

WE CHOSE TO SERVE

By Irmgard Meissner

My husband was battling cancer, but we accepted without hesitation the call to serve in the Frankfurt Germany Temple.

On December 12, 1994, we received a telephone call from Salt Lake City. A friendly voice told us that President Thomas S. Monson, then serving as the Second Counselor in the First Presidency, wanted to speak with us.

“The president of the Frankfurt Germany Temple would like to call you to be his counselor and your wife to be an assistant to the temple matron,” President Monson told my husband, Gerhard. Then President Monson expressed concerns about my husband’s health.

Gerhard had battled chronic lymphocytic leukemia for 11 years. Despite that challenge, the Lord had called us, and we said yes without hesitation.

When I resigned from my job in preparation to serve, my boss asked, “Can I keep you if I raise your wages?”

“No, we have to go,” I answered, telling him that we had promised the Lord we would serve a mission. “We had intended to serve in a couple of years, but I don’t know if my husband will still be alive then.”

When Gerhard received a routine examination less than two weeks later, the doctor told him, “Stay here; you have a high risk of dying.”

His condition had worsened. We were shattered and could not imagine how we could fulfill our calling, but we were full of faith, hope, and assurance. We put everything in the Lord’s hands. If He had an assignment for us, He would make a way for us to fulfill it.

On January 2, 1995, we left on our mission. Suddenly I realized what I was giving up: my mother, my children, my grandchildren, my career, my house, and my garden. But the next day we took our place in the Frankfurt Temple, where a dark night became a bright new day for us. All of the stress of everyday life left us.

In this holy place we found love, light, hope, joy, trust, warmth, security, protection, and the peace that radiates from our Savior. As we served, we met wonderful people from many countries. Though they spoke different languages, the language of love bound us. Our service in the temple made us very happy.

The spirit of the temple and the strength of God carried my dear husband for 26 months. One day not long after we had been released from our temple calling, Gerhard went to the hospital for his standard treatment. This time doctors kept him there. A few months later he returned to his heavenly home.

When I look back, I see those years of temple service as a gift from heaven—serving side by side with my husband in the house of our loving Father as we fulfilled our promise to serve a mission together. I am grateful with all my heart for that experience. ■

The author lives in Bavaria, Germany.



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