

CALLED
TO SERVE



“I pray that my spirit might be like that of Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin—whose passing brought about this call—a spirit void of any desire for personal attention, willing to go anywhere and do anything the Lord’s prophets would have me do, applying my full consecration in testifying of the Savior and building the kingdom of God until my final breath.”

**Elder Neil L. Andersen
of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles,
“Come unto Him,”
Ensign, May 2009, 79.**

ELDER NEIL L.



ANDERSEN

Newly called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Neil L. Andersen was serving as the senior member of the Presidency of the Seventy prior to his calling.

Born in Logan, Utah, and raised on a farm in Pocatello, Idaho, Elder Andersen remembers growing up doing typical farm work day and night. After having served in the France Paris Mission, marriage to his wife, Kathy Sue Williams in the Salt Lake Temple, and graduation from Brigham Young University, he earned a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University. He and Kathy then moved to Tampa, Florida, her hometown, where he worked as an advertising executive and a developer of real estate.

While they were living in Florida an incident with a persistent bug taught him a lesson about keeping small sins out of our lives. He wrote: "One evening as my neighbor and I stood on the front steps, he noticed a little bug crossing my sidewalk. 'You better spray your lawn,' he warned. 'There goes a mole cricket.' I had sprayed the lawn with insecticide not too many weeks previously, and I hardly felt that I had the time or money to do it again so soon.

"In the light of the next morning, I examined my lawn closely. It was lush and beautifully green. I looked down into the grass to see if I could see any of the little bugs. I could see none. I remember thinking, Well, maybe that little mole cricket was just passing through my yard on the way to my neighbor's yard.

"The story, however, has a sad ending. I came out the front door one morning, about 10 days after the conversation with my neighbor. Shockingly, as if it had happened overnight, brown spots covered my lawn. I ran to the garden store, bought the insecticide, and sprayed immediately, but it was too late. The lawn was ruined, and to return it to its former state required a new crop of sod,

long hours of work, and large expense.

"My neighbor's warning was central to my lawn's welfare. He saw things I could not see. He knew something I did not know. He knew that mole crickets live underground and are active only at night, making my daytime examinations ineffective. He knew that mole crickets did not eat the leaves of the grass but rather found nourishment in the roots. He knew that these little inch-long creatures could eat a lot of roots before I would ever see the effect above the ground. I paid a dear price for my smug independence.

"We live in a wonderful day. The blessings of our generation are lush and beautifully green. With faith in the Savior and obedience to the commandments, our lives can be full of satisfaction and joy.

"Our challenges in choosing to serve the Lord are more subtle than those of former days. There are spiritual mole crickets that burrow under our protective walls and invade our delicate roots. Many of these insects of wickedness appear small, at times almost invisible. Yet if we do not combat them, they will do damage and attempt to destroy that which is most precious to us. . . .

"With the influences of evil that surround us, can we even imagine going out in the morning without kneeling and humbly asking together for the Lord's protection? Or closing the day without kneeling together and acknowledging our accountability before Him and our thankfulness for His blessings? ("Debugging Your Life," *New Era*, Aug. 2000, 4).

Elder and Sister Andersen took their young family to France as he served as mission president of the France Bordeaux Mission. He also served as the stake president in Tampa Florida. Elder Andersen speaks French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Elder Andersen and his wife, Kathy, are the parents of four children and 12 grandchildren. **NE**