

Jack Hayford Hands 'Israel-Christian Nexus' Baton to Robert Stearns

Robert Stearns has been unanimously voted as successor to Pastor Jack Hayford's leadership role at the Israel-Christian Nexus, it was announced Monday. The Nexus is a historic interfaith-cooperation organization based in the Los Angeles area.

The Nexus was started by the late General Shimon Erem, a colorful and beloved Israeli-born L.A. resident, who had wonderful cooperation with key leaders in the L.A. area, including Hayford, Chuck Smith and many others. Involved in various efforts, Erem was best known for cultivating dialogue and friendship between Jewish and Christian leaders, which has been the primary work of the Nexus.

"I am thrilled that the legacy of this great organization started by my close friend Shimon will continue, and I believe, even flourish to greater levels under the capable leadership of Robert Stearns," said Hayford. "I have worked very closely with Robert for 15 years. He has an unusual ability to build bridges of respect and cooperation for the greater good. The Nexus is in excellent care with him at the helm."

Hayford will continue in the organization as chairman emeritus.

Stearns, who is internationally known for his leadership of Eagles' Wings, a global organization based in New York that he founded 20 years ago, commented: "It is a great honor to follow my mentor, Pastor Jack, in this important role. The fact is that the Nexus has a wonderful leadership team in place with people like Rabbi Kalman Topp, Miri Shepherd, Pastor

Toure Roberts, Dina Leeds, and many others. I am confident that with this dedicated team, we can do great work in the L.A. area and beyond.

“Certainly, the need for religious communities to cultivate deeper understanding and friendship has never been greater, especially at a moment where Israel and the global Christian community face increasing intolerance and even persecution.”

Consul General of Israel to Los Angeles, David Siegel, commented “Robert Stearns has a proven track record of progressive and strategic leadership. We are thrilled to continue working with him in his new leadership role at the Nexus.”

Sammy Rodriguez, head of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, weighed in on the appointment.

“Robert Stearns is a great friend to the Latino community and has a unique understanding of the special place Israel holds in the heart of the Latino community worldwide,” Rodriguez noted. “He is an excellent choice to lead the Nexus given the unique demographics present in the greater L.A. area.”

Influential Rabbi David Wolpe stated, “In my meetings with Robert Stearns over the years, I have found him to be a leader with great respect for traditions other than his own. I both hope and expect that his work with the religious community in Los Angeles will be successful.”

Stearns commented that one of his first areas of focus will be cultivating young leadership on college and university campuses.

“College campuses, which should be a bastion of free speech and tolerance, are increasingly intolerant to those of a Judeo-Christian background, especially as it relates to Middle East issues. We look forward to continuing Shimon Erem’s legacy of cultivating young student leaders who bring a

balanced perspective to their universities.”