

# WELS Review of the Christian Standard Bible Translation

## Overview

In 2017 Holman Bible Publishers published an extensive revision of the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB) under the shortened name *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB). The HCSB was one of the translations the WELS had examined carefully for possible use in its publications in 2012. Its English style was more contemporary than the ESV, but somewhat less polished than the NIV, and the renderings it chose for certain words and phrases were “quirky.” When the WELS Translation Liaison Committee (TLC) met with representatives of Holman in anticipation of a revision, Holman Bible Publishers welcomed input from our synod. The WELS TLC prepared hundreds of suggested edits for the revision of the CSB. Those suggestions were given serious consideration, and a sizable majority of them adopted for the revision.

On the spectrum of English Bible translations, the CSB sees itself as somewhat more “formal word for word” than the NIV, but more “dynamic thought for thought” than the ESV. Holman describes its translation philosophy as “optimal equivalence.” “In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. In places where a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is favored” (*Faithful and True* brochure, p. 11).

A few of the “quirky” or novel renderings of words or phrases the CSB has changed include its handling of the Hebrew tetragrammaton in the Old Testament, and how it deals with the phrase “slave (or servant) of Christ.” For hundreds of years English readers have been accustomed to reading God’s name יהוה (transliterated *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*) as Lord. There are over 6800 uses of the name in Scripture. Already the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), used the word “lord” (Greek “*kyrios*”) to render the name. Virtually every major English translation since the King James Version rendered the name in all capital letters, LORD. The HCSB had attempted to use the transliteration *Yahweh* in many, but not all, instances. This struck many reviewers and users of the HCSB, including those from the WELS, as awkward, especially in well-known passages. The CSB has gone back to the traditional English convention of translating the tetragrammaton LORD.

In the New Testament the words “slave” or “servant” do not have exact counterparts in our society. A “slave” is not the plantation worker from the days before the American Civil War, and a “servant” is not a member of the household staff of maids, cooks, and butlers. The HCSB often used the phrase “slave of Christ” where English readers were accustomed to reading “servant of Christ.” In many, if not all, cases, the CSB has returned to the use of the word “servant” where English readers expect it.

One of the biggest concerns some have raised about the most recent English translations of the Bible has been the way in which they handle so-called “inclusive” language. In an attempt to reflect standard, 21<sup>st</sup> Century usage of terms that can imply reference to a specific gender, some shy away from using “he,” “him,” “his,” “man,” or “men,” in a generic sense, referring to people of either gender, though this had been standard English usage up until a few decades ago. Many leading voices among conservative Christians, including not a few from our own circles, have pushed for moderation in the use of “gender neutral” terms, and more care to be accurate where the original text indicates a reference to both men and women. Sometimes attempts to avoid gender specific pronouns or terms where none is intended in the Hebrew or Greek can lead to awkward circumlocutions. In some cases there is disagreement among

1 Bible translators and scholars over whether a specific term in the original text does or does not intend to  
2 limit its reference to male human beings.

3  
4 The translators of the CSB also recognized that the English language has moved away from using  
5 masculine terms or pronouns in a generic sense where people of either gender may be included. They  
6 resolved to show this change in their translation, but to do so following the so-called Colorado Springs  
7 Guidelines produced by a meeting of Evangelical Christians in 1997. In this the CSB generally takes a  
8 more conservative approach to inclusive language than does the NIV. The Translation Oversight  
9 Committee (TOC) of the CSB sums up the principles it has followed this way:

- 10 • The word “brothers” suggests to English readers today only male believers, but in the vast  
11 majority of instances the Greek word *adelphoi* refers to both males and females, so it is  
12 translated “brothers and sisters” in those cases.
- 13 • For historical accounts, parables, or examples, the TOC generally retained “man” or “men.” For  
14 general principles, the translators used “person” or “one,” usually rendering *anthropos* as  
15 “person” since it doesn’t refer to males per se but to human beings, and *aner* as “man” or  
16 “men.” In all cases, the context determined the most accurate rendering of the original.
- 17 • The TOC did not make the third person singular pronouns inclusive, and thus translated them as  
18 “he” or “him,” not “they” or “you,” electing not to remove the individual and personal sense of  
19 those expressions.

