

Shad Groverland: 25 Key Points from the Organic Wisdom Podcast

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Approximately 97 minutes. Title: *Former Church President on Christ Consciousness, Spiritual Warfare & Veganism*

Shad's 25 most significant points into five sections, giving particular weight to his discussion of Unity Church, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, his presidency, and his concerns about Unity's theological direction.

The summaries represent Shad's views and recollections, not independently verified historical or theological conclusions. Timestamps are based on a Rev.com transcript of the podcast.

I. Shad's Background and Understanding of Unity

1. Unity is a worldwide movement with a complex organizational structure. [01:08](#)

Shad describes approximately 650 physical ministries and roughly 900 ministries in total, including online and alternative congregations. He explains the challenges of coordinating international regions, boards, ministerial education, and organizational standards.

2. His entire life prepared him for Unity leadership. [02:09](#)

Born into a Unity minister's family, Shad grew up immersed in the movement. He initially pursued sound engineering, but a skiing accident prompted a vocational change. He subsequently served ministries in Las Vegas and Boulder, planted a church in Kansas City, joined Unity's international board, and became president and CEO.

3. Unity began as a distinctly Christian metaphysical movement. [05:07](#)

Shad defines the original Unity teaching as practical or metaphysical Christianity, rooted in the Bible. He distinguishes Unity from Unitarianism and believes that Unity has increasingly moved away from its original Christian identity.

4. Unity should honor other religions without losing its own identity. [05:58](#)

His upbringing included Taoism, Yogananda, Edgar Cayce, reincarnation, and holistic healing. He values learning from other spiritual traditions but insists that appreciating multiple paths to God does not require Unity to abandon its particular message.

5. New Thought teaches that consciousness participates in creating human experience. [07:45](#)

He situates Charles and Myrtle Fillmore among the pioneers of New Thought and associates Unity with Christian Science's historical roots. The mind, in his understanding, participates in shaping health, perception, and life experience.

II. The Fillmores and the Original Unity Teachings

6. Spiritual teachers must practice what they preach. [08:47](#)

Shad describes witnessing religious leaders behave badly behind the scenes. This convinced him that authentic ministry requires rigorous personal spiritual practice. He committed to daily meditation and to working at least as diligently on his spiritual growth as his congregants.

7. The Fillmores modeled radical authenticity, including ethical vegetarianism and spiritual healing. [13:07](#)

He emphasizes that Charles and Myrtle lived their teachings rather than merely preaching them. He considers their vegetarianism, spiritual discipline, prayer, and emphasis on consciousness essential elements of original Unity, rather than incidental personal preferences.

8. Unity lost its distinctive mission when interfaith universalism displaced metaphysical Christianity. [15:33](#)

Shad argues that during the 1960s through the 1990s, Unity increasingly emphasized universalism and presentations from other religions. He believes this diluted the Fillmores' central mission: interpreting the Bible as a guide to spiritual and psychological transformation.

9. The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary expresses the heart of the Fillmores' work. [20:05](#)

Shad describes Charles Fillmore's lifelong effort to uncover the spiritual significance of biblical language, characters, places, and events. He emphasizes studying the historical meaning of words and then discovering their enduring metaphysical significance.

10. The Bible is fundamentally the story of every individual's spiritual evolution. [22:09](#)

Biblical narratives are not merely accounts of ancient people. Shad believes they describe processes occurring within us today. Israel, for example, can represent a spiritual condition or potential rather than only a geographical location or ethnic identity.

III. Shad's Theology and Spiritual Philosophy

11. Jesus demonstrates the spiritual potential available to all humanity. [24:04](#)

Shad understands Jesus as a historical human being who attained extraordinary spiritual realization. He describes four stages—Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, and Christ—representing increasing realization of Christ consciousness. He believes humanity can undertake the same spiritual journey.

12. God can be experienced in three complementary ways. [28:06](#)

Drawing on Rev. Paul Smith, Shad describes God as an intimate personal presence, a divine reality manifested throughout nature, and an infinite mystery beyond human comprehension. He finds this framework helpful for understanding the Fillmores' varied descriptions of God.

13. New Thought spirituality risks becoming spiritually arrogant. [34:34](#)

Shad criticizes the tendency of some Unity, New Thought, and New Age practitioners to consider themselves more enlightened than traditional Christians. He argues that Christianity often preserves an important sense of humility and reverence that metaphysical spirituality can neglect.

14. Different religious traditions can serve different stages of spiritual development. [38:10](#)

Rather than treating religions as competitors, he views them as potentially useful stages along a spiritual journey. Unity can provide a meaningful transition for Christians questioning conventional doctrine while still valuing Jesus and the Bible.

