

1 year experience in STF

A Testimony from Nicole Thurner

This notes are taken from Sunday service in the UC Munich

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Good morning everyone!

As you know I was for one Year on STF and I already can say this was a really important year for me. Sometimes not that easy, but it moved me a lot of times and especially as second generation, I could realise many many things for my future life. In the end, I want to show you some pictures of this year as well ...



The beginning of STF was for me not easy at all. My initial plan was, to fly to America in order to participate GPA, and the LLM program from In Jin Nim.

Strangely there were so many complications with my Visa, Passport, etc, and it wasn't easy to accept the fact that my dream to go to America bursted. I was really frustrated and depressed..

Bit by bit I came to the thought to consider Europe STF as another option for me and finally I ended up to the so called 'STF - trip ". Also through some members from my community, discussions with my parents and some other reasons as well, I decided to go to STF Europe. Later on I really understood and realised that God was guiding me to STF.

STF started more difficult for me than I thought, but when we learn to accept difficulties and uncomfortable situations and to trust fully in God, something wonderful can happen to us. God will

come and will embrace us, he will give us blessings. But the main point is, not to hesitate and first of all to accept these difficulties and then to go on. Don't complain or curse someone for that misfortune, but go on with absolute trust. That was the beginning of my STF time.

I had the desire to change something in my life, because at home I wasn't that filial daughter, I tried but failed many times, and I wasn't really "churchy-like". I even had the desire to understand our church better, I didn't want to follow blindly my parents. I wanted to understand my parents, why they were so "crazy" about god and true parents and were "crazy" enough to give up everything for them.

Fundraising is a main part on STF and not that easy. You meet a lot of people and you have amazing experiences through this, externally and internally as well.

When we consider fundraising only externally, it seemed to be only a job, just collecting money, or a culture trip or a travel around the world etc. But the actual internal part of fundraising helped me so much to understand God and to make him substantial to me. I went through a lot of different situations.

At the beginning it wasn't that easy for me to go around without having make up, without feeling beautiful, and to ring on the doors like a beggar. I couldn't wear any beautiful, "trendy" clothes, because they could be damaged easily, sometimes we couldn't take a proper shower, and so on. I was just myself, without any "mask".

Therefore on one day I felt really ugly, I saw people, which were dressed up very beautiful. I compared myself a lot with them and wished to be at home. I was so unmotivated and cained out for some time, but decided to continue. I came to one house, no one opened the door, but I looked around and finally on the doormat in front of the house there was written: "You look beautiful today" with a heart – symbol in the end.

Through this I could feel god's love, support and encouragement for me, that he didn't forget me.

I had many similar this kind of small experiences, more than 50 I guess, which became summarized ONE big experience and all this helped , to make God

real and substantial to me. More and more I could feel God's guidance during fundraising more and more.

Sometimes we went to industry areas. I was always really serious about fundraising and tried, to see everything from true parents and God's point of view, which were always very serious about mission work. During this time I remembered one quote from true father, who said once : " the only difference between you members and me is, that I am serious in everything what I do, in order to achieve my goal"

Therefore I went with internal confidence to industry areas, even though it was sometimes really scary, but I risked everything, with trust in God and the feeling to be invincible with God together. Through this attitude I could sometimes earn 100 CHF or more at one person

I fundraised. Only with true love, with God's love is this possible. In this time I realised more and more how important it was, to listen to my heart what it says to me, because God is working through our heart (mind) /shim jeong. Always when I had this kind of feeling,

I should speak to this or that person, most of the time I could restore the money from that person. God prepares people for us, FR areas, etc. Once my team leader said to me, FR is like a classroom, which God prepares for us in order to fulfil your setted daily goal.

Sometimes, we hear how difficult STF is, it's difficult to attend, it's lost/wasted time, etc , but when you see and understand that our life in general is not that easy either, then we can really say that these crazy difficult experiences during fundraising are so precious and important in our life. The best training for home, for our future because afterwards it will help you to deal with your real reality.

You will remember experiences which you could overcome with this attitude.

Last year, during the 2nd condition, we had a big challenge in order to go to Korea for Foundation Day in February 2013. Because STF didn't had enough money for everyone.

