

**Women's Luncheon – “When God Calls - Be Listening”**

Rev. Dorothy D. France

Virginia Regional Assembly

Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, VA.

Saturday June 5, 2010 12:30 p.m.

Did you enjoy your lunch? Have you had time to refresh your lipstick?

Seeing some of you replacing yours reminded me of the time when I spoke to a Woman's Club in Akron – the subject was “grief.” After my presentation the chair came up to me, took my hand, and asked me what kind of lipstick I was wearing. After I got over the shock I told her Estee Lauder, I think. Then she said, “I just wanted to know- I watched your lips while you were speaking and your lipstick didn't move.”

If you happen to be watching my lips while I am speaking and you see my lipstick move, please follow and tell me where it goes.

I'm in the process of going through 60 years of bulletins, correspondence, newspaper articles et cetera. Last week I came across an interesting article from the Richmond Times Dispatch dated March 2, 1957 titled, “Disciples to Observe Anniversary of Church Tomorrow.” It reads: “The Disciples of Christ Council of Richmond will hold a service tomorrow in observance of the organization of the first church of that denomination in Richmond. The service will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Seventh Street Christian Church, Malvern and Grove Aves.

In February, 1832, a small group of Richmonders severed their connections with the Baptist church and founded a Disciples of Christ Church. In less than a year the 69 original founders of the church had erected the old Sycamore Meeting House on 11<sup>th</sup> between Broad and Marshall Sts.

The congregation moved in 1870 to the corner of Seventh and Grace St. where it was renamed Seventh Street Christian Church. Out of the original Sycamore congregation has grown eight other congregations throughout the city.

## **Church discipline was strict in the Old Sycamore Meeting House.**

At one service the minister warned that should any member continue to “absent himself from the church and neglect their Christian duties they would be excluded from the church.” During the next month five men and women were excluded on these grounds.

Others were “excluded” because of indulging in ardent spirits, dancing, going to the theater **and speaking disrespectfully to the preacher and refusing to apologize.**

My! Times have really changed. Today the church, located at Malvern and Grove Avenue, is served by a capable woman minister, the Rev. Carolyn Schwarz .

I remember, following a conference some years ago, there was a rumor going around that the youth had been allowed to dance while at Craig Springs. Some church folks were saying if that was true their youth would not be going again.

When asked about it, I quickly responded: **“Dance? Why no. But we did play “folk games.” And that was the end of that. Sometimes it just depends on what we call things. Sometimes quick thinking and a sense of humor is the best way to stop a rumor in its tracks.**

Ministry has been a long, exciting and fulfilling journey. Carl and I were ordained on graduation morning 60 years ago in the old meeting house at Bethany College where Alexander Campbell preached. That place - that space - is where we were taught, shown by example, nurtured, encouraged and made to believe that we could do an be anything we wanted to do and be.

**It was where I first learned that “When God Calls – I’d better be listening.”**

The first time I spoke here at Lynchburg College was 42 years ago on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1958 in room 22, Hopwood Hall. Dr. Allen Stanger asked me to speak to his ministerial students, their wives and sweethearts - **not on the role of women as ministers - but on the subject “The Minister’s Wife.”** It reminded me of the time when Prof. Green at Bethany suggested I drop out of school and take a job at the college. “The minister’s wife,” he said, didn’t need a college education.

“Besides you will never be given the opportunity to be an active minister.” Thank goodness my advisor, Dr. Dwight Stevenson, nixed that idea in the bud.

**Just as women had a difficult time breaking into ministry, there was a time when women weren't key leaders – at least in visible positions – in the church.**

Every now and then, particularly in the early years, I had experiences that made me wonder if Prof. Green was right.

I received a call from the Regional minister, Rev. Lewis McPheran, asking if I would be willing to supply a couple of Sundays for the church at Bowling Green. They were a small aging congregation with low attendance and thoughts of possible closing. I checked my calendar and told him I would be happy to help them out.

The first Sunday I was there, after the benediction, I was descending from the pulpit when this elderly gentleman came up to assist me down the few steps. He took my hand, looked at me and said in a clear voice, “You know you are the first woman to ever stand behind that pulpit!”

