

Dr. Doug Nuenke Named New U.S. Navigators President

By Dean Ridings

When it comes to leadership, new U.S. Navigators President Dr. Doug Nuenke says he longs to lead like David of Old Testament days, “And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them” (Psalm 78:72).

“I desire to live up to that, to be a leader who shepherds people’s hearts and leads skillfully,” says Doug, “so that our staff members are freed up to do what God has called them to do.”



Members of the selection council prayed God's blessing on Pam and Doug Nuenke.

Doug, 50, was the unanimous choice of a 35-member President Selection Council, comprised of a diverse group of Navigator staff members. The U.S. Navigators’ Board of Directors commissioned Doug as president and director at their annual meeting in mid-August. He replaces Alan Andrews, who led the U.S. work for 11 years.

Mike Treneer, The Navigators’ international president who guided the selection process, says he will never forget how the room broke into spontaneous applause when the final vote was announced. Mike says that Doug and his wife, Pam, “knelt down in front of us to symbolize in a very powerful way their desire to lead as servants in releasing the gifts of others.”

Jerry White, former international president and current chairman of the U.S. Navigators’ Board of Directors, says he has “every bit of confidence” that Doug will keep U.S. Navigators focused on our Calling:

“To advance the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost.”

“He is deeply committed to the Calling,” says Jerry. And as to Doug’s leadership style, he adds: “Doug has a great ability to draw people around him and not be the one man out front. He will clearly work with a team and draw on the strengths of others.”

The Nuenkes joined Navigator staff in 1992 to pursue an international mission assignment, then became involved in ministry at the University of Kansas. In 1994, Doug helped launch The Navigators’ EDGE Corps, a short-term campus ministry for recent college graduates. Doug and Pam moved to Colorado Springs in 1997 to run that initiative from Navigator headquarters. After leading EDGE Corps for five years, Doug supported the Collegiate Mission in a number of other capacities, particularly as associate director and western divisional leader.

In late 2004, Alan invited Doug to join the leadership of The Navigators’ U.S. Metro Mission. Doug co-led and then directed the Metro Mission for three and a half years, bringing clarity to Metro’s vision and focus toward the next generation.

In 2007, Doug received his doctorate from Denver Seminary, with an emphasis on Executive Leadership. His thesis researched the roles of missional living and community among Christ followers in their twenties.

“We as a couple are called in this role to serve our staff and our Calling,” Doug says. “At the end of the day, what happens here in Colorado Springs matters only to the degree that it fuels the movement of the Gospel in local places all over the country - on college campuses, military bases, in neighborhoods and churches, in the city and among the urban poor. What happens there is what really matters.

“Our longing is that we would serve in such a way and do our part in this role so that at the end of many days there would be tens of thousands of everyday people, in the context of a community of friends, experiencing and advancing the Good News of the Kingdom in the normal pathways of life.”

“I really think Doug is a ‘David,’ “ concludes Penn Pendleton, a member of The Navigators’ Board of Directors, alluding to the unassuming shepherd boy anointed king of Israel (see 1 Samuel 16). “I think Doug is, maybe, not what anybody expected to lead this work because of his age, time with the mission.

“If God had put one of the older fellows in,” he says, “that would have given us perhaps a great feeling of safety. But I have a real feeling of anticipation - not anxiety, anticipation - that God is doing something really exciting here. So I can’t wait to see what the next chapter is!”



Doug and Pam joined The Navigators in 1992 and quickly moved into leadership roles in both the campus and metro-area ministries.