



FAITH

By Bill Pugh

Thanks for the Memory. A popular song sung by Bob Hope and Shirley Ross in the film, *The Big Broadcast*. They play a married couple on the brink of divorce and sing this song recalling the ups and downs of their relationship, and they decide to stay together.

Thanks for the Memory. At school we learned times tables, poems and spelling by heart. I will always be grateful for those tests of memory. In Sunday School we learned Bible texts, still in my mind and available to recall. So helpful. Jesus knew the scriptures and could answer those who tried to trick him. So what is the future of biblical memory? Helpful words coming down to us from the life experience of people of faith. How special is a message triggered by memory for some situation relevant to life.

I have seen how the stressed and anxious find peace from scripture committed to mind so long ago

at Sunday School or RE classes. Like a Mallee farmer transported to a Melbourne hospital for urgent surgery. Flat on his back in unfamiliar territory, all he could do was to recite Psalm 23, learned years ago in a Sunday School class.

Down the track will the next generation have the benefit of a stored facility? Everything is easily available from the Internet. Electronic books, Bibles, hymns and prayers. Very clever technology, but what about the quiet times, the situations where nothing like this is available? Where will spiritual wisdom come from? Memory is important for our mental and spiritual health. Wisely the Psalmist reminds us to “*write down for the coming generation what the Lord has done.*” And that includes what is stored in our minds to be prompted by the Spirit. The wisdom and benefits of oral tradition passed faithfully down the ages.

Reflection:

We often visited a Christian WW2 digger in a nursing home, suffering from dementia. Sometimes at our greeting he opened his eyes, then drifted back to sleep. Sitting quietly, chatting, including him by name, a reading and a prayer was the pattern. No response. One afternoon we tried this. Singing “onward Christian soldiers marching as to war...” He opened his eyes and joined in, word for word. Then he went back to sleep. Not in modern hymn books those words, but forever in his mind and heart. We left with a warm feeling. Thanks for the Memory