I was surprised at his remarks and was tempted to say, “and it will probably be the last. You can get someone else for next Sunday.” But I decided that perhaps a little humor would be in order so I said, “Let's check things out.” I stomped my foot on the floor and said, “The floor is still ok.” Then I looked up at ceiling, “The roof must still be on because the ceiling is ok.” I put my hand on his arm and said, “Let's check out the stained glass windows. We walked over to the windows. “You check that one and I'll check this one. . . Mine is o.k. How about yours?”

We had a good laugh and he apologized for his remarks. Many women have stood behind that pulpit since that time.

There are lots of similar events I could share but you can see I survived. Those of you who are in ministry or considering ministry I am confident you will survive and you will have the support of Women's Ministry!

In October, 1964, Carl and I attended the International Convention in Detroit. I attended the minister's wives luncheon and he the minister's luncheon. The number of women clergy was so small in those days that the few of us who were around felt more comfortable attending with our husbands. Mrs. Romney, wife of the then Michigan Governor, spoke to the Minister's wives on "**Going About or Going about Doing Good.**" Her message has stayed with me all these years. Even to this day before accepting an engagement, I ask myself, "**Will you be going about doing good or will you just be going about?**" I firmly believe that when the good within us is awakened there will be a difference in how we spend our time and energy.

There were several events that helped determine what and where my ministry would be.

**I learned early that "the world would become my parish." I just didn't know it would last a lifetime.**

In the late 1950s I received a call from the chair of the program committee asking me to speak for the annual women's luncheon at First English Lutheran Church in Richmond. I was seated between the program chair and the minister's wife, Dorothy Eckert. I finally asked the person where she got my name. She said she kept a file of possible speakers. She had seen an article about me over a year ago and put it in her folder and decided to invite me. When I began my presentation I told the women that I was sure Lutheran Women had more faith than most because of their willingness to invite someone to speak that they had never seen or heard. Several weeks later I received a call from Mrs. Eckert asking me to speak for World Day of Prayer.

**That was my introduction to Church Women United – the group that sent me to South Africa in 1968. If there is a unit near you, JOIN. If not, form a unit.**

In 1964 when I was 38 and had become active in Church Women United, a Church of the Brethren minister's wife, who remained anonymous, nominated me to represent Virginia women at The Summer at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City. This was a real awakening to the fact that the world was larger than the United States.

I learned one of many lessons about the **power and importance of words** –how we read them, how we hear them and how we understand and interpret them.

The first afternoon when I went into the conference room I was struck by the words on the large banner that hung on the front wall. It said: **“Not to Decide Is To Decide.”** In other words, it isn't ok to see a situation that needs correcting and ignore it or do nothing . **By doing nothing you have already decided that whatever it was is o.k. I tried to make this a goal in my life.**

**I encourage you - lay and clergy - when there are opportunities for workshops, seminars, special lectures - take advantage of them. I also suggest that you have someone attend with you. That way you have someone to bounce off ideas, to help with recruiting others to do whatever it is you want others to do.**

You may not be able to use what you learn right away but you will be “storing up in your mental **“file cabinet”** information that will be invaluable in the future.” Maybe you will read something in the paper or hear about something on the radio or TV about the need for volunteers to help with a senior feeding program and start a file like the Lutheran woman did.

**In 1966 when I was really old - I had almost reached 40 - I was chairman, that's what we women were called then - for the Virginia Church Women United Assembly held in Blackstone. Dr. Margaret Shannon, a Presbyterian , had just become the new Executive Director. She chose the Virginia Assembly as the first one she would visit and agreed to be our speaker. I guess I was too young to realize that I should have been nervous about having a new executive present. I went about doing the best I could to make the experience meaningful for those present.**

The meeting was in the spring. Early that fall when I was teaching, a message came over the intercom to my classroom stating that when I had a chance I needed to return a call to New York. **When I returned the call, Dr. Shannon told me they had just had a meeting and I had been chosen to represent CWU on a Christian Causeway to Africa .** I was shocked! I immediately told her that I was not qualified. I had never even been outside the U.S. much less going to Africa.

Her response was “Let me decide your qualifications. I watched you in action as you related to women at the meeting. Your creativity and dedication showed all over the place. The placemat you created was excellent. In addition,” she said, “Anyone who can stand up in a green wool suit and preside over a communion service in which Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic women participated, can meet

with women anywhere.”

