

Jack Hayford Will Not Seek Second Term as Foursquare President

✖ Jack W. Hayford announced Tuesday that he will not seek a second term as president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel when his five-year term ends Aug. 31.

Hayford, 74, made the announcement during Foursquare's annual convention being held this week in Anaheim, Calif. Hayford, founding pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif., was elected president of the 8.4 million-member denomination in 2004. He notified church leaders of his decision not to seek a second term on Monday.

"I am not resigning, retiring or refusing my availability to serve my church family in any way I may be asked," Hayford said during a Tuesday business meeting. "I am simply concluding my role as president; it was a decision prompted solely by a clarity born of God's Word and Spirit as my wife, Anna, and I have sought His will."

Glenn Burris Jr., Foursquare general supervisor and vice president of national church operations, will serve as interim president, effective Sept. 1. The denomination's board of directors will nominate at least two presidential candidates during the church's 2010 convention in Atlanta. Licensed and ordained ministers, as well as church delegates, will vote on the candidates.

Earlier this year Hayford said he would seek a second term, saying he felt "constrained by the Holy Spirit to serve." But in a letter announcing his decision to withdraw his availability to serve as president, Hayford said he began to sense God lifting the "constraint to continue" in the last several weeks. (Read Hayford's announcement.)

"[The Holy Spirit] has indicated that my sense of constraint to continue was, at this time, a bond to a noble sense of duty-not to His assignment," Hayford wrote. "So I surrender to the refinement of His directive and stand ready to serve in whatever ways He has in mind."

Hayford said there were no negative reasons for his withdrawal, and that he will remain available to serve the denomination. But he said he and Anna "arrived at an absolute, deep and confirming sense of peace" about the decision after the couple prayed together Saturday.

"Central among the very practical and lovingly tender things God gave me understanding about is that, foremost, commitment to a full five-year mission as president would be unwise for me to attempt with all else that is before me at this point in life," Hayford said. "I would gladly share in greater detail but as I've described, I've been given that perfect peace 'which passes understanding,' and there are 'no negatives.'"

Following Hayford's announcement, convention delegates gave him a standing ovation.

The Foursquare Church was founded in 1927 by evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. Hayford is the denomination's fifth president.