

Pope may embrace intelligent design

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Pope Benedict XVI may reportedly embrace the theory of intelligent design, possibly heralding a fundamental shift in the Vatican's view of evolution.

Philosophers, scientists and other intellectuals are to meet with the pope this week at his summer palace near Rome to discuss the issue, The Guardian reported Monday.

Advocates of the theory argue the universe and living things are so complex they must be a product of intelligent design rather than natural selection. Critics say the theory is a disguise for creationism.

Vatican officials last week announced evolution and creation would be the topics for this year's meeting of the pope's Schulerkreis -- a group consisting mainly of his former doctoral students that has been gathering annually since the late 1970s, The Guardian said.

Pope Benedict raised the issue during the inaugural sermon of his pontificate, saying, "We are not the accidental product, without meaning, of evolution."

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