## 20 21 **HCSB Edits Suggested by the WELS TLC**

22  
23 The WELS CSB Review Committee did not consider a careful analysis of the edits proposed to Holman by  
24 our Translation Liaison Committee (TLC) part of our task, but we were aware of the potential influence  
25 our TLC had upon the CSB. We note that a very high percentage of the suggestions made by the TLC  
26 were adopted. For example, in the gospels the WELS TLC had proposed edits in 72 passages. The CSB  
27 adopted 59 of those edits more or less in their entirety. It incorporated another five of the suggestions  
28 in part and chose to reject just eight. In the Old Testament Wisdom Literature of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,  
29 and Song of Songs, the WELS TLC offered edits to 25 passages. Sixteen were included wholly in the CSB,  
30 four more partially, and five not at all. In the case of this last group, the challenge in translating was  
31 often acknowledged by our own men. One change not adopted by the CSB was proposed for  
32 Ecclesiastes 4:13ff. Here the TLC introduced the rationale for its own proposal this way: “This text is a  
33 knot that most translations have a hard time untying. That there is an underlying narrative seems clear,  
34 but the pronouns make it hard to tell how many characters there are, how many “rags-to-riches” stories  
35 there are, and how exactly the stories fit together chronologically” (*TLC-ProvEcclesSongSongs*, p. 16).  
36 We provide this example as a way of illustrating that the rejection of individual suggestions from our TLC  
37 should not necessarily lead to grave concern over the faithfulness of the translation.

## 38 39 **The Methodology of the WELS CSB Review**

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41 Our committee described the methodology of this review in the WELS Report to the Twelve Districts  
42 2018: “Like the comparative, three-translation review of the NIV, ESV, and HCSB that took place in 2012,  
43 this review of the CSB has engaged the participation of one hundred and two WELS pastors, professors,  
44 and administrators. The text of the Bible has been divided into thirty-four sections.... The CSB review  
45 committee asked those involved in the review to rate the CSB on the same two criteria used in the  
46 three-translation review six years ago: the appropriateness of the English style, and the overall  
47 acceptability for WELS publications.” One numerical difference between the two reviews: five reviewers  
48 did not submit their scores for this 2018 evaluation of the CSB.

1  
2 **Critique of CSB Translation Choices**  
3

4 The Old Testament generally received higher marks from WELS reviewers than the New Testament. We  
5 have already discussed the widely approved return of LORD where HCSB had transliterated *Yahweh*.  
6 Other choices often divided our own reviewers.

- 7
- 8 • The CSB chooses to transliterate the Hebrew *sheol*. Some feel this is a good choice for a word  
9 that is often hard to translate precisely and consistently. Others complain that this will leave the  
10 English reader confused.
  - 11 • Weights and measures are commonly translated into common American equivalents. While this  
12 may make it easy for Americans to understand, most of the rest of the English speaking world  
13 uses the metric system.
  - 14 • Most of our reviewers liked the CSB decision to translate *Adonai Sabaoth* “Lord of Armies”  
15 instead of “Lord of hosts,” but some thought it sounded awkward.
  - 16 • Some reviewers liked the CSB’s “absolute futility” where KJV has “vanity” and NIV has  
17 “meaningless” throughout Ecclesiastes, but the opinion was not unanimous.

18 In places Old Testament reviewers were critical of sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization.

- 19
- 20 • More than one man noted that the title “angel of the Lord” is not capitalized even when it  
21 seems to be a proper name or title for the pre-incarnate Christ.
  - 22 • Sometimes the CSB utilizes unusual naming conventions: the Hittites are called the “Hethites.”
  - 23 • While the NIV and other modern translations refer to the King of Persia as Xerxes, the CSB goes  
24 back to the Hebrew Ahasuerus.

