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An Evaluation of the Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen White

by Felipe E. Tan and Terry Dwain Robertson

Abstract

Libraries at Seventh-day Adventist affiliated colleges and universities collect their denominational materials exhaustively. Many use the Library of Congress Classification Scheme (LCC). The challenge is that these exhaustive collections must fit in a classification scheme based on a general collection that does not typically hold much on this topic. LCC uses BX6151-6155 for Seventh-day Adventists. Following the LCC notation without modification or expansion results in the proliferation of decimals, impeding both library users and staff. When a number of institutions share this same need, finding a standard notation they all can use is a mutual benefit. This paper reports on the development of a modification and expansion to LCC to address this need for libraries with exhaustive collections of Seventh-day Adventist books. This scheme follows a different method than the other denominational collections that have published an expanded or modified LCC to meet their purposes. The method has proven functional, and collaborative efforts have made the scheme a success for libraries using it. This method may be of use to other small and highly specialized denominational collections in the LCC class BX.

Introduction

The Library of Congress Classification scheme was developed to classify and organize the library collection of the U.S. Congress.¹ Even though the LCC does not cover all existing academic disciplines, many university and research libraries and some large public libraries adopted the LCC.² The advantage of using LCC is that the scheme corresponds to major academic disciplines. Its enumerative scheme and the use of letters *and* numbers as notation has made it convenient for future expansion. Librarians also find LCC's research orientation convenient. Even so, when it comes to classifying topics not present in the LCC, catalogers have creatively expanded or modified the LCC numbers for local purposes.

The problem is compounded when an academic library collects materials on a comprehensive level on a subject that is not a major subject interest of the LC collection. Catalogers then face the challenge of keeping track of a long list of modifications to the existing limited numbers provided by the LCC.

Literature Review

The need for library classification systems that organized larger collections by topic became of interest in the late nineteenth century. In the United States, the dominant system that emerged from that era and is still widely used is the Dewey Decimal System (DDC), first published in 1876 by Melville Dewey. Under the leadership of Herbert Putnam, the Library of Congress, one of the largest libraries in the United States at the time, developed a more expandable and flexible system, the LCC, now widely used in larger academic libraries.

Given their inherent limitations, one of the earliest responses to these classification systems in theological libraries resulted in the development of the **Union Classification** system by Julia Pettee in 1908. Rebecca Butler has chronicled the history of this system and its use in theological libraries.³

¹ Lois Mai Chan, Sheila S. Intner, and Jean Weihs, *Guide to the Library of Congress Classification*, 6th ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2016), 11.

² Lois M. Chan and Athena Salaba, *Cataloguing and Classification: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 645.

³ Rebecca Butler, "The Rise and Fall of Union Classification," *Theological Librarianship* 6, no. 1 (2013): 21-28, accessed July 28, 2017, <https://theolib.atla.com/theolib/article/view/254/691>.

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For Catholic libraries, Jeannette Lynn provided a series of schedules that would allow individual collections to adapt either the DDC or the LCC for large **Catholic literature** collections. The most comprehensive option adopted the LCC class BQ, using a third letter to subdivide the literature, i.e., BQT for Catholic Theology.⁴ One contemporary library that has adapted one of these schedules is the Ralph B. Gehring Library of Loyola School of Theology at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, one of the largest theological libraries in Southeast Asia. It possesses the best Roman Catholic collection in the region. The librarian used the BVQ subclass to accommodate Roman Catholic works on canon law after finding LCC BX1935–BX1953 limited for the broad subject of canon law.⁵ John Macey and John Benyo have chronicled the history of the use and eventual decline of the Classification for Catholic Books scheme.⁶

In 1953, a classification for **Lutheran libraries** was compiled by Karl Jacobsen. This particular schedule worked within the LCC for Lutherans, but expanded the schedules to provide notations for an authoritative list of synodical organizations.⁷

Also in 1953, D. Glenn Hilts, librarian at La Sierra College,⁸ prepared a “Classification Scheme for Works of Mrs. E. G. White.”⁹ He appropriated the classification “W” as a complement to the LCC. Andrews University, which serves the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and which includes a branch office of the Ellen G. White Estate, was inaugurated in 1960 by merging three Seventh-day Adventist institutions: a college, a graduate school, and a seminary. The new university needed a proper library, and so James White Library was built. In merging collections from the earlier institutions, the LCC was adopted. This library collects all resources by and about Ellen White on an exhaustive level. The collection also includes all subsequent translations and editions of Ellen White publications. To keep all these works together, JWJ catalogers adopted Hilts’s scheme from the beginning using the W notation to classify its substantive collection. To illustrate the scale of this collection, a search on the LC online catalog found 245 entries in an author search and 121 in a subject search on publications by and about Ellen White, while the same searches in the JWJ catalog found 3,845 title entries.¹⁰ Andrews University may be the only library that continues to use the Hilts scheme. It was not included in the subsequent Adventist classification scheme that is the focus of this article.

