Emergent concepts and behavior as applied to Emerging Religions

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This is a study I did on "emergence / emergent behavior". I am going to share with you my observations on "emergent behavior" from the scientific perspective. I have been observing it from a distance for awhile. Here is a good scientific explanation I found of "emergent concept and behaviour" (http://www.answers.com/topic/emergence-1). You would do well to read it after you have read this study. It may clear away some of the mystery surrounding "emergent behavior" today as applied to religion. In this study, I applied well documented "emergent concepts" that have been theorized since the middle 1,800's to a hypothetical organization to see what one might look like. The explanation on "emergent concepts" was found on Wikepediea until there was a discussion on this topic on Slice of Laodicea back in Sept. 2007. The new stripped down version that you see today can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergent_behavior . Most of the explanation of "Emergent behavior and concepts" under the heading of "Fads and Beliefs" was then very swiftly stripped from the Wikepedia website and a disclaimer and caution put next to what was left of the paragraph. Sadly, Slice of Laodicea website was erased soon after and I never got to explore the concept further with other commenters. (F Whittenburg) The original copy that I quoted from can still be found in full at: http://www.answers.com/topic/emergence-1

I am curious to see if it will be changed also. You may want to make a copy of the web page at http://www.answers.com/topic/emergence-1 for future reference. Certain texts of special interest are in *bold*.

"*An emergent concept (EC) is a slight variation on consensus reality that is accepted as plausible. The hallmarks of an emergent concept, as opposed to*

*some categories of [memes](#) ([urban myths](#), or viruses of the mind) are that EC are increasingly accepted as truth or possibility, based upon other empirical or anecdotal evidence in the mind of the believer or society (in its subsets) as a whole. EC can be viewed as [fad](#), or common causal <u>reality</u> building. <u>**EC have no relationship to truth or fact,**</u> but are simply engines bringing individual concepts of truth into the mainstream."* (Bold added to existing text)

For example, if a group of "social engineers" applied "emergent concepts" to an organization of people, that organization would not then no longer have any real need or desire to understand truth, search for truth, defend truth, or embrace truth because the "emergent model" is designed to **"create"** truth! This is similar to consensus reality where multiple views on something like religion are all tossed together in a conversation and discussed until what is agreed upon finally as "reality" by the organization or group becomes the new "truth". The consensus is easily accepted by everyone in the group as "plausible truth" because all members had a hand in creating it. Theoretically, knowing "absolute truth" would be impossible, because "new truths" could possibly change existing "absolute" truth.

If you are on the outside studying organizations applying "emergent concepts" it is interesting to watch, but to someone inside that organization it would be almost impossible for them to see what was being done to them. You could give them the impression that the word "emergence / emergent" that they are a part of is actually a representation of a little fresh budding leaf of beautiful new spiritual growth. In actuality, the participants would be like busy ants in an ant colony trained to do their own little part to build the "kingdom". An ant colony and flocking of animals are natural examples of "emergent behavior" in nature. (F Whittenburg)

Here is more scientific explanation of "emergent behaviour" from the same site: http://www.answers.com/topic/emergence-1

Flocking is a well-known behaviour in many animal species from swarming locusts to fish and birds. Emergent structures are a common strategy found in many animal groups: colonies of ants, mounds built by termites, swarms of bees, shoals/schools of fish, flocks of birds, and herds/packs of mammals.

An example to consider in detail is an ant colony. The queen does not give direct orders and does not tell the ants what to do. Instead, each ant reacts to stimuli in the form of chemical scent from larvae, other ants, intruders, food and build up of waste, and leaves behind a chemical trail, which, in turn, provides a stimulus to other ants. Here each ant is an autonomous unit that reacts depending only on its local environment and the genetically encoded rules for its variety of ant. Despite the lack of centralized decision making, ant colonies exhibit complex behavior and have even been able to demonstrate the ability to solve geometric problems. For example, colonies routinely find the maximum distance from all colony entrances to dispose of dead bodies.

