

Leadership Profile: Pastor Tim Haahs and Calvary Vision Church Inc.

Sangeun (Isabel) Lee 23 January 2018

What does life mean to Pastor Tim Haahs? Or shall I call him President Tim Haahs of Tim Haahs & Associates Inc? Whatever his role is, his life can be summarized in two words, "serving others." It has been his motto after his first heart transplant surgery at the age of 29.

Pastor Haahs came to the U.S. when he was 12 years old with his father who was a missionary for lepers in South Korea back in the 1960's. After moving to the states, he worked hard to succeed in life under the definition of the "American Dream." He studied engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and climbed the highest rung of the corporate ladder at an early age. When he lost consciousness due to an unknown heart defect and discovered that he could not survive without a heart transplant in his late twenties, Mr. Haahs was helpless and angry. He wondered why he was undergoing such an ordeal at a young age? He had lived his life "relatively" good until then. Ivy league graduate, a hardworking employee, devoted father and husband, and regular churchgoer. After reading the Bible and meeting with his God while waiting for a new heart, he concluded that life is

all about helping others; His "relatively" successful life was lacking in "love" for others. With this personal mission, he founded his engineering company, Tim Haahs & Associates Inc. in 1994 in his house because he was unable to find any work due to his pre-existing health condition after the heart transplant. Soon after, in 1997 he also established Calvary Vision Church (CVC) with people who shared the same vision and belief as himself with the mission of "transforming our lives in Christ to serve others."

In 2002, when Tim Haahs & Associates Inc. finally settled into its own headquarters, Pastor Haahs also located CVC in the same building. By sharing the facility and utilities, CVC can focus on its religious foundation. With help from four pastors each with a diverse background, CVC expands its religious vision and mission to whoever they can help. During the interview, when asked how he defined and prioritized "people in need," Pastor Haahs answered "people who simply ask." So far, he has assisted numerous nonprofits and individuals who just asked for his help. One of the employees in Tim Haahs & Associates Inc. requested to have an unpaid leave to fulfill his personal mission to serve people in East Asia. The employee did not mention any financial assistance, but Pastor Haahs offered financial resources in addition to airplane fare under one condition: when the missionary encountered someone in need to just give to them as he was given without asking any questions.

Mr. Haahs also serves as a board member for a number of different non-profit-organizations nationally and regionally. He was nominated by President Obama in 2012 as a board member for the National Institute of Building Sciences, which is an Authoritative Source of Innovative Solutions for the Built Environment and he has been working actively on this initiative ever since. Also, Pastor Haahs has served as a board member of the Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization for the Korean community, the Jaison Medical Center, which provides medical and skilled and non-skilled care for Korean immigrant families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). According to Pastor Haahs, when he exhausted his lifetime deductibles through his former employer's group health insurance for his first heart transplant, he could not find any work due to his pre-existing condition. Back then, the Jaisohn Medical Center introduced the Health Management Organization (HMO) group insurance for low-income Korean immigrants and Pastor Haahs was fortunate enough to purchase a group health insurance through the organization. To honor and respect the organizations' mission to assist Korean immigrants in need, Pastor Haahs accepted when Jaisohn Medical Center asked him to be a board member. In addition to that, he also serves as a board member of the Einstein Healthcare Network (EHN). He was reluctant at first, but Mr. Haahs remembered what he had received when he first launched his firm. Community members in EHN were the only ones who gave Mr. Haahs work when he was going through a tough

time while running a startup company. He wished to contribute something out of his gratitude for EHN and its community members.

When asked why he was doing all this work for the community, Pastor Haahs recited "Love your neighbor as yourself" from the Bible. It took him three decades to realize that he might have cared for his neighbor but had not loved them as himself. He is exercising this verse each moment of his life, and it means surrendering to God's will. That is why Pastor Haahs does not plan anything in advance because he would like to yield to the way he will be led. Furthermore, he does not intend to see expansion in CVC to maintain its transparency and accountability as it suits 501(c)3. Pastor Haahs believes that building a trustful relationship between leaders and employee requires change regardless of the size, characteristics, and services an organization provides. Keeping solid relationships depend on patience and open communication within the members and CVC has maintained this because of its smallness. More than half of his employees in both the for profit and not-for-profit organizations have been with him more than a decade. During the 2008 economic crisis, he exhausted his finances to continue to pay his employees. Starting with himself by sharing with others within his firm, he sets an example for his employees and parishioners. When finally asked "where do you see yourself and CVC in 10 years." Pastor Haahs' answer was plain as well, "Wherever God

leads me and CVC. I did not know where I would be now. It will be the same way in ten years. I am just living a day at time."