

The Church of God
(La Iglesia de Dios)

Pentecost – the Forgotten Day - By Don Roth

PENTECOST—THE FORGOTTEN DAY!

(Bible verses quoted are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted)

Unlike Christmas, Lent, and Easter, which are all fabrications of man and not found in the Bible as days to observe, Pentecost is shown to be observed in both the Old and New Testaments. Many weeks are spent in preparation and anticipation of these man-made days, without a word in the Bible instructing this to be done. In addition, there is no historical evidence of those originally called by God to a new life in Christ to observe these man-designated days.

In fact, the Day of Pentecost marks the beginning of God’s call to all nations of this world to repent and change their way of living, accepting the sacrifice of Christ and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:38** is proof of this. ***Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

PENTECOST AND THE EARLY CHURCH

Secular history records interesting facts about Pentecost. Quoting from a book called “*God’s Festivals in Scripture and History*” by Samuel Bacchiocchi, page 204 (begin in Chapter 7, location 3423 of 4425 for electronic versions): “Eusebius of Caesarea (about AD 260-340), known as ‘the Father of Church History,’ called Pentecost ‘the feast of feasts.’¹ John Chrysostom (about AD 347-407), the ‘golden-mouthed preacher’ used similar phrases in his sermon on Pentecost: ‘Today we have come at the peak of all blessings, we have reached the capitol (metropolis) of the feasts, we have obtained the very fruit of our Lord’s promise.’”² At the bottom of page 205 of this same book he writes, “Pentecost: A Fifty Day Period of Rejoicing. The earliest references to Pentecost describe the feast as a fifty-day period of rejoicing for Christ’s redemptive accomplishments. For example, the earliest mention of Pentecost, found in the Apocryphal acts of Paul (about AD 180), says: “While Paul was in prison, the brethren, since it was Pentecost, wept not, neither did they bow the knee, but they stood and prayed rejoicing.”³ The custom of refraining from weeping, fasting, and kneeling between Passover and Pentecost is confirmed by several other documents to be examined later. At this juncture, I wish to draw attention only to the fact that in this text Pentecost is viewed as a season of rejoicing rather than a single-day festival.”

Pentecost is the concluding day of the early harvest of wheat, which covers a seven-week period beginning with the Wave Sheaf Offering.

¹ 3423 of 4425.

² 3423 of 4425.

³ 3448 of 4425.

The Bible also makes it clear that Pentecost was a day to be remembered and marked for observation as the New Testament aptly points out in **Acts 20:16** *“For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.”* As added emphasis note **Acts 18:21** *“but took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.’ And he sailed from Ephesus.”* **I Corinthians 16:8** says: *“But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.”* Here Paul is making special note of this day; not only because of its historical importance but because of its future prophetic understanding, which was understood by the early Christians. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies that were, in part, carried out in the New Testament and beyond that limited historical period reaching to the present time. Pentecost is an integral part of these prophecies.

MORE TO THE MEANING OF PENTECOST THAN ACTS 2

Why were these original Christians so enthralled by this day that is now virtually ignored? Was there a future fulfillment beyond **Acts 2** which they understood, and today has been lost? It was the prophecies that were centered about this very important day of Pentecost that they understood and looked forward to their fulfillment with great anticipation.

The total importance of this day is given in the original instructions when viewed as a prophetic picture of what their future would be. These God given instructions on how and when these days are to be observed contain the joy of anticipation that the new Christian had for this day. Just as we today should be looking to the fulfillment of this day with great desire. Those instructions are given by God in **Leviticus 23:10-11** *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”* Continuing on in **Leviticus 23:15-17** it states: *“And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to the LORD.”*

UNDERSTANDING THE WAVE SHEAF OFFERING

Without understanding the wave sheaf offering and the prophetic picture it presents it is impossible to grasp what this day of Pentecost should mean to the called of the Father; those who are following the example Christ gave when He walked this earth. The two loaves are directly dependent on the wave sheaf offering. The correct count to Pentecost cannot be made without knowing the day of the wave sheaf offering. This offering was the first fruit (grain) taken from the field to be waved before God, to be accepted by Him on behalf of those who raised it. This was the pure grain, uncontaminated with leaven (sin,) and pictures Christ, the first of the first fruit to be accepted by the Father as proven in **I Cor. 15:20** *“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*

This actually happened in **John 20:17** and represents the official acceptance of Christ's sacrifice by the Father as pictured by the waving of the pure grain by the high priest in **Leviticus 23. John 20:17**. Jesus said to her, ***“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.’”***

Christ's meeting with the Father was to happen immediately. He could not let Mary's desire to be with Him interfere with His fulfilling of the wave sheaf offering.

