

‘This Could Only Be God’: Pastor Michael Todd Gives \$1 Million to Tulsa Massacre Survivors, Black Nonprofits

Pastor Michael Todd of Transformation Church gave away a total of \$1 million to the survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre and Black-owned nonprofits Sunday, June 20, 2021.

“Reparation is not a political word. Reparation is not a word that your left-wing friends or your right-wing friends have coined,” Todd explained to his Bixby, Oklahoma, congregation. “Let me give you the definition of reparations. ‘The action of repairing something that was devastated.’ Reparations mean that somebody is going to take up the mantle and actually put into action the process of repairing something that was destroyed.”

He called for his church to be a pillar in the community and the first to acknowledge and act upon the reparations needed to restore relationships with those who suffered through the massacre. To that end, he presented checks for \$200,000 in reparations to the three remaining survivors of the Tulsa Massacre.

The massacre, which occurred from May 31 to June 1, 1921, and happened 100 years ago this month, is called one of the worst incidents of racial violence in U.S. history, leaving hundreds dead and thousands homeless after a mob attacked a Black Tulsa neighborhood.

Todd instructed his leadership team to find “every living survivor” of the massacre and invite them to Sunday service. They located Viola Fletcher, 107; Hughes Van Ellis, 100; and Lessie Randle, 106. He then used the sermon time to honor

their tragedy, saying, “Thank you for living a life that survived the devastation.”

In addition to the funds donated to the survivors—the average cost of a house in Tulsa—Transformation Church donated \$50,000 to the Terrance Crutcher Foundation, \$50,000 to Build in Tulsa, \$100,000 to One Race Movement and \$100,000 to Greenwood Cultural Center.

WE ARE THE CHURCH!! ☐ #TCNATION what took place this weekend was a cumulation of YOUR generosity, faith, and vision. We, the church, will be the ones who will build, repair, and restore.

THIS COULD ONLY BE GOD #GENEROSITY #buildyourchurch #REpresent

– Michael Todd (@iammiketodd) June 22, 2021

As he reflected on the devastation that struck, Todd said he realized the “most devastating thing” stolen from the Tulsa Massacre survivors was their homes. He asked, “How in the world do you rebuild when you go to sleep on a Thursday, and on the Friday, all your memories, all your life savings, everything that you build your life for, is in rubble in front of you. And you got to go to the fairgrounds and stay on cots and try to rebuild your life from ashes?”

He continued, “I’m a young Black man who took over a church from a white man who built it in North Tulsa. That couldn’t have happened if you all didn’t survive. Today, we can’t restore everything that has been stolen from you. But today, we can put a seed in the ground.”

This act of “tremendous” generosity made waves with his congregants, with one Black woman commending the pastor for doing what she says nobody else has.

“To my knowledge no one has ever paid any reparations to the victims of the Black Wall Street massacre. What Transformation Church did today for the survivors and other non profit groups

was amazing. This is why I will continue to sew seeds into this ministry. They are being the hands and feet of Jesus with their tremendous heart of generosity,” she wrote on the Facebook announcement.

Randolph Wiggins, who manages Build in Tulsa, a Black-empowering organization, tweeted:

Huge thanks to @iammiketodd and @transformtulsa for your support of Build in Tulsa’s mission to unleash the power of Black talent and potential in Tulsa and across America through technology, entrepreneurship, business and capital. #buildintulsa

– Randolph F. Wiggins (@randyfwiggins) June 20, 2021

Josh Clemons shouted out Delta Airlines for accommodating “an unusual request of transporting our \$100K gift,” from Transformation. The leader of nonprofit One Race tweeted a photo of the check on board the flight:

Shout out to @Delta & the DL1161 flight crew (Kali, Lisa, & Donavon) who went above & beyond to accommodate an unusual request of transporting our \$100K gift from @transformtulsa for our non-profit @OneRace

Unparalleled service & unparalleled kindness.

Thank you ☐☐ DL1161

– Josh Clemons (@RealJoshClemons) June 25, 2021

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