I told you I was young – wasn’t wearing a robe - and didn’t realize at the time that I wasn’t supposed to serve communion to Orthodox and Catholic women  
**After all, we Disciples, are People of the TABLE. Right?**

**You see, we go ahead and do and be who we are even if we make mistakes.**

**Sometimes, over time, those mistakes can become big pluses.**

I didn’t go to Africa in 1966 – my excuse- I’d signed a teaching contract. I was planning to go to Nigeria in 1967 but the Biafra War broke out and the center where I was to work was destroyed.

I finally went all the way to South Africa in 1968 and stayed 2 1/2 months rather than six weeks. Dr. Louise Clark, a dear friend, volunteered to go with me. When we left the terminal to board the plane to Liberia, I was handed an envelope and told not to open it until we were out over the Atlantic.

**When I finally opened it, there were only 6 words:**

**“Gods Speed and God’s Speech” Margaret**

**What powerful words they were!**

While in South Africa I also learned that words can convey different things depending on where you are.

One evening shortly after arriving in Johannesburg, South Africa from the Congo, my traveling companion, Louise Clark, wasn’t feeling well and chose not to have dinner. I decided to try the restaurant across the street from the hotel. It was a lovely setting complete with white table linens and flowers. The servers, from India, wore white jackets and turbans on their heads. I was seated, given a menu from which I ordered and was served very quickly. But one thing was missing- **there was no napkin**. I motioned for the waiter and asked him for a napkin. He asked, “What is it you wish mum?” I replied, “A napkin.”

He walked over to another waiter, pointed to me and said something to him and then came and asked again, "What is it you wish, Mum?" Again I said, "A napkin," This time he went to the cashier, looked over at me, and said something to her. By this time I began to wonder why he couldn't understand what I was asking. So when he returned and asked me again, "what is it you wish Mum?" I repeated "a napkin" and pretended to wipe my mouth with my hands. He walked across the room, returned, and said, "Your serviette mum", as he placed a large white napkin on my lap.

The next day when I met my hostess, I told her that I thought I had made a terrible mistake at dinner and explained what had happened. She burst out laughing and finally was able to control herself as she said, "Do you know what you were asking for? I said "no." She said, "A baby diaper" and we both laughed.

A week or so later she offered to take me shopping. We went to a large department store and did the usual- looked at purses, jewelry, gift items and the like. After a while, she asked me if I'd like to "spend a cent." I told her not just yet and kept looking. After asking me the same question several times she finally said, "Well. I have to spend a cent." I felt like saying, "Go right ahead. Buy whatever you wish." Then she asked if I'd like to go with her. I thought it best that I stay with her. She walked to an elevator in the back of the store. We went up, exited on the next floor and walked to what I then realized was the "Ladies Room." She handed me a coin - a cent - the least coin of South Africa, like our penny, and told me I'd need to place it in the slot to open the "stall" door.

**Yes, words can be powerful.** Reminding me of two experiences I'll never forget.

**It's hard to believe that 44 years ago when I first met Margaret Shannon, we were asking the same question that we are asking here today. We are just using different words. The meaning they convey is the same.**

**Our theme was, "Lord, what would you have me do?" Today it's - "When God Calls Be Listening" "When God Calls Be Listening!"**

And you'd better be ready! He may take you kicking and screaming - "I can't- we can't." But he'll pick you up, brush you off, and give you strength and say, "Go do it anyway!"

**The causeway experience for Church Women United changed my life.** I never returned to teaching – that is in a classroom. When I returned we went to Kansas City to the General Assembly, came back to Colonial Heights, packed our two cars and moved to new ministries in Pulaski. While I was away Carl sold our house and sent me the deed to be signed which I had done at the American Embassy.

Just two weeks after our move I received a call from the Director of the Community Action Agency in Christiansburg wanting to come by and talk to me about a job opening that would soon be available. He had heard of my interest in domestic and world hunger. The Director of Community Development was retiring soon and he thought I might be interested in the position. He came by. I accepted the job offer. And a new and exciting ministry began.

It was during this time that I became increasingly aware of the need for the church's involvement in addressing and solving problems in the communities where we lived.

**It was a time, much like today, when unemployment, hunger, crime, drug abuse – you name it – was before us and church attendance and community involvement was down.**

**Like right NOW 2010!**

The Senate Select Committee report on Hunger had just been issued. Southwest Virginia was listed as one of the worst areas in the country. That's when School Breakfast Programs first began, when Nutrition Programs for the Elderly were opened .