Another notable example is the *Methodist Book Classification*, first published in 1955 for Garrett Biblical Institute (now Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary). It uses a BY class for items relating to **Methodism**, and is now used by a number of libraries at Methodist universities and seminaries.¹¹

A novel approach was used by Brigham Young University for **Mormon literature**. In 1959, the BYU library developed a Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) schedule for Mormon works. Then in 1977, the decision was made to convert the library to LCC. To simplify the reclassification process, the library used the LCC BX86- stem to replace its existing M2-stem, including the cutter numbers based on C. A. Cutter’s *Three Figure Author Table* rather than the LCC cutter table. This

⁴Jeannette M. Lynn, *An Alternative Classification for Catholic Books: A Scheme for Catholic Theology, Canon Law and Church History* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing, 1937), accessed July 20, 2017, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001163525>. Note: BQ is currently the LCC class for Buddhism, adopted in 1972; see Chan et. al., *Guide*, 111.

⁵Felipe E. Tan, “An Evaluation of the Book and Periodical Collections of the Library of the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University” (Special Problem, Institute of Library Science, University of the Philippines, 1988), 64. See <http://ralphbgehringlibrary.weebly.com/> to view Loyola School of Theology’s Ralph Gehring Library online catalog.

⁶John F. Macey and John C. Benyo, “Quo Vadis Specialization?: The Current Status of Catholic Schemas in Light of Vatican II and OCLC,” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1987), https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v08n01_10.

⁷Karl T. Jacobsen, *Library of Congress Classification Schedules for the Lutheran Church, Modified and Expanded, Together with an Alphabetical List of Lutheran Synodical Organization* (Minneapolis, MN: Board of Christian Education, Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1953), accessed July 20, 2017, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006753768>.

⁸Now La Sierra University, Riverside, California, <https://lasierra.edu/>.

⁹D. G. Hilts, “Classification Scheme for Works of Mrs. E. G. White,” (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 1953.)

¹⁰Statistics from the online catalogs of Library of Congress and James White Library. Accessed March 27, 2017.

¹¹Lucy W. Markley, *A Methodist Book Classification*, 4th ed. (Madison, NJ: Drew University Library, 2005), accessed July 28, 2017, <https://www.atla.com/Members/divisions/denominations/Methodist/BY%20Schedule/byschedule.pdf>

approach proved helpful where some collections were using LC and others DDC.¹²

Because of their roots in nineteenth century North American libraries, both the DDC and the LCC have historically reflected a strong Christian and Protestant bias in their classification schemes. More recent work on the modification and expansion of existing classification schemes has focused on non-Christian religions, including Baha'i and Islam; however, not only are the available number classes limited, but the terms and categories are different than Christian counterparts.¹³

The Seventh-day Adventists

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination emerged out of the Great Awakening of the 1830s and the Millerite movement of the 1840s. Two core beliefs included the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath and the pre-millennial second advent of Christ, both of which were attested to when the approximately 3,500 Adventists chose a name and formally organized as a denomination in 1863. They realized this step was necessary so they could corporately own property — namely, a publishing house.¹⁴ James and Ellen White were among the most influential leaders leading up to and following this milestone; James White is remembered as a publisher and editor, and Ellen White as a prolific author. Her writings hold a special place as primary sources in understanding the growth and development of Seventh-day Adventist theology, spirituality, organization, mission, global orientation, and education, and they continue to shape and guide the denomination today. Following her death in 1915, the Ellen G. White Estate¹⁵ has continued to publish new works compiled from her extensive correspondence, sermons, articles, and manuscripts.¹⁶

Academic libraries with extensive Seventh-day Adventist publications have also faced the daunting task of classifying denominational resources. While Adventist publications do not match the quantitative scope of the Catholics or Methodists, nonetheless there are far more Adventist books than may be currently found in the LC collection. It wasn't until 1980 that Keith Clouten, librarian of Canadian Union College (CaUC)¹⁷ at the time, became acutely aware of the limitations of LCC, following the trend of transitioning academic library collections from DDC to LCC. These he summarized as follows:

- “A range of only five numbers (BX 6151-55) is allocated by LC to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, which is treated as any other branch of Adventism. In contrast, a range of twenty-five numbers is allocated to Adventists in general.
- “Biography of Adventists, including Seventh-day Adventists, is classified at BX 6191-93. These numbers are separated from the S.D.A. numbers by all other branches of Adventism.