25 There were a few word choices that also gained the disapproval of multiple reviewers:

- 26
- 27 • “resident aliens” in the CSB for “foreigners” or “sojourners;”
  - 28 • “happy” in the CSB for Hebrew *asher*, “blessed” (One man pointed out that those the Lord  
29 disciplines in Psalm 94:12 are unlikely “happy” in the way we usually understand the word,  
30 though they are “blessed”);
  - 31 • Hebrew *nephesh* translated “I” or “me” when “soul” would have been richer and perhaps more  
32 accurate.
  - 33 • In Psalm 46:10 the CSB replaces the familiar “Be still and know that I am God...” with “Stop your  
34 fighting...”, a choice that is sure to grate on the ears of the heirs of the Reformation.

35 But these are highly subjective issues and don’t necessarily reflect on the faithfulness of the translation.  
36 Translation choices that earned praise throughout the Old Testament included generally proper use of  
37 inclusive language, while preserving male pronouns and vocabulary where appropriate. Where other  
38 translations like the NIV had dropped the phrase “son of man” from Psalm 8:4, making it harder to  
39 connect this to Christ in the book of Hebrews, the CSB retains that translation. In appropriate places the  
40 CSB uses the words “reverence” or “awe” where traditionally translations used “fear.”

41  
42 Taken as a whole, WELS reviewers found the CSB translation of the Old Testament a substantial upgrade  
43 over the HCSB. Many commented about the comfort they would have with seeing it used in WELS  
44 materials. One of those who worked on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther offered: “In my previous analysis I  
45 rated the NIV 2011 highly for their translation of these books. But now my evaluation of this revision of  
46 the Holman is leading me to think that this translation has great potential.”  
47

1 Though the reviewers who analyzed the New Testament also gave the CSB high marks, their regard was  
2 less enthusiastic and less consistent. For example, one man who reviewed Acts scored the English style 3  
3 and the overall acceptability 3, another gave scores of 6 and 6, and the third rated it an 8 and a 9. Mark,  
4 similarly, saw scores ranging from 2 to 8. Romans and Hebrews were two other New Testament books  
5 that received lower scores from some reviewers. When all the New Testament scores are added up, the  
6 overall rating is just a little less than the Old Testament. But the instances of wide variance are notable.  
7

8 There were fewer translational choices that received comment from more than one reviewer across  
9 multiple books of the New Testament than there were in the Old Testament. More than one reviewer  
10 noted that sentences were too long. They complained the translators were following the Greek  
11 construction too closely in such cases. On the other hand, several reviewers noted that the CSB handled  
12 verb tense and mood well in the New Testament. “I was impressed with the way that the CSB translators  
13 brought out the nuances of not only the imperfect tense..., but the moods of the individual verbs as  
14 well. They also did an excellent job bringing out the nuances of particles, interjections, and conjunctions  
15 where appropriate—something rarely seen in the idiomatic translations like NIV and slavishly seen in  
16 more wooden translations like ESV.”  
17

18 Rather than focusing on specific translational choices, New Testament reviewers seemed to come to  
19 their conclusions mostly based on their perception of the English style. This varied widely from reviewer  
20 to reviewer and book to book. On the positive side, one reviewer for John’s Gospel concluded: “CSB is  
21 not a perfect translation, but it is definitely worthy of use in our circles. From my study of its translation  
22 of John’s Gospel, CSB should reasonably be considered one of the top translation possibilities for WELS  
23 publications, especially over ESV.... CSB is very similar to NIV84, while improving in some areas and  
24 bringing in quite a few of the positives from NIV11 and even ESV.”  
25