**First Christian Church, Pulaski was one of the first lunch program sites in the area.** Those programs filled a need. I'm told that right now there are children who are not being fed and senior citizens who are lonely and not being cared for.

**Maybe now's the time when we need to ask ourselves again "What's Church Got to Do With It?"**

I certainly didn't begin my ministry thinking I'd spend years working with

CROP and Church World Service in the areas of domestic and world hunger and refugee resettlement. It happened because a woman, Margaret Shannon, liked a placemat and my green suit at the communion table and followed up with her hunch that, just maybe, with a little help and encouragement a female clergyperson might develop into something.

I kept myself and my ministry grounded - or you might say focused - by serving several congregations on a part time basis. That's when I met Kathy and the wonderful people at Petunia, Galilee and Prospect in Dinwiddie County.

I learned so much from the members of those congregations!

**In 1969** everyone that took the local paper knew I was at Petunia and that I was different! **The article clearly stated that "Rev. France is the first female minister to serve any Christian Church in Wythe County."**

I'll never forget the Sunday Kathy's father, Jap Umberger, stood behind the communion table at Petunia and led the congregation in the Communion meditation. He said: "Jesus Loves Me this I know for the Bible tells me so." He believed it and he wanted others to believe it too as they came to the table which was open to all.

One cold snowy morning, Jap called and said he'd be down to pick me up as soon as he'd put up the mail. It was too dangerous for me to travel over the mountain from Pulaski to Wytheville. He picked me up right at my front door and delivered me to the door to the education building. **Best LIMO service anyone could ever have.** Franks Walters always made sure my tires were good. He checked them every Sunday and different folks made sure Carl had fresh homemade butter, fresh cracked walnuts and congo squares.

**When I traveled there were always notes from the young people waiting for me when I landed in some far away destination – Notes telling me about camp or whatever they had been up to.**

One Friday morning I dropped by to visit a shut-in, Mrs. Simmerman, prior to attending a World Day of Prayer service. As I prepared to leave she called to her son and asked him to bring her jars of pennies from her closet shelf. She handed

me the larger jar saying that she had been saving them for her bathroom but wanted me to take them as her gift for World Day of Prayer. I placed them on the altar an hour or so later, with thanksgiving in my heart for the dedication of that beautiful humble woman.

Going to district and regional meetings Petunia was the only church congregation that could wear a flower as their name tag. One minister said it wasn't fair. We wore them anyway.

And there were humorous moments as well.

- For example, when a nurse at the hospital stopped me when I was making a hospital visit to tell me that Dr.(I'll not use his name) had really cleaned up his language since he started attending church  
and
- when one cold snowy day, following a graveside service, the local funeral director pulled into the parking space in front of the shoe store wanting to buy me some boots. He said it was too cold to be wearing black pumps. I told him Carl would be waiting for me so we could get to Natural Bridge for the Ministers and Mates conference. Can't you just imagine the buzz that would be going around even before I got out of town?

**And those days at Galilee (1973-1975)** with folks like Doris, Kay and Clyde Daugherty.

Every night since those days when I go to bed I nestle in under a beautiful handmade quilt made and given to me by Mary Henderson, an elderly member of Galilee. Before I go to sleep I look over at my quilt rack and see the gorgeous quilt made by the women of Galilee that includes a square from every family in the church. What a delight it was to pull up to that church building on Sunday and know the folks would be there ready to worship almighty God and to love and support one another.

I could go on and on.

**And then there was Prospect (Dinwiddie County 1981-1984)** What could I bring to this congregation which consisted mainly of retired folks? It was during the time when we were raising funds for blankets and many countries were having

conflicts of one kind or another. I decided that before my sermon I would lift up an area, pray for that area and urge the members to follow the happenings in the news.

A welfare mother lived with one of the members. One Sunday morning following the service I was greeting everyone as they left. This lady came, took my hand and said, “Last night we were watching the news. I told Mrs. --- that you would pray for the people of Ethiopia during church tomorrow morning. And you did! **She was so excited. She had gotten the connection between the six o’clock news on Saturday night and Sunday morning worship.**

What more could a minister ask for?

I’ve often been asked if I was ever afraid? No. But there were times, particularly when I was in Viet Nam and South Africa, when I prayed: “Lord, you got me into this and I’m trusting you to get me where I’m supposed to be next!” And He always did.