It happened on the first day of the week, early in the morning, which mirrors the first act of the high priest on that same day. It is from the offering of this wave sheaf that we are instructed that seven Sabbaths shall be complete to reach the 50th day—Pentecost. Repeating **Lev. 23:15-16** ***“You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.”*** The offering is made on the fiftieth day.

THREE WAYS TO COUNT PENTECOST

The instructions must be rightly understood to observe the correct day on which Pentecost must be kept. Presently there are three different ways of counting to arrive at what is thought to be the correct day.

1. The Jewish count, which is followed by many in the Messianic movement.
2. The second count is made by a few Sabbath-keeping groups, using the weekly Sabbath to count the seven weeks required in **Leviticus 23**.
3. A third, and much smaller group, adds a day to the count of fifty, resulting in a 51-day count to the observation of Pentecost, clearly not following the count of fifty days.

THE JEWISH SYSTEM (COUNT)

The Jewish system says that the count begins on the first day of Unleavened Bread, a high day. **John 19:31**. ***“Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), ...”*** John was correcting the idea that this was incorrectly referred to as the Sabbath day of creation, but was in fact a high day.

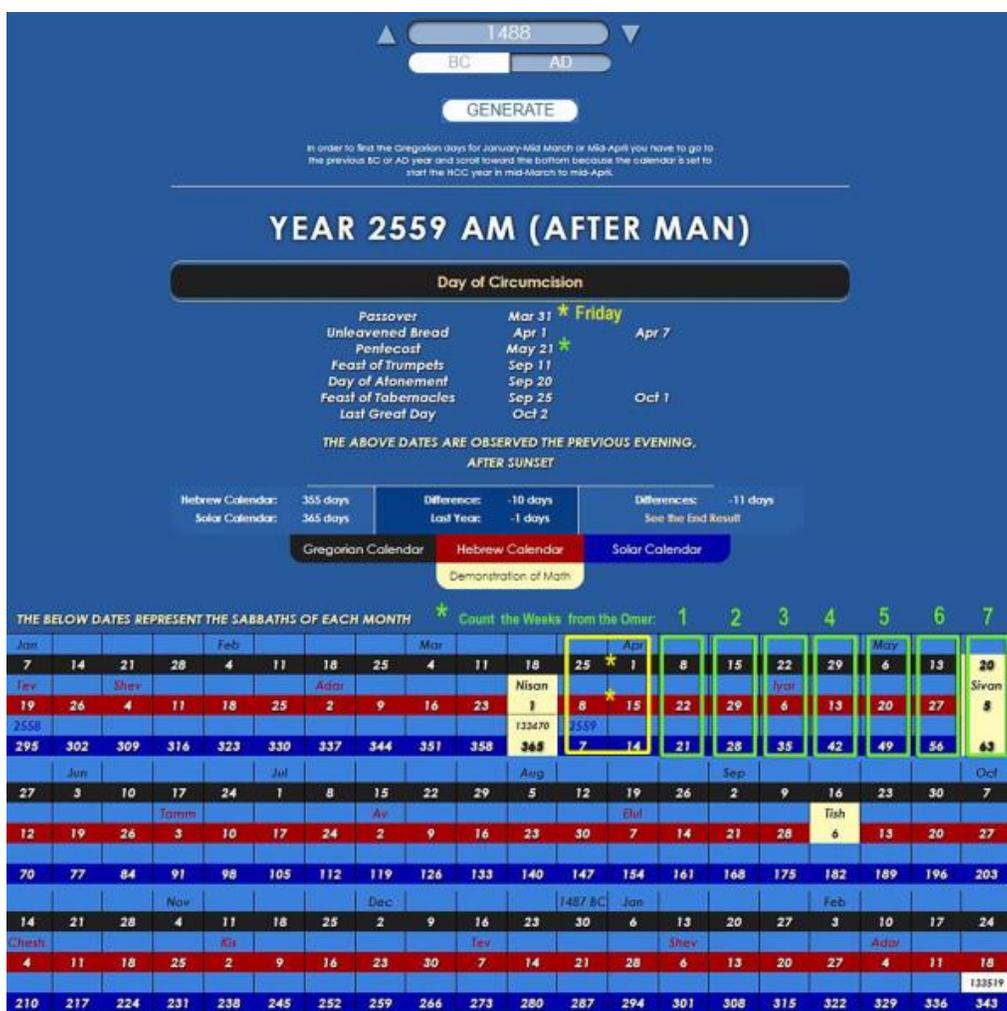
The Jews point to the following as proof of their belief: Quoting from the same book by Samuel Bacchiocchi, page 169 (2848 of 4425). *“This question became an outstanding point of contention between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees interpreted the ‘Sabbath’ as the festival day of Passover Season, Nisan 15, which was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus, they waved the first sheaf of barley on the following day, Nisan 16, and from that day they counted the fifty days to Pentecost. The chief support for this interpretation comes from the Greek version (Septuagint) of Leviticus 23:11: “The priest shall wave the Omar on the morrow after the first day of Unleavened Bread.” But in verse 15 of the*