¹² Robert Divett, Naoma Rich, Chad Flake, and Kayla Willey, eds. *Mormon Classification Schedules*, 2013 ed. (Provo, UT: Harold B. Lee Library), v.

¹³ Vanda Broughton, “A New Classification for the Literature of Religion: Presented at the 2000 IFLA Conference,” *International Cataloging & Bibliographic Control* 29, no. 4 (2000); Haroon Idrees, “Classification of Library Materials on Islam: A Literature Survey,” *OCLC Systems & Services: International Digital Library Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1108/10650751111135427>; William P. Collins, “Classification of Materials on the Baha'i Religion,” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1988), https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v08n02_09.

¹⁴ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, rev. ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 146. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized on May 21, 1863.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White Estate, <http://ellenwhite.org/>, accessed March 5, 2018.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White wrote about 8,000 letters and manuscripts. The manuscripts included sermons and talks, diaries, and testimonies addressed to individuals or groups. The total number of typewritten pages in this category is about 60,000. The ministry of Ellen G. White resulted in more than twenty books during her lifetime and many compilations and selections since 1915. Compilations are published by the Ellen G. White Estate in accordance with the guidelines in her will. For further discussion, see George R. Knight, “Ellen G. White's Writings,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2014), 138-139.

¹⁷ Canadian University College (located in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada) was renamed Burman University on December 11, 2015. <https://www.burmanu.ca/namechange>.

- “Ellen White is allocated a Cutter number within BX 6193. It is quite impossible to place here all works by or about Ellen White.
- “Provision for ‘Individual Adventist Churches’ (BX 6185) and ‘Converts’ (BX 6189) is made outside of the number range specific to Seventh-day Adventists.”¹⁸

A colleague, Warren Trenchard, theology faculty member at CaUC, encouraged Clouten to make the change to LCC anyway, and together they came up with an intentional modification of the LCC numbers on Adventist topics.¹⁹ They first published “A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen White” (CSA) in 1980.²⁰

In 1985, the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL) formed a Standing Committee on SDA Classification. The committee assumed the role of publisher for the CSA, and fostered conversation on additional modifications and expansions. Clouten continued as editor until 1993, followed by Marilyn Crane from Loma Linda University. Felipe Tan from Andrews University assumed the responsibility in 2007. Distribution was managed by Clouten at CaUC until he assumed the role of Library Director at Andrews University in 1993. Since then, distribution has resided at Andrews University.²¹

The SDA Classification scheme is currently used by the two largest Seventh-day Adventist academic libraries — the James White Library at Andrews and the Del E. Webb Memorial Library of Loma Linda University, California. It is also used by at least twelve other institutions.²² Because of a reluctance to reclassify a substantive collection of works already in the library prior to 1985, Andrews University did not formally adopt the CSA until 2006. Reclassifying works already on the shelves is not happening, but as new works are added, they are classified using CSA. The notational complexity of the section using the original LCC is clearly evident, and finding individual works is challenging.

In 1985, a copy of the CSA was submitted to the Library of Congress. In a response from the LC by Mary Pietris, she commended the effort:

Your modification of the BX numbers appears to be very well done. After a quick comparison of your scheme and ours, my only regret was that you were not able to expand without substantial changes to some of the numbers, which will make it harder for those who have used LC numbers to adopt your scheme without reclassification. However, it would have been impossible to keep our numbers without resorting to considerable use of decimals, and we appreciate you have been able to fit your 44-page development inside the existing span so well.²³

¹⁸ Felipe E. Tan, ed., *A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen G. White: A Modification of the Library of Congress Religion Schedules, BX 6101-6189* (Berrien Springs, MI: Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians, 2011), ii, accessed July 20, 2017, <http://www.asdal.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/documents/classification2011.pdf>

¹⁹ Keith Clouten commented that sometime in 1980, the Canadian Union College Library decided to switch from DDC to LLC. It was during this transition that Clouten “discovered that LC’s allocation of numbers for Adventist topics was quite inadequate.” Warren Trenchard, who spent considerable time doing research in the University of Chicago Library, where the collections were organized by the comprehensive LCC, encouraged and helped Clouten in modifying and expanding the LCC numbers for Adventists, particularly the Ellen White section. Email from Keith Clouten, May 21, 2013.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., ii.

