

Personal Essay

‘What did Satan do to her?’

‘You’re causing problems for others by doing this.’

‘If she were my child I wouldn’t have let her come home.’

These comments from 6-7 years ago still sting just like they did back then.

Despite my mission for the LDS church having come and gone, the pain and the trauma I went through still affects me to this day, although it is minor now.

I remember growing up in the church being so excited to serve a mission. I always knew I was going to be a missionary and sung those missionary songs in primary school loudly and proudly. There were so many things I looked forward to; meeting new people, knocking on doors, teaching the gospel, and traveling to a new place. Little did I know that all those expectations were but a fantasy in the perfect world I had created in my mind.

After spending two terms at BYU-Idaho at the beginning of 2018, I came home and started the papers I needed to give to my Stake President. Then, after much persistence and begging him to send my papers to Utah, he sent them and then a couple weeks later I received my mission call. I remember praying that I would be sent to an Asian country as my heart has always centered around Asian Culture and my major at the time was International Studies (as BYU-Idaho didn’t have an Asian Studies). As I opened the envelope and shakily pulled out my papers, I read out the words all pre-missionaries enthusiastically anticipate: “You are hereby called to serve as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are assigned to labor in the Houston, Texas mission.”

Absolute disappointment.

Absolute devastation.

Not only was I called to the ‘arm-pit’ of America, but I was also being called to a Spanish-speaking mission. This couldn’t be any further from what I prayed for and what I felt in my heart was my calling.

BUT! I went anyways because in my mind, my born and raised Mormon girl, prophet-trusting mind, there was a reason I was being sent where I was, and I’d see it through as far as I could go.

And so, a week before Christmas day in 2018, I left for Provo, Utah with a determined mind and a resilient soul.