same chapter we read, “You shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath.” The word “Sabbath” in Greek, when used by itself, can mean only the seventh day of the week, or the week as a whole, but not an annual feast.

“In the Targum of Jerusalem we find the same interpretation for Lev. 23:11, “After the first festival day of Passover.” Philo and Josephus support the same tradition. Philo writes: “Within the festival of Unleavened Bread there is another festival following after the first day.” In a similar vein, Josephus writes: “From the second day of Unleavened Bread they count fifty days.” “They also incorrectly point to Joshua 5:11 as proof.”

By consulting the calendar generator for the year they crossed the Jordan River—1488BC (2559AM)—it is found that the Passover was on Friday, March 31, placing the Wave Sheaf on a Sunday. This calendar is an absolute count of Sabbaths beginning at creation and coming forward in increments of seven, joining perfectly with the current week. It correctly shows the Passover for that week is on a Friday.

The date circled in yellow on the calendar shows it is the fifteenth (shown in red,) the first Day of Unleavened bread and is on the weekly Sabbath. They are the same day.



This year is an exception, and proves nothing, as the calendar shows the Pharisees count and God's count end on the same day. Whenever the Passover, the 14th of Nisan, falls on a Friday the two systems will be in agreement.

As the Pharisees always have this day on the 15th of Nisan, Pentecost will always fall on the sixth day of the third month, Sivan, meaning that the weekday on which it is observed will change because the numbered day of the month is fixed, just as our present Gregorian calendar is fixed. Why would God have you count weeks and days to correctly observe Pentecost if it always fell on the same numbered day?

Here is how the Jews figure this count: The first day of Unleavened Bread, a high day, is on the 15th day of the month of Nisan which has 30 days. The last 15 days of the month, plus 29 days of the second month Iyar, plus 6 days of the third month, Sivan equals 50 days.

Jewish tradition has always observed Pentecost on the 6th of Sivan. They claim the proof for this belief lies in their history (tradition), which designates the 6th of Sivan. The Jews have been keeping this day for many years and were the first to observe this day; therefore, they say they cannot be wrong.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORD SABBATH

When correctly understood, it was not the Jews who established the day on which to observe Pentecost but God. A careful look at the instructions is needed. As already noted, the count was to begin on the day AFTER the Sabbath when the wave sheaf was waved. Was this a high day or a weekly Sabbath? The answer is found by comparing the Hebrew word for the weekly Sabbath in **Leviticus 23:3**, Strong's #H7676, with the word for Sabbath in **Leviticus 23:24**, which was a high day, #H7677 (The Feast of Trumpets).

Clearly the original Hebrew has two different words translated in the King James Bible with the same English word, Sabbath. #H7676 is Shabbat, designating a weekly Sabbath rest. #H7677 is designated as an action of rest. It can be seen that there is a difference in **Exodus 16:23** where God reveals the correct use of Sabbath day. Here the translators used these two words together, showing their difference, and how they should be understood. ***"Then he said to them, 'This is what the Lord has said: Tomorrow is a Sabbath, (#H7676), of rest (#H7677), a holy Sabbath (7676) to the LORD."***

As a result of the difference in the wording of these verses it will be understood that God has made a difference in these two words, Sabbath, #H7676 and Sabbath rest, #H7677. In the Old Testament the word Sabbath #7676 is used 107 times. It is used to point to the seventh day Sabbath, or it is used to describe a kind of rest that God wants understood. It is incorrect to point to **Exodus 31:13-14** to prove that this word is also used for high days as well as weekly Sabbaths and are called by the same number, #H7676, because the plural of Sabbaths is used. ***"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who***

profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.”