Therefore the goal was, only the first 5 people which can manage to achieve 1000 CHF in this condition, will have the opportunity to fly.

First of all, it destroyed me internally, I don't like this kind of challenges at all, and when I compared with GPA, I thought they could go anyway, without such challenge. I was really frustrated. Nevertheless, I am not that type of person who gives up right at the beginning, therefore I invested everything. I put my whole effort into this challenge in order to achieve these 1000 CHF. I was running the whole time,

several times I slipped and almost fell on the ground. It was really icy outside, but my heart was with God and the spiritual world.

Later on, I meet and spoke to a man and behind him, there was a car with a sticker.

On that sticker was written down: "slow down, take it easy" this moved me a lot and I knew that God was with me again. He wanted, that I should take care of myself.

When you participate this kind of program and you invest everything you have, you will be able to see many messages from God through different things, because you are so focused on God and true parents. But you have to have an open mind for his signs. After a while, you become more sensitive in this matter and everything becomes so real!

This was a short overview of my fundraising time; sometimes really difficult, but in the end very meaningful with a lot of internal experiences !

After Christmas, the witnessing periode started.

Witnessing was a very precious time for me, because during this time I could understand the most about our whole church – movement and about God and true parents.

As I said, it was my internal wish, to change many things in my life. In order to do this, was convinced, that God will guide me and send me to the right country. Finally my mission country was Romania. And honestly, this wasn't a coincidence at all. I always felt that everything what ever happened had a special reason. Maybe, at the beginning we don't understand, but later on we realise how everything fit perfectly together.

I can say, the circumstances in Romania were perfect for me. Korean family, Korean food, which I missed a lot, I met David H. whom I met 2009 in CP, from the national leader, her spiritual son lives in Munich, in my community, the Romanian community needed someone to play piano etc. so many small things fit perfectly together.

Everything has a higher meaning, a reason as I said before, especially when we really believe in God we shouldn't have any doubt in this case! We should believe that God and spiritual world is working all the time.

I loved HDH in Romania, even though I was sometimes really tired, on the other hand, I really enjoyed it. Some days were so interesting because Mr. Jeong (Romanian NL) gave me always the perfect answer, when I was struggling to find the right way to solve a problem. I never asked him directly but during HDH, when I had a sincere question, immediately, spiritual world was working

through Mr. Jeong.

I got my answer. But my heart and question had to be really honest, serious and sincere!

Through witnessing I could additionally deepen my understanding about the principles.

In a "normal" WS, I usually never really understood it deeply and didn't reflect about it afterwards, but as soon as I studied them by myself I could grasp everything so clear and understood it with my heart. I was allowed to give some lectures in front of guests, which deepened my understanding even more, because only through teaching it by yourself you will understand it properly. Therefore through my own lectures I could gain the most. Especially the fall of man, was a really deep experience for me, to feel god's desperate sad heart. I could also understand, why my parents were so desperate and captivated about the principles. I realised that they are the real truth, so logic and complex. This was a really valuable experience.

Since the beginning of the witnessing conditions I was in Romania. In total 6 month, more or less. In this time I could even find a very good guest. With a lot of patient and without expectations I was sometimes confronted with many many questions. When I first met him, I was a bit sceptical about his answers and opinion about life. Nevertheless I still wanted to invest everything in that person, because I always felt that EVERYONE is a child from god and everyone has to get a chance to get to know the "new truth".

During witnessing it is very important, not to have any prejudice or to have to many expectations, or to give up easily, on people which seem hopeless to understand god, because most of the time this person needs God the most and will be so grateful to you in the end. Even though you cannot stay all the time with this person together, you need to trust in God and spirit world, that they are working and helping, if you lay the right conditions. I could experience what it means to have a parental heart, a heart which is always worried about his child, if he/she will understand or not, always tries to be up to date, how this person might feel.

Witnessing is the best way to experience Gods heart, his joyful, broken and hopeful heart.

A crucial point during this time for me was the **holy wine ceremony for Foundation Day** in Romania. If I had not known the real meaning of this ceremony, I think I wouldn't had valued this time so much.

The NL in Romania explained everything so clear, the deep meaning of the Holy Wine, the sacrifices and conditions which true parents laid for us, the sacrifices of our own parents and the most important part, through this I could make a new start

in my life. I was really moved by that. Therefore we prepared ourselves very well for this day.

