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**It's Time to Stop the Violence Between People of Color**

St. Louis, Mo—Recently the city of Philadelphia, and the country was shocked by an episode that many wished would have never happened. Several Asian American students were on the subway when they were attacked by four African American teenagers. All of the attackers were females, and under 17 years of age. The four teens have been accused of ethnic intimidation in what police describe as a racially motivated crime.

First and foremost, as clergy leaders representing the Black community, we first want to extend a heart felt apology to the young Asian teenagers. Secondly, and more importantly, we want to urge young Black adults to take a moment and reflect upon their actions, and the consequences of their actions. Throughout the history of America, African Americans have known the sting of being attacked and targeting simply because who we are, such as in the recent case of **Ahmaud Arbery**. Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Indian Americans, and others have all suffered and continue to be victims of racially based attacks. African Americans, at the very least should not, and cannot be party to the targeting of the AAPI community or any other community because of who God created them to be.

**The Ecumenical Leadership Council of Mo** emphatically denounces violence and rudeness by African Americans towards Asians, and the Asian community. We are deeply apologetic and pray that the Philadelphia incident does not discourage bridge building between Asians and Blacks currently happening in many parts of the country. We encourage reaching out and taking the time to know Asians, not as a ethnic category, but as distinct and different individuals. African Americans and Asian Americans have a host of commonalities. Their different backgrounds can be an opportunity to share experiences and explore possibilities for the future. With all the potential available for both communities, we believe it's time for Blacks and Asians to join together and loudly proclaim, **Black Lives Matter**, and **Stop Asian Hate!**

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