In 1986, I was a member of a team of seven staff and volunteers from Virginia **to visit refugee camps in Southeast Asia.** We were going, hopefully, to meet families scheduled to be sponsored by churches in Virginia. Our visit to several camps in Thailand were coordinated by the State Dept. and the U.S. Embassy in Thailand. The Embassy provided a van and a driver. We were scheduled to visit Site 2 near the Cambodian Border.

We had been told ahead of time that we must report first to the Camp guard; that we may or may not be allowed to enter and if we did get in we would have to report to the main office and receive permission from the Commander of the camp before going any further. We passed the guard o.k. When we arrived at the main office, our driver said that since I was the designated leader I would be the only one to go. The rest should remain in the van.

As I approached the buildings I soon realized that I had to cross over a bridge and go down a narrow boarded path before reaching the door. As I approached the door I noticed a row of shoes lined up neatly on the outside. So I took my shoes off and went in. I approached a young Thai woman seated at her desk. I stated who I was, showed my ID and related my purpose.

Her immediate response was the Commander wasn’t in and she didn’t expect him to be in today. The doorway to a nearby room was covered with strings of

beads. I would see a gentlemen seated at a desk. I thought I'd try again stating that we'd come all the way from Virginia in the USA and only wanted to visit several families scheduled to be resettled in our area. I also told her our goal was to help reduce the number and relieve camp pressures.

She looked me in the eye and asked, "**Where in Virginia do you live?** I told her I lived in Richmond. She asked, "Have you ever heard of Fort Lee?" I could barely control myself but I remained calm. "Oh yes," I said. "My husband was a minister in Petersburg and we often had visitors from Ft. Lee." We chatted a little about the nearby shopping center.

She told me she had been stationed at Ft. Lee for training a year earlier. Then she said, "Just a minute. Let me check to see if the Commander had arrived."

**Surprise, surprise!** He had. He was the one I could see in the next room. He came out, greeted me and signed the permit.

**You decide. Was this a coincidence or was someone I couldn't see but whose presence I could feel still in charge?"**

Changes in our lives, communities, and churches have been a part of our past. And no doubt more changes and adjustments will be required. We can welcome them as challenges and opportunities or become bogged down and unable to be the Church. Some of the issues/concerns we now face include low attendance, shortage of clergy( especially male), different styles of music, wars, unemployment, health care, aging population and on and on.

"We can look back over time and learn; but we can't change what has taken place. What we can change is the future. As women we can wring our hands and be resolved that nothing we try will work or we can act and nourish our church and find common ground. We know that change can be painful, but if it takes change to reach the unchurched around us, then let's start figuring out together how to do that so we don't have to look back in regret.

As individuals we can promise ourselves never to neglect each other or let **people** slip out of our lives without giving the best effort to stay connected.

One of the writers of a letter in "Dear Church" raises this question , "What should young women in ministry dream about? From my prospective, she says, "they

should dream about ministry in a denomination that is being born anew – a denomination that is starting to reflect the diversity of God’s creation. Think of all the immigrant congregations in formation. By the third generation they will be integrated into the whole life of the denomination.” What a difference that will make in our understanding of God’s family.”

Thirty six years ago I visited the Klong Toey slum in Bangkok, Thailand and thirty three years ago, 1977, I was in Haiti. Little did I realize that some day those two places would be connected. The folks from the slum which was built on and still stands on a “garbage heap” have sent funds to help the folks in Haiti.

**Who helped make that possible. YOU did through Disciples missions Global Women’s Connecting Service Project for 2008-2012 is Klong Toey.**

We are trailblazers. We have always been trailblazers!

I believe that women have the power to shape the moral and spiritual standards of our nation and of the world. Too often, however, we attend retreats, and assemblies - have our batteries recharged and then we go back home and let the batteries run down from lack of use. We must free ourselves of “outdated ways of doing things in order to attract the young and perhaps restless” without getting hung up and worried over who will get the credit.

**When God Calls, LISTEN and try to form a calm center to our many obligations rather than from frustration and exhaustion.**

**Reach out to women of other denominations/faiths. Check out needs in communities, invite other circles to join you in identifying and finding answers . Don’t be afraid to travel over “troubled waters.**

Not long before my move back to Virginia I had an appointment with a lawyer in downtown Akron. It was a hot and humid day. He told me I would probably have to park on the street. Fortunately it was only several blocks from High Street Christian so I parked in the church lot.