26 By contrast, the three reviewers of the book of Romans described the readability as “inconsistent,” “less  
27 fluid,” and too erudite for the common man. One man reviewing Hebrews noted, “Especially in the first  
28 half of Hebrews (chs 1-6), a level of diction that supports the majesty of the subject matter is bogged  
29 down in stiff English constructions that adhere, sometimes slavishly, to Greek grammar.... It all makes  
30 the translation sound like a paper written by someone who’s trying to sound like he’s smart when he  
31 isn’t.”  
32

### 33 **Inclusive Language**

34

35 Perhaps no issue inspired the production of the HCSB and the ESV in the early 2000’s and drove the  
36 revision of the NIV in 2011 so much as the way in which English speaking people have moved away from  
37 using masculine pronouns and terms in a generic sense when the gender of those to whom they refer  
38 may not be known and may include females. We noted the issue and the CSB approach in the Overview.  
39

40 Throughout most of the Bible our reviewers were satisfied with the way in which the translators  
41 implemented their approach. One Old Testament reviewer noted, “The CSB deals very skillfully with the  
42 use of gender and gender-neutral terminology by using “one person” and “a person” (for *ish*)—gender  
43 neutral terms—while not being afraid to still use the singular pronoun “him” instead of substituting  
44 “them” as in the NIV 2011. I felt the CSB did a very commendable job dealing with the issue of gender  
45 neutrality throughout my section by using gender neutral language where appropriate, but also  
46 preserving male pronouns and vocabulary when necessary.”  
47

1 Those who reviewed the New Testament made relatively few references to inclusive language in their  
2 comments. The biggest issue raised centered on the phrase *andres adelphoi* in Acts 1:16. The CSB  
3 translates “brothers and sisters.” In many cases in the New Testament we can acknowledge that the  
4 Greek word *adelphoi*, “brothers,” is used in a generic sense to refer to both men and women. “Siblings”  
5 would be a good English equivalent, but is not a word we commonly use to address people. “Brothers  
6 and sisters” may be a wordy alternative, but it is a phrase we are more accustomed to hearing and  
7 using.  
8

9 All three reviewers of Acts flagged the translation “brothers and sisters” in Acts 1:16 for discussion. This  
10 is because the word *adelphoi* is preceded by the word *andres*, literally “men.” If ever there were a  
11 reason to limit the translation of *adelphoi* to “brothers,” this would seem to be the case. One reviewer  
12 cited comments from Joel Fredrich and Ken Cherney for favoring an exclusively masculine translation  
13 here: “Joel Fredrich writes, ‘Here we run into disagreement among eminent scholars. A number of them  
14 regard the word [ἄνδρες] as merely a stylized way of addressing people that adds nothing except  
15 perhaps a formal tone and is therefore not meant to exclude women. I am not persuaded; these  
16 scholars offer their sense of what is going on in these contexts, but as Barrett observed, proof is lacking.  
17 There are also eminent scholars who take *andres* in a biblical speech as an indication that the speaker is  
18 addressing the men (even if women are sometimes present). This may seem odd or boorish to us, but  
19 would it seem so in a clearly androcentric culture?’<sup>1</sup> In his article *Gender-Neutral Language, with Special  
20 Reference to the NIV 2011*, Ken Cherney says, ‘*ανηρ* means “male” and even “husband” (Matthew 1:16,  
21 Mark 10:2), and ἄνδρες vocative ‘has a strong tendency to retain its normal meaning ‘men.’ While in  
22 certain contexts other translation objectives might be more important than making it clear that males  
23 are meant (c.f. Acts 2:29 “Fellow Israelites”), a decision explicitly to add “...sisters” to describe a group  
24 addressed as ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί is not easy to defend.’”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, one of the other reviewers  
25 pointed out that Chrysostom seemed to understand Peter to be addressing both men and women in  
26 Acts 1 (Homily 18 on 2 Co 8:16).  
27

