

ANGELS ON BICYCLES

By Bill Pugh

I remember them well from Presbyterian days. Trainee deaconesses based at Rolland House cycling over to Ormond College Theological Hall.

In those days classes were male dominated and the ministry was clearly male oriented.

Now things are different, thank the Lord. Women have equal status. Deaconesses served in many areas of ministry, as wonderful pastors, teachers and hospital chaplains.

Leading women's groups, supporting Sunday schools with resources and the PFA. Conducting Bible study groups, visiting the sick in hospitals, and at home. Except for administering the

sacraments, their role was not different to men.

In vacant parishes they took services, presided at funerals and exercised vital ministry.

We were truly blessed by their service and the church is richer for the selfless ministry of these angels on bicycles. We must never forget them. Now women have equal status, church history should underline the role of deaconesses.

As a student at Ormond College, and as a parish minister, I had first-hand evidence of their contribution, and I thank God for the ministry of deaconesses, angels who came on bicycles.

Reflection:

How appropriate to express the call to ministry of those angels on bicycles are these words of Richard Gillard.

*I will hold the Christ-light for you, In the night time of your fear:
I will hold my hand out to you, Speak the peace you long to hear. (TIS650:3)*

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