²² Based on responses to an inquiry on a listserv of SDA librarians; there may be more libraries using the system, but their librarians didn’t respond to the listserv. Institutions known to be using CSA are Adventist University of Health Sciences (Orlando, Florida), Burman University (Lacombe, Alberta, Canada), Pacific Union College (Angwin, California), Southern Adventist University (Collegedale, Tennessee), Southwestern Adventist University (Keene, Texas), Walla Walla University (Walla Walla, Washington), and Washington Adventist University (Takoma Park, Maryland). It is also used overseas by the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (Philippines), Adventist University of Africa (Kenya), Middle East University (Lebanon), and Newbold College (United Kingdom). Some libraries modified their use of the Adventist Classification. For example, the James White Library uses Adventist Classification for Adventist topics but uses W classification for Ellen G. White publications.

²³ Mary K. D. Pietris, “Library of Congress Responds to S.D.A. Classification Schedule,” *ASDAL Action* 5, no. 2 (1986, April): 7.

The Structure of the Adventist Classification Scheme

The authors of the CSA modified LCC BX 6101-6146 by using BX Table 1 which has forty-three numbers. Below is an overview of the CSA numbers and LCC Table 1 (BX). For full view of the CSA alongside of LCC Table 1 (BX), see Appendix A at the end of this article.

Adventist Classification (BX)		LCC Table 1 (BX)	
6101-02	Periodicals	1	Periodicals
6107	Directories	7	Directories
6112	Sabbath Schools	12	Sunday Schools
			History
6115	History	1	General Works
6121	General works. Theology	21	General works. Theology
6123	Controversial works	23	Controversial works
6123.4	Relations with other churches	23.4	Relations with other churches
6126.9	Sermons	27	Sermons
6131-39	Organizational units		Individual churches.
		31	United States
		35	Other countries
6144-49	Ellen G. White		Biography
		41	Collective
		43	Individual

As shown above, the classification structure of the CSA scheme follows the outline of LCC BX Table 1 for other denominations such as Catholics, Baptists, etc.

The CSA scheme makes provision for Adventist teachings in BX6122. Seventh-day Adventist doctrines that are part of the general orthodox Christian heritage are classified using their corresponding classification numbers in the BT subclass. Also, BX6122.5 has been set aside in the CSA scheme for moral or ethical topics that are of great interest in discussion of Adventist norms. Another topic of major interest to the Seventh-day Adventist Church is missions. The CSA scheme assigned BX6127 for missions. It also assigned historical and geographical treatment of church work in CSA BX6117-6118, which has been assigned to cover Seventh-day Adventist history rather than BV.²⁴

The CSA scheme uses BX6131-6139 to classify together all the organizational units of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The CSA also provides a comprehensive list of the organizational units of the different levels and entities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has twenty million members worldwide²⁵ and operates an extensive and complex organization with various entities.²⁶

The CSA provides a table to show a pattern of subdivision by topic and date to be used with the classification number for the particular organizational unit.

²⁴ Tan, *A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen G. White*, iv-vi.

²⁵ Andrew McChesney, "Propelled by Total Member Involvement, Adventist Church tops 20 million members," March 1, 2017, <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2017-03-01/propelled-by-total-member-involvement-adventist-church-tops-20-million-members>.

²⁶ The Seventh-day Adventist Church is composed of thirteen divisions all over the world. Each division is further subdivided by various types of smaller organizational units, agencies, and departments. See *Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Church 2016* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2016).

.A1-14	Official periodicals
.A15	Yearbooks. Directories
.A2	Constitution. By-laws. Policies. By date
.A25	Official reports. By date
.A3	Sessions. By date
.A35	Annual councils. By date
.A38	Other councils. Spring Council. By date
.A41-49	Miscellaneous councils and committees.
.A5	General works

The table above follows the general pattern of subdivisions of the LCC tables.

In addition to the organizational units, the CSA scheme organized all publications by and about Ellen White under BX6145– 6149.9. These classification numbers were expanded to accommodate all topics regarding Ellen White, including letters, manuscripts, criticism and interpretation, controversial issues, indexes, concordances, and bibliographies.