28 Throughout the rest of the New Testament, *adelphos/adelphoi* continued to draw the most attention on  
29 the inclusive language question, whether because the CSB handled it well (e.g. 1 Corinthians 10:1,  
30 Galatians 1:2, Philippians 4:21) or because reviewers questioned the translator’s choice (e.g. Acts 6:3,  
31 Acts 7:37, Acts 15:7, 1 Corinthians 15:6).  
32

33 One of the Acts reviewers also provided a comparative look at the way in which the CSB handled the  
34 word *andres*, “men,” in various contexts in that book: “In the 29 occurrences of ἄνδρες, the HCSB  
35 translated all 29 with a masculine English word. The CSB translates 6 occurrences as “brothers and  
36 sisters,” 8 as “fellow Jews (Israelites, people, etc), and 15 as “men.”” This led him to wonder whether  
37 the translators of Acts were following some agenda.  
38

39 However, across the entirety of the translation our reviewers seemed satisfied with the way in which  
40 the CSB navigates the issue of inclusive language. Based on some preliminary communication with the  
41 committee overseeing the CSB, it is possible that some of the concerns raised by our reviewers may be  
42 revisited in a future revision of the translation.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Fredrich, “Some gender issues in translating the Bible into English, illustrated from selected versions,” presented to Special Michigan District Winter Conference, January 16, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Cherney, WLQ Vol 113, No 4, Fall 2016.

## Handling of Core Doctrines

Holman Bible Publishers is a publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. Considering the theological bent of the publisher, our committee and reviewers were interested to see whether this influenced the CSB translation.

The Translation Oversight Committee for the CSB consists of ten members, only three of whom are members of the Southern Baptist Convention. Two others are non-denominational. Of the remaining five, two are Lutheran (one ELS, the other LCMS), two are conservative Presbyterians, and one is Anglican. Translators from a total of 17 denominations were also involved in the project. This denominational diversity seems to have worked to discourage overt denominational biases in the CSB text.

Our reviewers noted 18 passages in the Old Testament that they ranked among the five weakest translations in their section because of possible doctrinal concerns. Most of them are isolated translational choices that don't seem to betray a trend in the CSB. The Aaronic blessing in Numbers 24 begins each statement of benediction with the word "may," though the context suggests that these statements are promises, not mere possibilities. The CSB chose not to translate the title "Angel of the Lord" using capital letters even in places such as Genesis 16:7 or Judges 13:3, where context indicates this is a reference to the pre-incarnate Christ. That choice doesn't necessarily deny the identity of the Angel, but it denies the reader a more explicit indication. One reviewer believed that the CSB's rendering of Proverbs 16:4 left the door open for double predestination. However, even the reviewer's suggested changes would not preclude a person from reading it into the text, nor does the current form force the reader to the false conclusion.

In the book of Isaiah reviewers identified possible Calvinist or Evangelical bias in the translation in a couple of isolated passages. Isaiah 45:25 in the CSB reads, "All the descendants of Israel will be justified and find glory through the Lord." The Hebrew translated "justified" does not ordinarily have the New Testament sense "declare not guilty" in the *qal* form, as here (Cf. Pieper, *Isaiah II*, p. 290; Also Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 842). "Find glory" might better be translated in a more active way: they will "glory in" or "boast in" the Lord. One reviewer wondered whether the CSB, then, was making "a hat-tip to the teaching among some Evangelicals that all people of Jewish descent will be saved." However, these word choices aside, our understanding of "the descendants of Israel" would not be limited to the Jews in any case. Pieper points out, "All the seed of Israel is not Israel according to the flesh...it is the spiritual Israel, which includes the converted Gentiles...(p. 290). Of course, in this he is simply reflecting the New Testament understanding put forth in passages such as Romans 2:28-29 or Romans 9:6-8. "Descendants (or seed) of Israel" is a reference to the believing people of God, whether Jews or New Testament Christians.

