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BVI Police Arrest Preacher For Breaking Curfew

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Bishop John Ivan Cline of New Life Baptist Church in Duff's Bottom, Tortola. By. ANGELA BURNS/VI CONSORTIUM

Tortola, British Virgin Islands – True to his word, Bishop John Ivan Cline defied the government's mandatory curfew and turned up at his New Life Baptist Church in Duff's Bottom, Tortola today to host his usual Sunday service.

The BVI government instituted a curfew from Wednesday and Thursday 8pm-6am and ramped it up to a 24 hour curfew from Friday at 8:00 pm to April 2 at 6:00 am in the first instance, in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus. To date, there are two confirmed cases in the BVI.

However, Bishop Cline was seen live on Facebook this morning from his church preaching on "The Weapons of Our Warfare".

Bishop Cline was the topic of public discussion this past week, following a voice note he circulated to his members when the government announced the curfew.

VI Consortium obtained a copy. The note said: “this new curfew starting Friday for 24 hours for a whole week shutdown, I am telling you all now, I will have church on Sunday if it’s me by myself. This has gone too far. We’ve done everything they’ve asked and the local population have abide(d) for the most part by what they have asked...So, prepare for your pastor to either be arrested or stopped or called a rebel. I’m telling you all now, I will not comply with not being in church on Sunday. All I need is for the video to be set up.”

Apart from heading one of the largest churches in the British Virgin Islands, Bishop Cline also owns several businesses in the territory, including an electronics and computer equipment and supplies store.

Commissioner of the a Royal Virgin Islands Police Force Michael Matthews declined to confirm names, but told VI Consortium that he “can confirm officers have attended a call to an illegal gathering at a church and have arrested one individual who was taken to Road Town Station. They have been subsequently cautioned and warned before being released.”

Other BVI media outlets reported on the arrest.

In the Facebook Live, Bishop Cline proclaimed that “the thing that we find ourselves in cannot be fought just with a medical solution because it’s not physically derived. This is a spiritual battle and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but they are mighty through God and it will pull down strongholds.”

He said we are not just warring against the coronavirus but against stress, anxiety, worry, economic hardships in businesses and the nation, financial difficulties in families and individual lives, the survival of human rights, spiritual and religious oppression in the world and the powers of darkness. He said persons should not ignore their spiritual, emotional and mental health, but be strong and of good courage.

“We have so much untapped power and resources and we ought not fear and wait for man, but know that we can arrest this thing at its root and show the world that our God is mighty,” the preacher declared.

He said there are weapons to be used in this fight: the Word of God, praise, prayer and fasting. He contends that this is more than a virus but a system that seeks to control people’s lives with things like digital imprints.

Bishop Cline said people don’t need a vaccine, they need the Lord. He said his heart goes out to those around the world affected by this virus, but he's standing on a word for the BVI that death shall not come near its shores.

In a shocking announcement, he accused the authorities of wanting to keep people inside because of some dangerous radio frequencies in the air, balloons from Florida to St Vincent down to Trinidad, that can be tracked by a Flight Tracker app. He said it’s a project launched by Google to spread 5G throughout the world.