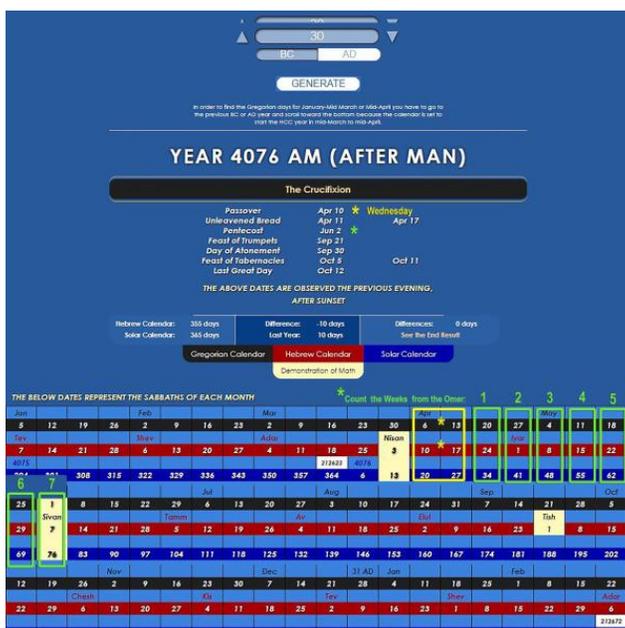
The next three verses define what is meant by the plural Sabbaths of the previous verses, and clearly deal with the observation of the seventh day Sabbath of creation, not the high days. The high days are individual days observed once a year. The weekly Sabbath is observed many times in a year, being the reason for the bible using the plural “Sabbaths.” Continuing to read verses, 15 through 17 it becomes clear that the plural of Sabbaths is clearly defined as the seventh day Sabbath of creation.

BIBLE COUNT TO PENTECOST

Does the Bible contain an actual day count that without question resolves this dilemma of how to count Pentecost? The answer is found in two scriptures in the New Testament. **John 20:17** and **Acts 1:3**. Here is where the example of the actual count is found, proving that the counting of fifty days begins on the day after the weekly Sabbath, not on the high day. As already pointed out the wave sheaf of pure grain was representative of Christ as a sinless offering. **John 20:1** states that it was a Sunday (first day of the week) that Christ went to the Father.

There is no controversy about the count being fifty days in both the Jewish tradition and the weekly Sabbath count. It must be realized that the accepted crucifixion day of a Friday is a myth, and not supported by the Bible record. This is proved in the article “The Good Friday Myth.” The calendar for 30AD shows the Passover—the day of His crucifixion—and the 14th of Nisan were on Wednesday. Therefore the first day of Unleavened Bread was on a Thursday, a high day as John plainly states in **John 19:31** **“Therefore, because it was the preparation day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”**

The following calendar shows two stars within the yellow circle that point to the fourteenth of the first month, a Wednesday of that week.



CHRIST, THE WAVE SHEAF OFFERING

Using the Jewish count, which began on Thursday, the high day, ends with the 50th day being on a Friday. As Christ was dead and in the tomb on that day He could not come before the Father for His acceptance as the pure grain offering required. The count could not begin until He was resurrected by the Father, just as the original wave sheaf had to be waved by the high priest for acceptance of God before the new grain could be eaten.

The article titled “The Good Friday Myth” proves that Christ was resurrected late on the weekly Sabbath, and then waited until early Sunday morning to go to the Father for acceptance, which was the fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf Offering. It was on the first day of the week that He showed Himself to His followers and is confirmed in **John 20:1** ***“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”***

NEW TESTAMENT COUNT TO PENTECOST

In **Acts 1:3** the count of days from His first appearance to His ascension is found. ***“to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”***

This means that the count of fifty began on a Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath. His ascension was forty days later, on a Thursday. Pentecost was then ten days later, on a Sunday, the fiftieth day, proving the count began on a Sunday, following the first Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, not the high day. Is there any stronger proof than that given by our Savior?

THE PROPHETIC PICTURE OF PENTECOST

The New Testament church understood the prophetic picture centered about this important day of Pentecost that they looked forward to with great anticipation. Unfortunately, this understanding has been lost to modern Christianity. When viewed as a prophetic picture of what was to come, as it was meant to be, Pentecost can be truly understood. It shows the important future event that God’s called out ones look forward to, and is in the original instructions about when, how, and why this day was to be observed. It reveals the true importance to all those who believe and trust in the sacrifice of Christ.

