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CHURCH AND STATE IN AUSTRALIA:

The Background and Implications of Separation.

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in the Australian National University.

December, 1953.
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My aim is not to watch the gradual breaking down of a tradition - that of an 'established' church - until the Separation of Church and State occurred, but rather to watch the building up in a new and unprecedented type of colony of a form of Church - State relationship which was the practical expression of the political theory and religious thought of the nineteenth century.

The story runs from the earliest settlement and the beginnings of organized religion to the time when the drafting of the Federal Constitution made it necessary to produce a working formula to regulate the relations between Church and State.

In the days of penal colonization Church-State relations underwent a phase which could conveniently be described as quasi-establishment: a relationship dictated more by the needs and circumstances of the penal settlement than by the views and policy of the Colonial Office. This was followed by a phase (covered in the second and third chapters) when several churches received State support, but this was clearly intended to be temporary only, marking an advance towards the goal of Separation and religious freedom.

Chapter four analyses the religious and political ideals which, during the third and final phase, were contributing to make Separation a reality.

Lastly, in the fifth chapter, the implications of the formula arrived at in the Constitution will be explored with a view to showing that neither the guarantee of religious freedom nor Separation is absolute.

This thesis covers only one aspect of the subject of Church-State relations in Australia which also involved the theoretical and legal position occupied by churches - as one type of voluntary group - within the general framework of the State.