15. Religious institutions inevitably reflect human imperfection. [40:46](#)

Drawing on his experience as a spiritual organization CEO, Shad says institutional corruption and misconduct are not exclusive to Christianity. He advocates acknowledging serious problems while strengthening what is spiritually valuable rather than condemning entire traditions.

16. Spiritual activism must combine conviction with humility. [45:18](#)

Recalling his participation in protests against Monsanto, Shad describes realizing that opponents deserve understanding. He rejects both angry self-righteous activism and spiritual bypassing—the tendency to avoid confronting real-world problems by claiming everything is an illusion.

IV. Spiritual Warfare, Consciousness, and Ethical Living

17. Evil may be better understood as a condition of consciousness than as demonic control. [55:53](#)

Shad acknowledges uncertainty about the existence of demons. He is more inclined to interpret harmful institutional behavior as the collective expression of selfish, fearful, or spiritually immature consciousness. This approach, he believes, preserves the possibility of personal transformation.

18. Unity's concept of race consciousness helps explain collective behavior. [1:05:39](#)

Shad invokes the Fillmores' concept of race consciousness: the idea that individuals are influenced by the consciousness of those around them. He applies this to destructive patterns of behavior and the possibility of spiritual growth.

19. Biblical demon possession can be understood through psychological and metaphysical interpretation. [1:07:18](#)

Shad considers whether accounts of Jesus casting out demons might describe psychological healing or allegorical transformation. For him, the practical question is how suffering people can change their consciousness and behavior, regardless of whether supernatural entities exist.

20. His vegetarianism and veganism developed from spiritual compassion rather than dietary ideology. [1:12:08](#)

At age 12, Shad became vegetarian after hearing his father discuss Diet for a New America and the ethical treatment of animals. He later became vegan in 2012. He presents these choices as expressions of his spiritual relationship with God and his concern for animal suffering.

21. Ethical eating should emerge from conscience, not moral superiority. [1:14:53](#)

Shad resists telling others that veganism makes him morally superior. Instead, he encourages people to examine their own relationship with God, listen to their conscience, and consider why harming an animal evokes a different moral response from harvesting a plant. He wants to minimize harm to sentient beings.

V. The Unity Presidency, His Departure, and His Subsequent Work

22. His presidency was intended to reverse a century of theological drift. [11:16](#)

Shad says he accepted the presidency only after warning the board that returning Unity to the Fillmores' original teachings would create controversy. According to his account, the trustees initially supported this direction because Unity was losing congregations, members, and relevance.

23. Unity faced a fundamental conflict over whether its founders' teachings were authoritative. [1:24:00](#)

Shad identifies two competing philosophies: preserving the distinctive teachings established by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, or allowing each generation and congregation to redefine Unity. He strongly favored preserving an identifiable theological core. He recalls encountering congregations unfamiliar with the Fillmores and even churches that discouraged or prohibited biblical references.

24. He believed Unity had become so inconsistent that he could not confidently recommend its churches. [1:28:47](#)

Shad expresses frustration that people interested in the original Unity message might not find it in contemporary Unity congregations. He describes the personal toll of trying to change the movement and reflects on his eventual removal as CEO. Although he would not have voluntarily quit, he came to regard his departure as beneficial for his own well-being.

25. After leaving Unity leadership, he continued pursuing the Fillmores' vision through new initiatives. [1:30:44](#)

Shad describes establishing the Fillmore Church in Kansas City, which did not grow as he had hoped. He subsequently joined his brother in developing WISDM, a media and educational initiative promoting natural and holistic healing. He sees this work as continuing his commitment to spiritual responsibility, health, and personal transformation.

The most significant themes for deeper study

Points 8, 9, 22, 23, and 24, together, they express Shad's central argument: Unity's original identity was a distinctive form of metaphysical Christianity, and its gradual transformation into a broadly interfaith movement weakened that identity.

Three especially interesting questions emerge from his account:

- Theological continuity: Did Charles and Myrtle Fillmore intend to establish a defined body of teachings, or a spiritual movement that would continually reinterpret its foundations?

- Organizational leadership: Was Shad's difficulty as president primarily theological, or did it also reflect tensions between centralized leadership and the autonomy of individual Unity congregations?
- Historical accuracy: How closely does Shad's description of the original Unity movement correspond to the Fillmores' actual writings, particularly their understanding of Christianity, vegetarianism, healing, and the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary?

Those are questions we can investigate separately, comparing Shad's statements with primary Unity sources rather than assuming that his recollections are definitive.