

Patois Bible Nah Go Ready So Til April

The first audio book of the Bible translated in the Jamaican native language is expected to be ready by April, a delay of about four months from its original schedule.

"The patois version of St Luke's gospel was supposed to be ready last December, but a substantial revision of an earlier draft has pushed the production back by a few months, Rev Courtney Stewart, general manager of the Bible Society of the West Indies, told the Observer. "The end of last year was our aim but we had to revise our goal. The University of the West Indies (UWI), with whom we are collaborating, shared some information with us concerning how we were doing it, so we had to restructure our approach," Rev Stewart said. The announcement last year of the production of the patois Bible over 12 years at a cost of \$60 million, ignited heated debate about its appropriateness and cost. Rev Stewart explained then that it was mainly an audio project in which the spoken word would be produced on compact disks and via the Internet, although some written texts would be made available. Meanwhile, the producers of the controversial scriptures have apparently taken some criticisms to heart and have made adjustments to a previous draft. "An earlier draft we were working on had to be almost completely revised based on the comments we received. We realised there were several matters we needed to address," Rev Stewart said. He said the changes were made as a result of the findings of field tests conducted by the UWI team hired for the project, as well as comments garnered from focus groups and other interviews. "Because of the nature of the material we have to be extremely careful. This is the word of God, this is not a novel. We would rather err on the side of extreme caution, so when we put out something we can say this is an accurate representation of the word of God, and is also an accurate representation of the vernacular," said Rev Stewart. As to when persons will be able to hear the Bible in patois, Rev Stewart said "we working for a launch around Easter time." Good Friday is on April 10 this year, while Easter Sunday is April 12.

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Douglas