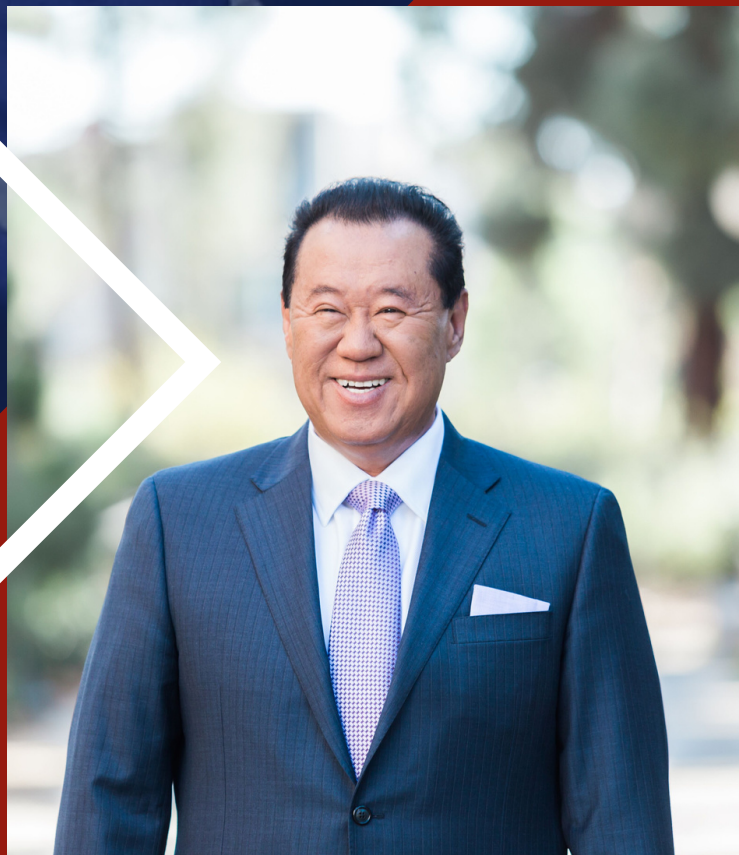


ISSET AGENCY



PASTOR CHE AHN *&* MAT STAVES, ESQ.

DEFEND THE FIRST AMENDMENT
AND THE RIGHT TO WORSHIP
IN CALIFORNIA IN A LAWSUIT
AGAINST GOVERNOR
GAVIN NEWSOM

HARVESTROCK
CHURCH

AS SEEN ON



OVERVIEW

LOS ANGELES, CA – July 15, Liberty Counsel filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking a preliminary injunction on behalf of Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry against Governor Gavin Newsom's unconstitutional COVID-19 orders prohibiting all indoor worship services, including home Bible studies and fellowship, while encouraging mass gatherings of protestors throughout the state. The lawsuit challenges both the total ban on in-person worship (including in private homes) in the counties on the "County Monitoring List," and the ban on singing and chanting in the remaining counties. In addition to in-person worship at Harvest Rock Church, the church also has many "Life Groups," which are home Bible studies and fellowship groups. These too are now prohibited under Gov. Newsom's recent orders. Harvest International Ministry includes 162 churches in California and 65,000 affiliate churches and ministries worldwide.

On July 6, 2020, the governor issued yet another revised "Worship Guidance" document which states unequivocally: "Places of worship must therefore discontinue singing and chanting activities and limit indoor attendance to 25% of building capacity or a maximum of 100 attendees." (emphasis added).

On July 13, 2020, Governor Newsom announced that the counties on the California Department of Health's County Monitoring List must close all indoor operations. In-person worship services are not permitted in these counties. Additional counties may be placed on the list, which currently covers about 80 percent of the population. This ban on in-person meetings, also applies to home Bible studies and fellowship meetings.

In the Q&A section posted on the California government website, COVID19.CA.GOV, under the "Are gatherings permitted" section, it states: "State public health directives prohibit professional, social and community gatherings.

Gatherings are defined as meetings or other events that bring together persons from multiple households at the same time for a shared or group experience in a single room, space, or place such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, or other indoor or outdoor space..." (emphasis added).

To the question, "Can I attend church," the website states: "indoor services in places of worship must be discontinued." To the question, "Can I practice my religious faith," the state says, "in-person religious gatherings ... have been restricted..." (emphasis added).

However, in response to the question, "Can I engage in political protest gatherings," California officials state: "Yes, although in-person protests present special public health concerns. ... In particular, activities like chanting, shouting, singing, and group recitation negate the risk-reduction achieved through 6 feet of physical distancing.

OVERVIEW

For this reason, people engaging in these activities should wear face coverings at all times. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that those exercising their right to engage in political expression (including, for example, their right to petition the government) should utilize alternative channels, such as the many online and broadcasting platforms available in the digital age, in place of in-person gatherings. However, state public health directives do not prohibit in-person outdoor protests as long as you maintain a physical distance of 6 feet between persons or groups of persons from different households at all times. (emphasis added). While discriminating against churches and houses of worship, including home Bible study and fellowship meetings, Gov. Newsom continues to encourage thousands of protestors to gather throughout the state. For example:

May 31, 2020 - Governor Newsom released an official statement praising and encouraging the protestors in California to continue to gather in large numbers despite the flagrant violation of his orders he said: "We have seen millions of people lift up their voices in anger, rightfully outraged . . . Every person who has raised their voice should be heard." He continued, "I want to thank all those . . . who exercised their right to protest peacefully." (emphasis added).