When my appointment was over the lawyer suggested that when I left the building I should turn left, cross over and then cross over again and enter the first floor of

the public library. I should take the elevator to the second floor and exit onto High Street. I would then be very near the parking lot.

I followed his instructions. I turned left and crossed over to the crowded bus stop. I stood there in the crowd a couple of minutes realizing that this was actually the first time I had stood at a bus stop except when waiting for **a tour bus.**

All kinds of things flashed through my head. What would it be like to do this every day of my life? What would I do if I didn't have bus fare? What if it was cold and snowing? How far would I have to walk to get home?

I finally crossed the street and approached the door to the Library. As I did I noticed there were several "street persons" approaching the door as well. As I moved toward the door they stepped back and an elderly woman said, "You go first." I got a closer look at her as I suggested she go ahead. I could tell that at one time she has been a beautiful woman- someone's mother, sister, aunt, daughter,- maybe grandmother like me. What had gone wrong in her life? All she needed was a bath, a shampoo and set, some clean clothes.

She looked at me and asked, "Do you have a jacket? It's very cold in there. They tell us that we can catch a cold by going in and out of the heat into the cold building." I had taken my jacket off and laid it over my arm. I told her I had a jacket. I started to put it on and she said, "**Let me help you.**" **She put it over my shoulders and opened the door for me. I thanked her. They followed me inside.**

I got on the elevator and went to the second floor. As I exited I thought: "Why didn't you take those dear folks into the coffee shop and at least get them something cold to drink or a cup of coffee." I pushed the down button and went back to the first floor but I couldn't find her. All I could think of was the scripture:

**"As you did it unto one of the least of these you did it unto me."**

**But I didn't. I missed an opportunity to witness as one of Christ's followers.**

**GOD WAS CALLING ME BUT I WASN'T LISTENING!**

Each of you in this room has accomplished a lot more than you realize. There is a common thread that has woven together what you have done in and with your life. Find that common thread and celebrate and expand upon it.

**Remember I stand before you today not because of what I've been able to do BUT because of what you enabled and allowed me to do and be when it wasn't popular for a woman to be serve communion, preach a sermon, conduct a funeral or a wedding.**

Never forget how special you are as a church woman! Remember all the Chi Rho, CYF and Women's Retreats we attended at Craig Springs and Blackstone and have lived to tell about. Remember all the Woman's Days we celebrated together.

We want women today to be able to have similar memories to share. Be aware of those around you - young and not so young - who have a talent or skill that perhaps they haven't recognized within themselves. Compliment them on whatever it is that you see, encourage them to pursue and develop that ability.

**It was during my trip to Haiti in 1977 that I saw my first "live conch." I was sitting on the shoulders, yes sitting on the shoulders, of a young Haitian man who was taking me from shore to the waiting boat that would take our group for an overnight visit to the Island of LaGuave.**

My male colleagues had simply rolled up their pants and waded out to the boat. When he (my transportation) was wading through the water with me on his shoulders, I looked down and saw that the bottom was covered with huge Conch. Much like the one here. For a brief moment I considered taping him on the head and asking him to get me one. But then I thought "When he bends over I'll do a somersault into the water."

**This beautiful shell here beside the podium** belongs to Nancy, the administrator at Cedarfield, the retirement community where I now live. It belonged to her Mother. When I came to visit and make the decision about moving back to Richmond, Nancy left word that she'd like to see me. She had something she wanted to show me. (I'd met her on an earlier visit.)

Cedarfield was preparing for their health inspection and she was naturally uptight about it. Her husband suggested she go to her favorite place - the beach for a

couple of days and relax. She was walking along the edge of the water when she saw something protruding from the sand. Using a stick she dug out this conch.

She showed it to me and said, “I washed it off and put it up to my ear. I could hear the roar of the ocean. Do you think that was God telling me everything would be o.k.?”

I said, “I think so. But the important thing is, ‘Were you listening? Were you listening?’”

I have some shells that I treasure. I have them placed at various locations in my apartment. **Every so often I place one to my ear to remind me that When God Calls, I’d better be listening.**

**SURELY THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE.  
YOU CAN FEEL HIS POWER AND HIS GRACE -  
IF YOU’RE LISTENING.**