

Called to Serve: Why I'm Running for Governor of California

Ché Ahn and his wife, Sue, have been the Senior Pastors of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California, since 1994. Ché is the President of Harvest International Ministry, an apostolic network in over 70 nations, and the International Chancellor of Wagner University. He received his . and . from Fuller Theological Seminary and has authored numerous books, including his latest release, *Turning Our Nation Back to God Through Historic Revival*.

How compassionate justice, common-sense policies and righteous reform can turn California around—and help awaken a nation

1. How did you know God was calling you to run for governor?

There are moments in life when the direction you're headed is suddenly interrupted—not by ambition, but by a quiet clarity that can only be described as a call. In the early morning hours of April 28, 2025, I sensed that kind of moment. At 2:30 a.m., I felt God speak to my heart in a way that I've come to recognize over 52 years of walking with Him: an invitation to lay down what's familiar and step into something far greater than myself.

Running for governor was not part of my personal plan. But as I began to pray, seek counsel, and weigh this deeply, confirmations came—both personal and public. I shared the moment with my wife, Sue, who immediately affirmed the sense of calling. Trusted friends, mentors, and national leaders

echoed the same encouragement. Then came something I couldn't have scripted: within an hour of throwing a fleece before the Lord, I received a text message followed by an email—an invitation from the White House to the National Day of Prayer. It was a nudge that reminded me God sees, and He speaks with precision.

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Since then, I've felt a growing sense of responsibility. Not as a politician seeking a platform, but as a servant willing to lead. I've spent my life helping people find hope, healing, and purpose. I believe California is ready for that same renewal—not just spiritually, but economically, socially, and culturally. This campaign is about answering that call.

2. Why do you believe you're the right person for this role?

I don't come from a political machine or a traditional path to office. But I bring something that I believe California is urgently looking for—authentic leadership rooted in service, character, and real-world impact.

My journey started as an immigrant. I was born in South Korea and came to the United States with my family in search of freedom and opportunity. My parents did things the right way—legally, patiently, and with deep respect for this country's laws and institutions. Their work ethic and integrity shaped me early on.

As a teenager, I made mistakes. I dropped out of high school. I struggled with addiction. But in 1973, my life changed. I encountered hope. I found purpose. And from that moment forward, I dedicated my life to helping others find the same.

Over the last five decades, I've built churches, led global humanitarian work, trained thousands of leaders, and stood in the gap when it mattered. During the pandemic, when churches

were threatened with closure, I took legal action and won a landmark case protecting the constitutional rights of houses of worship—not just for Christians, but for people of all faiths. That experience taught me that leadership is about standing up when others won't—and doing it with both courage and compassion.

What qualifies me isn't a title. It's a track record. I've led in crisis. I've built coalitions. I've fought for families, walked with the hurting, and stood up to systems that shut people out. I believe leadership is about character, not career. And I believe California is ready for a leader who will listen, serve, and bring people together around common-sense solutions.

3. How does your faith shape your vision for governing California?

My faith isn't a political tool—it's the foundation that's shaped every major decision I've made in life. It's what taught me that people matter, that truth is worth protecting, and that real leadership begins with humility and service.

One of the guiding verses in my life is Matthew 6:33, where Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." To me, this means when we prioritize what's right—honesty, fairness, compassion, accountability—then good things follow: safety, stability, and prosperity.

This is not just a spiritual belief—it's a practical approach to governing. When we care for the vulnerable, protect public safety, and reward responsibility, we create the kind of society where everyone has a chance to thrive. That includes the unborn and the elderly. It includes our neighbors living in poverty, and it includes small business owners trying to stay afloat.



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Psalms 89:14 says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face." That's the model I believe in for government. It's about protecting what's right, correcting what's broken, and doing it all with a heart to serve—not control.

Whether or not someone shares my faith, I believe these values resonate: honesty, accountability, compassion, and the courage to do what's right, even when it's not popular. These are principles that build strong communities and better outcomes. As governor, I'll lead from those principles every day.

4. What will you do differently than what's been done before?

The challenges we face in California aren't new—but the way we've approached them hasn't worked. For too long, we've seen top-down leadership driven by ideology instead of practicality, and by special interests instead of real-world outcomes.

What I bring is a different kind of leadership—one rooted in service, not self-interest. I'm not here to manage a political career. I'm here to help fix what's broken and deliver results that Californians can feel in their everyday lives.

That starts with the basics:

- We pay the highest gas prices and utility rates in the nation.
- Our income tax is the highest in the country, topping out at 13.3%.
- Nearly one-third of Californians live at or near the poverty line.
- Despite spending over \$24 billion on homelessness, the crisis has grown by 40% in just five years.
- Our state budget went from a \$97.5 billion surplus to a

\$12 billion deficit in the last three years.

These numbers don't point to a lack of resources. They point to a lack of accountability.

As governor, I will focus on clear, measurable goals. That means lowering the tax burden on working families and small businesses. It means streamlining regulations so job creators can thrive. It means investing in energy policies that reduce costs and make our grid more reliable.

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It also means doing the hard work of rebuilding trust. We will audit homelessness spending and redirect funds to programs with proven results. We will ensure that parents—not bureaucrats—have the final say in their children's education and health. And we will restore integrity to infrastructure projects by prioritizing local needs, fixing our roads and dams, and ending costly boondoggles like the high-speed rail project that has ballooned past \$100 billion.

I won't claim to have every answer. But I will ask the right questions. I will listen. And I will lead with both courage and compassion, working across the aisle to serve all Californians—because good policy shouldn't be partisan. It should be personal. And for me, it is.

5. Why is this bigger than just one race in California? What does it mean for our nation?

California has long been a bellwether. What happens here doesn't stay here—it spreads. Our policies, innovations, and cultural shifts often lead the nation. That's why this race for governor matters far beyond our state lines. It's not just about changing who holds office. It's about changing what we

expect from leadership.

In recent years, we've seen policies passed that many Californians quietly question—not because they're trying to make a political statement, but because they know something is off. Proposition 1 is a prime example. It allowed for abortion through the ninth month of pregnancy—something the majority of Californians were never asking for. It didn't reflect the values of balance, compassion, or common sense.

But instead of staying stuck in the past, we can cast a better vision for the future—one where life is honored, women are supported, and children are given a chance to thrive. The data is clear: when we invest in prenatal care, community support, adoption access, and real economic pathways for young families, outcomes improve. Abortion rates decline. Communities grow stronger. Hope rises.

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This campaign is about doing the hard work of renewal. Not reactionary politics. Not partisanship. But principled reform that puts people over ideology. I'm seeing it everywhere: parents, pastors, teachers, and business leaders stepping up—not out of anger, but out of a shared desire to see California flourish again.

It's often said that as California goes, so goes the nation. If that's true, then what we do here in 2026 matters more than we realize. Because if we can turn things around here—if we can build a state where families can afford to stay, small businesses can grow, and every life is treated with dignity—then we're not just changing a state. We're giving the nation a new example of what's possible.

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