

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor Mapp, A 'Growing Christian,' Delivers Sermon-Like Speech During Praise And Thanksgiving Event

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ST. THOMAS -- Residents of St. Thomas joined members of the Mapp administration for an afternoon of thanksgiving and praise to commemorate the anniversary of 2017 storms Hurricanes Irma and Maria, two Category 5 weather systems that blew through the territory leaving widespread damage in their wake.

Sunday's event, the first of three to be held across the territory, saw a number of praise and worship teams, singers and pastors, leading the crowd at the UVI Sports and Fitness Center in an hourslong inspirational affair. The atmosphere was filled with spirituality, and

even Governor Kenneth Mapp -- who declared himself a Christian whose walk is not perfect -- took to the podium and encouraged followers of Jesus Christ to put their faith into action. The governor spoke of when he gave his life to God through Jesus Christ. He recalled it being a moment shared with his then-wife in 1986 while listening to Dr. Frederick Price, a once-popular televangelist.

"On a dare or a challenge by Pastor Price, we decided to get down on our knees and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior; that he had died on the cross, saved us from our sins, and that if we dared to believe and have faith, and do the work, that our lives would be better," the governor preached.

"I accepted the challenge in reality, and as many of you know I refer to myself as a continuing, growing Christian, because I am one that is far from perfect," the governor went on. "I still have some more penance to pay and some more redemption to ask for. But I take comfort in knowing that each year I get a little stronger in faith than the year before."

The governor spoke of the support he received from members of his administration, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, along with unwavering support from Washington -- all parts of a whole that helped in the territory's recovery, he said. "We figured a way to rebuild our territory and to get the resources that we need, and the help that we need, that we could almost take a disaster and turn it to opportunity," Mr. Mapp said.

Even as the governor expressed gratitude, he was cognizant of [the two systems churning in the Atlantic Ocean](#). "Isaac is said to either go north of us, south of us, or maybe close to us. I don't know where it's going to go; I am personally hurricane fatigued. But at the end of the day I know there's somebody bigger than me, somebody stronger than me, and somebody who will not give us more than we can carry," the governor proclaimed, steadying his rhetoric back to preaching.

Audience members rewarded him with round of applause and cheers.

At one point, the governor lauded a Haitian minister who delivered his own sermon in creole, or patois as its called in the Caribbean. "I don't speak a lot of creole, but apparently my spirit does as I was singing along with you," Mr. Mapp said.

Before he gave up the mic, the territory's leader thanked his cabinet members for their participation, some of whose flights were delayed but made it nonetheless.

And he gave one last word as he left.

"I say to each one of you, you are members of God's army," the governor declared. "And you are blessed and you will continue to get the blessings."

The next event is scheduled for September 23 at the Educational Complex on St. Croix from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and will feature Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights as well as other inspirational groups.

The thanksgiving service on St. John will be held at Franklin Powell Park in Cruz Bay on September 30 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and will follow a similar program.

Sunday's affair was well put together, with a seamless flow of guests unencumbered by pauses. The Department of Tourism organized the event.

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