What is the significance of Pentecost beyond this new era of those now called to repentance and a new type of life? Much as we will see by the typology presented by God in the wave sheaf offering followed by seven weeks to Pentecost. These original seven weeks were the time of the wheat harvest. The first and smaller harvest was of barley, which requires five months to maturity; and the wave sheaf was taken from that harvest.

THE TWO LOAVES

The seven weeks of the wheat harvest represented all those called from Pentecost 30 AD to the return of Christ. To understand what this day should mean to us the instructions of the Old Testament

must be looked at in **Leviticus 23:17, 20** ***“You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to the LORD. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits as a wave offering to the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.”***

There were two loaves to be waved; one for the Old Testament believers, and one for the New Testament believers. Notice the difference between the wave sheaf offering of pure grain and the second offering of two loaves baked with leaven. As the Bible always pictures leaven as sin it becomes clear that these two loaves represent those who have come out of this world’s way of life, which is the epitome of sin. Read the article: *“Understanding Leaven.”*

Note that the grain for these two loaves does not come from the first fruits given to the Priesthood, but from the grain used for daily bread. This picture tells that these two loaves do not represent a special class of people, but are taken from the ordinary citizen. To prepare these two wave loaves the wheat first went through the grinding process and was then mixed with leaven, then shaped into loaves ready for baking. These loaves represent the life lived in the present world of pain and death. We are those individual grains of wheat born into a world where sin is a way of life, with the philosophy of “get yours anyway you can,” even if it means stealing, lying, or killing to achieve their ends, keeping in mind that their thin veneer of respectability was not broken, and was there to hide their evil intent.

THE FATHER’S PLAN

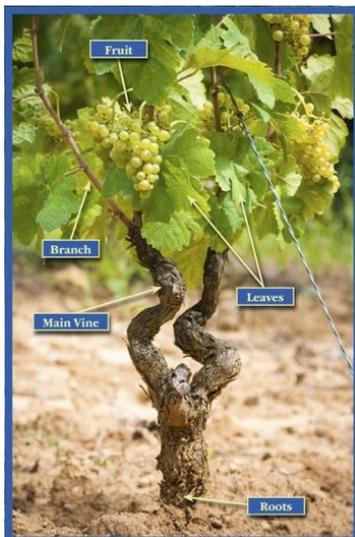
The essence of the Father’s plan allows us to experience a world of chaos so that we can see the tragic result of His laws being broken with impunity. The breaking of God’s laws is the real cause of all of man’s ills.

Without the baking process the leaven would completely destroy the flour. Man in his present condition is destroying himself. Without the Father sending His son to this earth a second time to prevent us from destroying ourselves and this earth, this world as we know it would end. Matthew 24:22 says, ***“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”***

There are those called of the Father **John 6:44** ***“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”*** **Rev. 17:14** tells us in the simplest terms how the plan of God is being executed. ***“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen and faithful.”*** These are the ones being prepared by the Father for the job of assisting Christ in the coming millennial kingdom.

John 15:1-2, 5-6 ***“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not***

abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.



THE BAKING PROCESS

Think of how the baking process works. As the heat of the oven begins to kill the leaven of the outer layer of bread it, represents the change to a new lifestyle. The obvious first change that one makes from a life of sin is to begin to understand what living by God's law means. As the heat of the oven continues to penetrate the loaf, killing the leaven (sin), as we continue to overcome our sinful nature. When all of the leaven is killed, we can see the end result in **Ephesians 4:13**. ***"till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;"***

THE TRUE MEANING OF PENTECOST

Consider the Father as the master baker who knows how to control the heat of the oven to bring forth a perfect loaf. The churches of this world spend their religious fervor on celebrating days like Christmas, Lent, and Easter, when these were never mentioned as days to be celebrated in the Bible. They were never celebrated by the early church. The Christians of the New Testament place their joy in looking forward to the day of Pentecost. Why this extreme difference? As Christ was raised to life on the day the high priest waved the pure grain to be accepted by God, they knew that the two wave loaves baked with leaven represented them and the day on which they were to be resurrected. That day was Pentecost!

For further study on this subject read: *"The Good Friday Myth," "Man's Purpose,"* and *"The Wave Sheaf Offering."*

Don Roth (Revised June 18, 2021)