The CSB renders Isaiah 55:7b, "Let him return to the LORD, so he may have compassion on him." The little word "so" translates a Hebrew *waw*. The parallel expression in verse 7c begins with Hebrew *ki*, "for," indicating that these clauses don't so much intend to express that man's action is a condition to be fulfilled with the purpose of winning God's response. Rather, man's action is a response to the promised grace of God. One reviewer saw the CSB rendering as "an apparent nod to decision theology." And the little word "so" certainly fits that understanding. But in the last part of the verse the CSB does get the relationship between the phrases correct, "...and to our God, *for* he will freely forgive." We disagree with the use of the word "so" in verse 7b and its implications. It seems to make the gospel

1 conditional. The translation here may not offer a fully developed decision theology, but it certainly fits  
2 into that point of view.

3  
4 In the New Testament 24 passages were flagged for potential doctrinal shortcomings. Almost a quarter  
5 of them had to do with the inclusive language issue we have already discussed. More than a quarter of  
6 the passages marked for some doctrinal issue received attention because of a lack of clarity (Acts 11:21,  
7 Romans 1:3-4, Romans 3:21-22, Romans 3:23-24, Galatians 2:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:15, 1  
8 Peter 2:2). Our reviewers felt these were open to misinterpretation, not that they expressly made false  
9 statements. In the remaining passages our men warned about renderings that

- 10 • support double predestination (Romans 9:22, Jude 4),
- 11 • wrongly limit the claims of the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4),
- 12 • misidentify the mention of baptisms in Hebrews 6:2, exclude the possibility of forgiveness for  
13 believers who willfully sin (Hebrews 10:26-27),
- 14 • make faith a meritorious work (Hebrews 11:2),
- 15 • teach perfectionism (1 John 5:18), misidentify the righteousness of the saints (Revelation 19:8),  
16 and
- 17 • support millennialism by mistranslating the simple aorists of Revelation 20:4-5.

18 In the majority of these passages the CSB is making the same choices as the NIV11 and the ESV.

19  
20 On the positive side, our reviewers did not report major problems in the way the CSB handles the  
21 passages that teach baptism, the Lord's Supper, the two natures of Christ, the virgin birth, atonement,  
22 the dual nature of the Christian, prophecy and fulfillment, heaven and hell, and sexual ethics. Problems  
23 with passages that teach other major doctrines such as eschatology, justification, election, and  
24 conversion and faith, seem to be limited to the isolated passages mentioned above.

25  
26 In a number of cases reviewers expressed enthusiasm about the usefulness of the CSB for teaching  
27 Christian doctrine. "I'm of the opinion that the 'role of men and women' section of 1 Timothy 2—an  
28 obvious issue in WELS—is solid and would serve well as a basis for teaching the order of creation," one  
29 said. Another noted good things in the way it handles Peter's teaching on baptism in 1 Peter 3: "I believe  
30 the CSB gets an 'A' here for rendering *antitupon* as 'which corresponds to this.' It removes the possible  
31 confusion the word 'symbolizes' may accidentally insert into the discussion. This is an important passage  
32 for understanding baptism. Despite the Baptist roots of the CSB, the translation is faithful to what Peter  
33 is clearly saying: Baptism saves you."

34  
35 On the whole, the CSB handles passages of a doctrinal nature in a way that compares favorably with  
36 other modern English translations.

### 37 **Appropriate English Style and Overall Acceptability: The Scores**

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40 Having looked at all these issues, there were two categories on which we asked our reviewers to score  
41 the CSB: Appropriate English Style and Overall Acceptability for Use in WELS Publications. For each  
42 category they were to rate the translation on a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning unacceptable,  
43 and ten indicating outstanding.

