie Kuenzi** (La Vega, Dominican Republic).

Preaching from **Deuteronomy 4:20**, I shared how God takes us through a **"refining furnace"**—not to break us, but to **shape us into a people prepared for His mission**. Learning a new language and navigating a new culture strips away self-reliance. **Yet, the furnace is never the final destination**; it is the vital preparation required before stepping onto the field.

From **September 1st-3rd**, we traveled to Oaxaca City for the **Fiesta de las Etnias Mexicanas**, joining missionaries



Celebrating the graduation of Northern Triad Global Workers from CINCEL

Carolyn Marton, and Noah and Melanie Lane for the second national gathering of Mexican indigenous groups hosted by the Assemblies of God of Mexico. Standing alongside national workers—including several from **Yucatán**, where Kelly and I served for 13 years—we experienced an **earthly foretaste of the heavenly feast** described in **Revelation 7:9**.

In Oaxacan culture, **Guelaguetza** represents a beautiful tradition: **bringing your finest gift to share joyfully with others**. The Gospel itself is the ultimate gift meant to be shared. Yet across Mexico and beyond, **isolated**

communities still lack access to this good news.

When placed side-by-side, these two events reveal **God's intentional design**. The refining process at CINCEL is what **transforms willing hearts into a living offering**—equipping workers to love across deep cultural divides, adapt to unfamiliar settings, and **share the hope of Christ where He is not yet known**.

We aren't refined to keep the Gospel to ourselves; **we are shaped in the furnace so we can share in the feast** with every nation, tribe, and tongue. **Thank you for your prayers and faithful partnership** that make equipping, sending, and supporting these workers possible!



With Yucatecan workers among the indigenous at the *Fiesta de las Etnias*