Joint Statement on The Anniversary of the "Atlanta Massacre" from African American and Asian American Faith Leaders

Leaders remember the "Atlanta Massacre" and call for an end to hate.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Wednesday, March 15, 2022) – On the anniversary of the "Atlanta Massacre" and the spark of the Stop AAPI Hate movement, a diverse group of African American, Asian American, and allied clergy and faith leaders stand in solidarity against hate and racial injustice.

"On the anniversary of the Atlanta massacre, we mourn the senseless killing of eight lives including six Asian women who were described as 'temptation' that needed to be eliminated as well as the 11,000 reported attacks on Asians since the beginning of the pandemic, said **Hyepin Im, President & CEO, Faith and Community Empowerment**. "Hate is hate no matter who inflicts the violence. I am honored to stand in solidarity today with fellow clergy leaders from the Black community to call out against all forms of hate and violence on our Asian American, Black, Latinx and Native American communities as well as white supremacy that pits our communities against one another. We are so much stronger when we stand together."

"We have not always loved each other. We actually have been hurtful to one another. That was a decision. Now we can make a new decision that we are going to go forward together." - **Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, CEO & Founder, Skinner Leadership Institute, Co-Chair, National African American Clergy Network**

"The rise in anti-Asian violence, primarily aimed at Asian women, is yet another manifestation of the evils of white supremacy rearing its head in racialized communities. It is significant and essential for Black and Asian clergy to lead the charge to stand together to fight against racial violence in this country – regardless of where or how the violence shows up." - **Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland Tune, Chief Operating Officer, National Council of Churches**

"People of color are under siege. Asian Americans, along with African Americans and Latinx, do not feel safe in the streets, in workplaces, and even in places of worship. We need to unite and work together to stop discrimination, hate, and racism perpetuated against people in our communities." - **Jeffrey Kuan, President and Professor of Hebrew Bible, Claremont School of Theology**

"White supremacy does not discriminate. It wants our communities to fail. We stand together as one Body experiencing each other's pain, praying for our collective healing and flourishing." - **Rev. Janna Louie, American Baptist minister, Coalition of AAPI Churches**

"As Christians, we believe that ALL people, regardless of race, gender, creed, or class are made in God's image. All people have value and worth that is inherent to their existence. Yet, bigotry in all its forms, has created categories and hierarchies that have degraded and devalued divine image bearers in ways that have led to hate, violence, and death. Jesus cares for all people, and Christianity demands that we

extend that care to others. This means when anti-Black, anti-Brown, anti-Indigenous, anti-Pacific Islander, anti-Arab, or anti-Asian racism takes place, we are called to stand together (regardless of our own background) against the forces that seek to dehumanize the humanity that bears God's likeness."- **Pastor Raymond Chang, President, Asian American Christian Collaborative**

"We are living in times of isolation and fear. To combat racial hate crimes, we must create opportunities to sit together to learn and understand one another. Given this chance, we will realize that what ties us together is far greater than what physically distinguishes us. Otherwise, a tragedy such as the Atlanta massacre will continue to happen. Only by working together will we be able to bring love and peace. No one is exempt from this. " - **Rev. Dr. Kyunglim Shin Lee, Vice President for International Relations, Wesley Theological Seminary**

"The tragedy of Anti-Asian hate is a reminder of the reality that sin is not just in the soul but also in society. Christians are called to embody and extend love, grace, reconciliation, and justice in a broken and upside down world."- **Rev. Dr. Efrem Smith, Co-Pastor of Midtown Church and President of Influential Global Ministries**

"With 75% of Asian American Pacific Islander women experiencing racial discrimination in the last 12 months, we have got to do better as the Church whose Savior is Jesus who gives honor and hope to all people and who especially stood for those in marginalized communities. I am grateful for our African American brothers and sisters and other allies who stand with us in the AAPI community to stand for justice and peace. There has been too much violence. Thank you for honoring the lives of Asian Americans and AAPI women. Together, we will continue to reflect the multi-facet of God's wisdom (Eph 3:10). Together, we can show the power of God's people united in love and in action to an unjust world. " - **Margaret Yu, National Director of Epic Movement**

Statement from African American and Asian American Faith Leaders on the Anniversary of #StopAAPIHate

We write as clergy and faith leaders from diverse backgrounds - African American, Asian American, and supporters and allies of both communities - to mark the anniversary of the "Atlanta Massacre" and the Stop AAPI Hate movement. In these times where there is so much focus on what divides us, we join hands to say that hate in any form is unacceptable. We surround our AAPI brothers and sisters, along with all underrepresented people, with love and support in this difficult time.

In the First Epistle of John, the author notes, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen." God is love, and hate is the opposite and absence of God. As Black clergy leaders, we condemn acts of hatred against the AAPI community, as recently as this week in Yonkers, New York. As Asian American faith leaders, we join with our African American brothers and sisters in solidarity to support racial equity, justice, and equality in these times when civil rights are under attack.

The future of advocacy in our communities is intersectional; we will walk further together. On this sacred anniversary we recommit to that togetherness, to solidarity, and to stand shoulder to shoulder as Black and Asian faith leaders in the fight against hate and pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

Additional quotes from individual signatories are included below.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner

Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network

Rev. Hyepin Im

President & CEO, Faith and Community Empowerment

Dr. Walter Kim

President, National Association of Evangelicals

Dr. Mark E. Whitlock, Jr.

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Rev. Kip Banks

Senior Pastor, East Washington Heights Baptist Church

Pastor Raymond Chang

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Dr. Russell Jeung

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Jeffrey Kuan

President and Professor of Hebrew Bible, Claremont School of Theology

Rev. Dr. Kyunglim Shin Lee

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