The breakdown of these assigned numbers is as follows:

BX6145	Periodicals
BX6145.4	Collected works of Ellen G. White
BX6146	Separate works of Ellen G. White
BX6147	Compilations of Ellen White writings
BX6148	General works, Biography
BX6149	Criticism and interpretation
BX6149.3	Study and teaching
BX6149.7	Indexes and concordances
BX6149.9	Bibliography

The CSA scheme provides a comprehensive listing of all Ellen G. White publications. An alternative arrangement using BX6146 in the appendix of CSA was provided for libraries that may wish to keep all individual works of Ellen G. White, both separate and compilations, in a single alphabetical sequence.

Unlike the *Union Classification* and the *Lynn-Peterson Alternative Classification for Catholic Books*, the CSA did not develop a comprehensive stand-alone scheme. Beyond the immediate scope of the CSA, the standard LCC was sufficient and preferred. Nor did the CSA assign unused class letters or numbers in the LCC like the *Methodist Book Classification*. While some accommodation of the LCC was needed, the volume and complexity of SDA literature does not correspond with the quantitative scope of Methodism — in part because of the denomination's much shorter history, in part because of its relatively smaller size. Nor did the CSA create its own subdivisions like the *Mormon Classification Schedules*. The original editors were not attempting to accommodate both DDC and LCC, but to fully migrate to the LCC. Nor did it simply use the LCC, assigning further subdivisions as needed, like the *Library of Congress Classification Schedules for the Lutheran Church*. Adventists didn't have a comparable range of numbers to work with. The CSA innovation has proven to be right-sized to meet the need.

Summary

The CSA filled a need of Seventh-day Adventist academic libraries in organizing their relatively large collection of Adventist-related resources. The CSA scheme addressed the range of topics covered by Adventist and Ellen White resources. Instead of being limited to five numbers, BX 6151-6155, the authors of the CSA modified LCC BX 6101-6146 by using BX Table 1 which has forty-three numbers. Thus it followed the outline and notations of major denominations in LCC BX when it assigned the classification numbers for Adventist topics. This scheme follows a different method than the other denominational collections that have published an expanded or modified LCC to meet their purposes. The method has

proven functional and collaborative efforts have made the scheme a success for libraries using it. This method may be of use to other small and highly specialized denominational collections in the LCC class BX which may also be limited to five numbers.

The CSA has been in use for thirty-five years. Its usefulness as an alternative special classification will continue for years to come as denominational academic libraries will use it to classify the growing number of publications on Seventh-day Adventists and Ellen White.

Appendix A²⁷

MODIFIED SCHEDULE (BX)		TABLE I (BX)	
6101-02	Periodicals	(1)	Periodicals
6103	Societies, Associations	(3)	Societies
6104	Museums, Exhibitions	(5)	Conventions, etc.
6106	Dictionaries, encyclopedias		
6107	Directories	(7)	Directories
6108	Yearbooks		
6109	Collections, collected works	(9)	Collected works
	Study and Teaching		Study and Teaching
6110	Education of the Clergy		
6111	Education of the Laity	(11)	General works
			Sunday Schools
6112	Sabbath Schools	(12)	General works
		(13)	Service books
		(14)	Textbooks
			History
6115	History	(15)	General works
6116	By Period		By Country
	By region & country	(16)	U.S. and Canada
6117	U.S. and Canada	(17)	By state
6118	Other countries	(18)	By city
6119	Special topics	(19)	Other countries
		(20)	By administrative unit
6121	General works. Theology	(21)	General works. Theology
6122	Special topics	(22)	Minor works. Pamphlets
6122.5	Moral theology		
6123	Controversial works	(23)	Controversial works
6123.4	Relations with other churches	(23.4)	Relations with other churches
6123.6	Relations with governments		
		(24)	Creeds and catechisms
6125	Sacraments. Special services	(25)	Liturgy and ritual
		(25.5)	Sacraments
6126	Government and discipline	(26)	Government and discipline

²⁷ Tan, *A Classification Scheme for Adventists and Ellen G. White*, iii–iv.

MODIFIED SCHEDULE (BX)		TABLE I (BX)	
6126.9	Sermons	(27)	Sermons
6127	Church work. Missions		
6127.1	Evangelistic work	(27.3)	Benevolent work. Social work.
	Welfare work		
6127.8	Other classes of work		
6128	Work with persons		
		(29)	Individual branches
6130	Camp Meetings. Revivals	(30)	Camp Meetings. Summer camps, etc.
			Individual Churches
6131-39	Organizational Units	(31)	United States
		(35)	Other countries
			Biography
6141	Individual Churches	(41)	Collective
6143	Biography	(43)	Individual
6144-49	Ellen White		

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