

Moving Mormon by Lillyanne Pham

While many Bull Dogs will be reporting to their summer jobs, senior Tyson Clark will soon undertake a mission for the big boss above

Young, reserved and disciplined, senior Tyson Clark believes he can reach a profound relationship with himself and God. This lifestyle awakened Clark to dedicate himself to a two-year mission organized by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

“You wake up at a certain time. You go to sleep a certain time. You are working through the day,” Clark said. “I will be out there finding myself; away from distractions. I don’t have to worry about college or money. I’ll just be out there serving the Lord.”

Born and raised as a Latter-Day Saint, Clark never observed missionary work as a stranger. His ambition to voluntarily abandon a self-indulgent life stays consistent.

“I’ve always known it was something I’d do in a couple years. Then eventually there were fewer and fewer years until my time. As a kid, they seemed a lot scarier than now that I understand how everything works.”

Absorbing knowledge about his religion helped him find closure towards the missions’ outcomes: “To come more to grips with my religion, understand it more and see it more actively in my life,” Clark said.

He gives credit to years of exposure.

“Since I was raised in church, I’ve always really known about it (missions). It would be a hard concept for people who join the church later. I’ve always admired people I’ve heard stories about, who are eighteen and serve a mission a year later. I couldn’t fathom doing that.”

Decision making occurs within the Quorum of the Twelve, a top-ranked governing body for the Church. The process will call missionaries to serve a specific region. Hence, a letter was waiting for Clark stating that his calling was in Carlsbad, California.

“I read it line by line while my family was there with me. My mom and dad called (and facetedimed) my grandma, uncles, and everybody.”

His mission begins with a six-week stay in Mexico’s Missionary Training Center, a place educating necessities for a successful journey. Through immersion, Clark’s Spanish fluency is expected to increase, thus giving him a broader vocabulary for him to preach the Gospels.

“I wasn’t too keen on learning a new language, especially Spanish. I took Spanish twice because I’m terrible at it. But, everyone who was chosen to learn another language, it’s a miracle work.”

According to Clark, two years are small dosages of life. He is eager to plan for the future.

“Get back on the airplane and go home. I’ll have to get a job and save a lot of money for college because I’m going to be spending a lot of money on this mission trip. I deferred to three colleges (Brigham Young University, Rose-Hulman, and University of Utah).”

Clark's optimism and faith guides him in decision making.

"My Uncle Tommy told me when I go on my mission I should only come back with one convert and that's me."

He will soon say farewell, while already on a plane to extraordinary encounters.

"Hopefully, I'll come back as a better person," He said while smirking, "If I don't, I don't know what's wrong with me."