

Central District Conference
Conference Minister Review for Doug Luginbill (2025)
A Summary of Constituent Survey Responses

The Survey Review Team

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The Survey Process

The CDC Board of Directors invited all CDC credentialed ministers, members of CDC's Leadership Council, and several congregational lay leaders with whom Doug has worked (search committees and congregational crises) to reflect on Doug's performance in the Conference Minister role, focusing on his gifts as well as growth opportunities. An additional question asked respondents to identify challenges and opportunities in the Central District Conference. Doug completed a self-evaluation used for comparison.

149 surveys were emailed, and 77 surveys returned (52%), representing each of the groups listed above. Respondents represented a range of people from those new to the CDC and/or ministry to long-term conference members and retirees. The full geographic range of CDC congregations was represented and included established and newer congregations.

General Impressions from the surveys:

Doug is widely regarded as steady, patient, accessible, and highly gifted in his role and is described as thoughtful, faithful, and skilled in communication, ministry, and leadership. Many respondents expressed appreciation for his ability to listen carefully and provide calm, thoughtful responses. There were also affirmations and noted challenges related to the CDC's openness to growth, welcoming of congregations from other traditions seeking affiliation in CDC, and new models of ministry in emerging communities of faith.

Affirmations of Doug's Ministry:

Doug demonstrates deep faith and scriptural grounding in his leadership, preaching, and personal and wider communications. Respondents commended Doug for strong relational skills and effective responses in personal interactions and conflict resolution. People noted Doug's supportive leadership style and ability to provide steady guidance for teams and individuals. He is affirmed for his commitment to inclusivity and the promotion of diversity and openness. Doug's deep spirituality and willingness to put it into action is specifically evident in the donation of a kidney to his brother and his arrest for conscience in Washington, DC, during a 2024 protest calling for a cease-fire in Gaza. One respondent offered a poignant illustration of Doug's meaningful and repentant response to a past interaction where they felt hurt and sought a more restorative process. Many expressed gratitude for the sense of stability that Doug provides and his key role in CDC becoming a positive, supportive environment, noting that these attributes are not present in some conferences. Ministers spoke positively about the Pastor-Peer

groups and opportunities to know one another better, as well as the opportunities for deeper discussions about relevant church issues.

Areas for Growth:

There were very few responses identifying areas for personal growth and each of those noted that his overall leadership is strong. A few suggestions focused on expanding his leadership focus beyond personal relationships to structural or systemic change. One response suggested the potential for development in handling difficult conversations with even more clarity and directness.

Doug' self-evaluation

Doug's self-evaluation mirrored the survey responses, both affirmations and areas of challenge. This is a good indication of Doug's authenticity in his role and ability to relate well to people, especially during challenging times in their personal lives or the lives of congregations. While respondents often described the personal impact of Doug's leadership or engagement (a past or present snapshot), Doug's evaluation included his role in relation to the CDC as a whole and his responsibilities in MCUSA. He addressed the current state and future considerations related to the CDC's geographical spread and attention to sustainable financing for future staffing. Doug expressed appreciation for the addition of the part-time Associate Conference Minister for Emerging Churches. He noted the specialized knowledge, skill, and support that Matt Pritchard brings to these unfolding relationships and Doug's awareness that he would not be able to do this work himself, in either time or talent.

Challenges/Opportunities for the Conference

In response to the question asking for ideas about challenges and opportunities for the Conference, many noted that these can often be two sides of the same coin. How do we meet the challenges and engage the opportunities as we move forward since, as one person said, "The church won't be what it was in the past. We can't go back. So how do we imagine and reinvent the "new" peacemaking church that is so needed?"

Opportunities for the Conference:

The Conference is seen as healthy— a place that provides joy and nourishment to our members. Because of this, some wondered how CDC might provide more leadership both in MCUSA and with other Anabaptist groups. As one person wrote, "CDC has a leadership role in discerning what relationship building/maintaining needs to be done with other Anabaptist and Anabaptist-related groups."

Many respondents mentioned their desire for the Conference to continue to be a welcoming place for churches, pastors, and individuals. There is an affirmation of the work to develop and nurture Emerging Communities of Faith and a call for openness to the newness and gifts they bring to the Conference. Because of the changing demographics in the church, CDC needs to work on recognizing and embracing diversity.

There was strong encouragement for the Conference to be proactive in responding to what is happening in the world today including encouraging congregations to work with each other and with groups in their communities to become engaged in peace-making and responding to the needs they see around them.

CDC is seen as a place congregations, pastors, and individuals should be able to go for spiritual formation and teaching and there is a call for more of this. Perhaps this call is best summarized in this quote from the evaluations: [CDC is called] “to be a collective voice and story-sharing community of faithful witness to the Jesus way of peace and compassion.”

Challenges Identified:

The geographic spread of the Conference, theological differences, and changes in church identity and structure can make it harder to establish relationships between congregations and harder for a conference minister to keep things together. In a time when these kinds of relationships seem more important, how do we provide the needed resources and connections?

Respondents wondered, as one person said, if “we are raising a loud enough voice to counter the war-like rhetoric” and if we are challenging members enough to do the hands-on work of peacemaking and seeking justice.

In what ways might the Conference find ways to sustain and support leaders amid evolving needs and expectations?

How might the Conference engage overly busy people, call out the gifts and talents of a diverse range of people, and, at the same time, “continue to present ‘Jesus-following’ in a joyful, gracious, genuine, and inclusive manner”?

Once again, we are grateful for Doug’s many gifts, his self-awareness, and his openness to where God’s spirit might be leading us. Thank you, Doug, for your leadership and service as our Conference Minister.