44  
45 In their comments our reviewers often noted that the English of the CSB has taken a big step forward  
46 from the HCSB. "Comparing it to the Holman Christian Standard Bible that I was able to review a few  
47 years ago, the CBS is significantly better than its predecessor in many ways and in many places. Many of

1 the “quirky” and annoying features have been removed. What remains is more than bearable. The  
 2 translation, as a whole...is very good both from a faithfulness standpoint and from the perspective of  
 3 readability. It’s like reading the old NIV again.” “Overall, the translation is careful and understandable,  
 4 using the language of the people while still trying to present the complexity of Isaiah’s mode of  
 5 expression.... It is perhaps just one revision away from being a truly outstanding product.” “I found the  
 6 English of the CSB very easy to understand, very faithful to the Greek, and written in ways that I believe  
 7 would be very easy for most any English-speaker to understand.... I found that this translation ‘speaks  
 8 my language,’ and I think it would leave the average bible reader feeling the same.” “This revision  
 9 addressed a number of the concerns I initially had about the HCSB.... I found it to be much more  
 10 readable and user-friendly.... In my opinion, it is on par with the NIV in acceptability and English style.”  
 11

12 As alluded to earlier, four New Testament books received the most criticism for their English style: Mark,  
 13 Acts, Romans, and Hebrews. “Numerous examples of poor word order.... Numerous examples of using  
 14 the imperfect when English prefers the perfect.... Numerous examples of odd translation of participles.”  
 15 “This translation felt less fluid than the predecessor, the HCSB.” See again the comments quoted from a  
 16 reviewer of Hebrews at the end of the discussion of Translation Choices above.  
 17

18 Here are how the reviewers scored the CSB for English Style:  
 19

	Total Points	Average Score
Entire Bible	777.5	8.01 (Divide by 97)
Old Testament	530	8.28 (Divide by 64)
New Testament	247.5	7.5 (Divide by 33)

20  
 21 These scores are a notable improvement over the scores the HCSB received in 2012. Then the average  
 22 English Style score for the entire Bible was 6.87. Many of the reviewers, but not all, were the same ones  
 23 who participated in the study in 2012. The total number of reviews was slightly less for the CSB since  
 24 five reviewers submitted incomplete reviews or none at all, as has been noted.  
 25

26 In 2012 the NIV’s average score for English Style across the entire Bible was 8.3. Thus the CSB has come  
 27 quite close to the NIV in the quality of its English Style in the opinion of most WELS reviewers.  
 28

29 The other category for which we asked participants to score the CSB was Acceptability for Use in WELS  
 30 Publications. Those scores look like this:  
 31  
 32

	Total Points	Average Score
Entire Bible	802	8.26
Old Testament	542	8.46
New Testament	260	7.8

33  
 34 These again indicate much improvement since 2012, when reviewers gave the HCSB an average score of  
 35 6.46 for the entire Bible. The CSB acceptability score actually surpasses the average given to the NIV in  
 36 2012: 7.55.  
 37

38 **Conclusion**  
 39



1 Reading through nearly a hundred evaluations of a Bible translation reveals that WELS pastors and  
2 professors often disagree with each other about good translation choices as much as they disagree with  
3 the translators. In a world with many English translations of the Bible, no single translation is likely to  
4 please everyone.

5  
6 That being said, the translators of the Christian Standard Bible have produced a translation that is highly  
7 faithful to the original texts and speaks in clear, readable English. We can identify passages in which we  
8 believe their renderings fall short, but it is clear that the translation team regarded the entire Greek and  
9 Hebrew Scriptures as the very words of God and strove to reproduce them in English without letting  
10 their personal beliefs and opinions unduly color their work. The CSB has adopted the motto “faithful and  
11 true” from Revelation 22:6. To the degree a translation that is the product of imperfect humans can  
12 reproduce the faithful and true words of God, the translators of the CSB have been successful in their  
13 mission.

14  
15 We believe that we can recommend the Christian Standard Bible for reading, preaching, and teaching in  
16 our church.

17  
18 Respectfully submitted,

19  
20 The Christian Standard Bible Review Committee  
21 Professor Samuel Degner  
22 Pastor Adam Mueller  
23 Pastor Raymond Schumacher  
24 Pastor Mark Voss  
25 Pastor John Vieths, Chairman