June 1, 2020 - Gov. Newsom held a press conference in which he expressed appreciation and gratitude for the thousands of protestors gathering in the streets in California in violation of his own orders. In response to the weekend violence Newsom said, "You are right to feel wronged. Those that want to express themselves and have, Thank You! God bless You. Keep doing it." (emphasis added).

June 5, 2020 - Gov. Newsom not only continued his support for mass protests that continually disregard his orders, but he said new standards should be applied for such protests. "Protestors have the right not to be harassed . . . Protestors have the right to protest peacefully. Protestors have the right to do so without being arrested."

June 6, 2020 - Thousands of protestors assembled in Sacramento, right outside the Governor's office, in violation of the governor's orders, and no citations or threats were made against them.

June 7, 2020 - Approximately 100,000 protestors, rioters, and looters were permitted to gather in Los Angeles in close proximity without any threat of criminal sanction for violating the governor's orders. Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, "Governor Gavin Newsom cannot disregard the First Amendment and ban all in-person worship in private homes and churches. Nor can the state micromanage the form of worship by banning singing or chanting. The governor is not the High Priest over all religions. There is not two First Amendments - one for protests and one for houses of worship. Gov. Newsom encourages thousands of protesters to gather in the streets but bans in-person worship and home Bible studies and fellowship. This discriminatory treatment is unconstitutional."

PASTOR CHÉ AHN



Ché Ahn and his wife, Sue, are the Founders and Senior Pastors of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, CA, since 1994. Harvest Rock Church has three additional locations in Corona, Downtown, and Orange County. Pastor Ché is the Founder and President of Harvest International Ministry, a global revival and reformation movement in over 65 nations, with 65,000 affiliate churches, united by the common vision of "Changing Lives, Transforming Cities, and Discipling Nations." He is also the International Chancellor of Wagner University, an international network of apostolic training centers established to equip the saints for Kingdom ministry.

Ché received his M.Div. and D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary and has played a key role in many strategic local, national, and international outreaches. He has authored numerous books, including Say Goodbye to Powerless Christianity, How to Pray for Healing, The Grace of Giving, God Wants to Bless You!, and Modern-Day Apostles. As a member of the Revival Alliance and Apostolic Roundtable, Ché ministers extensively throughout the world, bringing apostolic wisdom with a Holy Spirit impartation of revival, healing, and evangelism. His new show, "Equipping the Saints with Ché Ahn," debuts this week on God TV.

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MAT STAVER, ESQ.

Mat Staver serves as Senior Pastor, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel; Chairman of Liberty Counsel Action, Faith and Liberty, National Pro-life Center, Freedom Federation, Salt & Light Council, and National House of Hope; Founder and Chairman of Liberty Relief International; Vice President and Chief Counsel of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (which includes over 42,000 Evangelical Hispanic churches); former Vice President of Liberty University; former dean and tenured professor of law at Liberty University School of Law; Trustee of Timothy Plan, a New York and Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange-traded family of mutual funds Trustee of the Supreme Court Historical Society; Member of the Board of Reference of the Christian Film and Television Commission; Member of the Board of Advisors of Care for Pastors; Founder and former President of Staver & Associates; and Founder and former President of The Staver Group. Mat has over 300 published legal opinions. He authored eight scholarly law review publications,



many booklets and brochures, hundreds of articles and numerous books, including *Why Israel Matters*, *Faith & Freedom: A Complete Handbook for Defending Your Religious Rights*, *Same-Sex Marriage: Putting Every Household at Risk*, and *Eternal Vigilance: Knowing and Protecting Your Religious Freedom*. Mat is the host and producer of Faith and Freedom podcast/radio program and Freedom's Call radio program. He also produces a Bible study podcast. He is a frequent guest on many international and national network and cable television and radio programs, and has been interviewed for thousands of print and electronic media sources. Mat has filed numerous briefs and argued in many federal and state courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court and has argued two landmark cases before that Court, *Madsen v. Women's Health Center* and *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky*. Prior to law school, Mat pastored several churches. He reads Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Syriac. He graduated first in his seminary class and wrote the longest Master's thesis in the history of the school at that time, entitled: *Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Inquiry into the Historicity of the Passion Predictions*. Using historical research methods, he defended the historicity of the passion statements of Jesus. While in seminary, he was invited to present his research to biblical scholars from around the world at an American Society of Oriental Research annual conference. Mat continues to preach, baptize, and perform other sacerdotal functions. Mat has the highest AV rating given to attorneys by Martindale-Hubbe. He is licensed as an attorney in Florida and the District of Columbia, and is board certified in Appellate Practice by the Florida Bar. Mat has a B.A., Theology, cum laude, Southern Missionary College; M.A., Religion, summa cum laude, Andrews University; J.D., University of Kentucky; LL.D., honoris causa, Liberty University; D.D., honoris causa, South Florida Bible College.

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