If applied to humans, they could be kept so busy focused on the small picture to ever see the bigger picture. All they would know is that every time something "changes" or "shifts" in the paradigm then there is a new "truth" to be discovered and then they start looking forward to constantly changing "truths" with new "truths" constantly being discovered. This could theoretically go on indefinitely, as long as everything is constantly kept changing and shifting. A whole new paradigm could result. (F Whittenburg)

Here again is more scientific explanation of "emergent behaviour" from the same site: http://www.answers.com/topic/emergence-1

*"An **emergent behaviour** or **emergent property** can appear when a number of simple entities (agents) operate in an environment, forming more complex behaviours as a collective. If emergence happens over disparate size scales, then the reason is usually a causal relation across different scales. In other words there is often a form of top-down feedback in systems with emergent*

properties. The processes from which emergent properties result may occur in either the observed or observing system, and can commonly be identified by their patterns of accumulating change, most generally called 'growth'. Why emergent behaviours occur include: intricate causal relations across different scales and feedback, known as [interconnectivity](). The emergent property itself may be either very predictable or unpredictable and unprecedented, and represent a new level of the system's evolution. The complex behaviour or properties are not a property of any single such entity, **nor can they easily be predicted or deduced from behaviour in the lower-level entities**: *they are irreducible.* **No physical property of an individual molecule of air would lead one to think that a large collection of them will transmit sound.***"(bold added to existing text).*

As with the air molecule analogy, one individual with one mind set, vision, and purpose could only do so much on their own, but just imagine a whole world that was focused on one purpose and vision like one big Global Brain thinking the same thoughts. (F Whittenburg)

" According to an emergent perspective, intelligence emerges from the [connections between]() neurons, and from this perspective it is not necessary to propose a "soul" to account for the fact that brains can be intelligent, even though the individual neurons of which they are made are not."

By applying the concept of "emergence" to all of humanity, humankind theoretically could "emerge" into a whole new "reality". Possibly a new world order or even attempt to bring Heaven to earth? (Genesis 11:4-7 KJV). To achieve something like that, you would have to teach all humanity a new way to "think" in terms of groups (i.e. group think). Someone once said: "I would like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony". To be of maximum effectiveness, you would have to teach all in the emergent organization how to focus and center their thoughts and prayers the most effectively. Think of the possibilities? The

Bible says that nothing would be restrained from man if all mankind could imagine it. (F Whittenburg)

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is ONE, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now NOTHING will be restrained from them, which they IMAGINED to do (Genesis 11:6 KJV).

If you want to see some VERY interesting things, do a web search with the words "human + emergence" after you read this study.

I personally believe that consensus reality as it has been used in history has been shown to be a flawed way to come to a clear concept of the actual "reality" to be embraced by society. Example: All the great scholars have reached a consensus; we believe the earth is "flat"! Sir Isaac Newton is a heretic and a madman that must be hunted down and killed because he thinks the earth is round!

For "emergent behavior" to manifest in the organization, you would first need to create unity in the organization with a single purpose and vision. Then you would have to drive out all that are not in unity and at the same time shield the target organization from the dissenters and resistors until the desired behaviour has time to "emerge". You can then go back and deal with the resistors later, after the desired emergent behavior has begun manifesting. You could reach out and offer the dissenters and resistors one last chance to join you, or you can just let them remain isolated. (F Whittenburg)

"*On the other hand, merely having a large number of interactions is not enough by itself to guarantee emergent behaviour; many of the interactions may be negligible or irrelevant, or may cancel each other out. In some cases, a large number of interactions can in fact work against the emergence of interesting behaviour, by creating a lot of "noise" to drown out any emerging "signal"; the emergent behaviour may need to be temporarily isolated from other interactions before it reaches enough critical mass to be self-supporting.*"

One unique thing about "emergent behavior", it can be observed in small groups also, without a centralized structure and command.

"Thus it is not just the sheer number of connections between components which encourages emergence; it is also how these connections are organised. A hierarchical organisation is one example that can generate emergent behaviour (a bureaucracy may behave in a way quite different to that of the individual humans in that bureaucracy); but perhaps more interestingly, emergent behaviour can also arise from more decentralized organisational structures, such as a marketplace. In some cases, the system has to reach a combined threshold of diversity (**all faiths**), organization (**small groups**), and connectivity (**love, social justice, environment, etc.**) before emergent behaviour appears." (bold words in parentheses added).

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http://www.christiannewbirth.com/whenfaithcame.html