

Australia's most senior Catholic Archbishop sparks outrage after saying Jews are 'intellectually and morally inferior'

By [Rick Dewsbury](#)

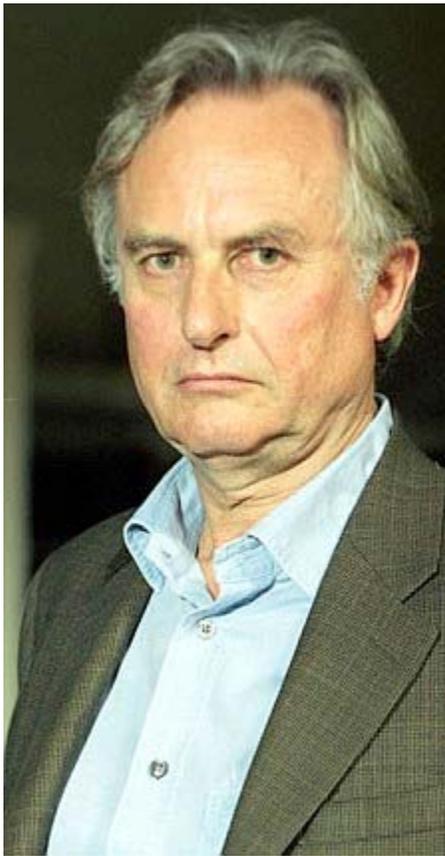
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Australia's most senior-ranked Catholic official has risked an international backlash by claiming that Jews are 'intellectually and morally inferior'.

Cardinal George Pell said 'the little Jewish people' were shepherds who lacked intellectual development during a debate with atheist Richard Dawkins.

He went on to claim that Germans had suffered more than the Jews during the horrors of the holocaust in the Second World War.





Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, said Jews were intellectually and morally inferior during a TV debate with atheist Richard Dawkins, right

The remarks came during a televised debate with Dawkins on Australian TV in which the pair became locked in a heated discussion on religion and evolution.

'I've got a great admiration for the Jews but we don't need to exaggerate their contribution in their early days,' Cardinal Pell said during the debate on ABC television.

'They weren't intellectually the equal of [the Egyptians or Persians] – intellectually, morally ... The poor – the little Jewish people, they were originally shepherds. They were stuck. They're still stuck between these great powers.'

Cardinal Pell said Jews had been stuck between the Egyptians and Babylonians, and that this reflected their intellectual development. He said this included Jesus.

The religious leader went on to suggest that Jews had not suffered as much as the German people during and after the holocaust.

Asked why god permitted the Holocaust to occur, he said it was a 'terrible mystery' why the Germans had been subsequently 'punished'.



Offence: Cardinal Pell suggested Germans had suffered more than Jews during the Holocaust in which million were killed at concentration camps such as Auschwitz, pictured

He said: 'He (God) helped probably through secondary causes for the Jews to escape and continue. It is interesting through these secondary causes probably no people in history have been punished the way the Germans were. It is a terrible mystery.'

The debate host said that the Jews had suffered more than the Germans, to which Cardinal Pell replied: 'Yes, that might be right. Certainly the suffering in both, I mean the Jews, there was no reason why they should suffer.'

Cardinal Pell was declared the winner of the debate, a decision that appeared to have caused confusion among viewers.

His remarks were also criticised by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry which conveyed its 'serious concern' over the debate.

The Australian Jewish News also condemned Cardinal Pell and published a front page with a large picture of the cardinal under the headline 'Clerical error'.

Editor Zeddy Lawrence said said the paper had been inundated with Jewish readers who were upset and offended.

'It doesn't seem he was thinking clearly, but many people also said he is a good friend to the community,' Mr Lawrence told the Age.

Cardinal Pell later apologised as he sought to clarify his argument. He said that he did not intend to offend the Jewish community.

He said: 'Historically or culturally unequal might have been more appropriate than intellectually.'

'My commitment to friendship with the Jewish community, and my esteem for the Jewish faith is a matter of public record, and the last thing I would want to do is give offence to either. This was certainly not my intention, and I am sorry that these points which I tried to make ... did not come out as I would have preferred in the course of the discussion.'