Through this kind of STF program we can really grasp the urgency of our UC organisation, basically of the truth, which true father discovered with a lot of sacrifices and conditions.

We are not just any random organisation, but it is our own personal responsibility to live according to this truth.

It is not about the "association/club" or the "church", but it is about every individual human being here on earth, doesn't matter if he or she is in the "association/club" or not, because the truth is universal and is valid for everybody.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN LIFE!

This blessing (holy wine) which we received from true parents, gave me the opportunity to "wash away my sins", my past, it gave me the possibility to start from ZERO. I became again a white blanket. I got a chance to order my life with new requirements. I was really moved and emotional in the moment when I drank the holy wine.

Another very decisive moment in Romania was the fact, I cut myself very deeply into my right hand. The national leader told me, he had a similar experience like mine and explained me which meaning it could have.

Immediately after this happened, I knew that this didn't happen randomly, it was "a sign / punishment" from God. I really felt that. Because before this happened, I struggled about some points, for example, I thought about my motivation towards the people around me and some other things which distracted me in this time.

It happened as a sign from God that I should be careful that I don't follow the wrong way or that I gonna lose my focus.

I felt so much pain, not because of the wound but because of this "punishment" from God, I felt so unworthy and cried a lot afterwards.

On the following day, Mr. Jeong said randomly to me, that God really really loves me and that he wanted to give me a hint through this accident.

Later on, I recognised that my scar had a much deeper meaning than I thought. Not only a spiritual meaning, but also the external form itself shows a never forgettable hint.

In that scar I could see the four-position-foundation and the symbol Yang and Yin. Yin and Yang always represented God for me, because of his dual characteristics and the harmony between them. I mean I never thought about to see a special symbol or something in that scar, but from one second to the other, I realised it and it became so clear to me.

I was so excited that I shared my realisation with my team leader and he said to me “you got a heavenly scar”, and yes it is definitely a gift from god, that I can always remember what I have to accomplish in my life (... and when I struggle with my faith, I “just” need to look at it).

What did I realise through STF ..?

The main point from this kind of program is what you can gain from it in the end. For me the most important gain was that I could make God substantial to me. I mean I always knew that there is a God and that True Parents are the messiah, no doubt, but I never felt it in my heart. I never could see God as something real. But through this STF year I could build a relationship to him and could develop in this matter more and more. First with the many small experiences during fundraising, which already let me believe that there are no coincidences! and then through witnessing. When I needed desperately an answer, I always got them through different ways. Everything is spiritual connected. This was one of my biggest realisations. Nothing happens without a reason. Everything is connected, especially we as human beings we are always guided and influenced by spiritual world. God communicates and gives us love through music (lyrics, melody), symbols, signs, posters, books, other people and personally for me, especially through the nature.

Again, only if we are serious about an answer if we have the right heart, a sincere question then spiritual world will take us serious, god will take us serious.

Moreover through witnessing I could understand deeply the incredible value of the second generation, and the sacrifices of the first generation, of my parents.

I always asked myself and complained about why I had to live in “bad” conditions, why I couldn’t have all the things like my friends, without working by myself, why I gonna have my driving licence with 22, 23 or 24, why I still need to use my old mobile phone, which I already have for 5 years; etc.

I dealt a lot with this. Two years before I came to STF, I struggled so much, also towards our church. I was so dissatisfied, because I saw everything just from my own point of view, from my own situation. I could never accept it from my parents point of view or I tried to understand them but I guess I failed in this matter. But STF helped me to understand the big sacrifice of my parents and especially the sacrifices from true parents, which I even saw and felt in Korea. Thank's to STF.

Furthermore, I learned to **understand the real meaning of the second generation** and the **value of our purity**, to wait for the future spouse. We need to fulfill the true lineage, the true life and true love.

Because of the opportunity to give a lecture about the “human fall”, I could deepen my understanding about purity even more. The most important is that we as second generation want to keep purity by ourselves, with our own motivation.

Another point is that I understood why I need to become a “good” person. I mean, most of the time it is much easier, to let out your anger and frustration to other people, especially to your close ones, parents, siblings, close friends, etc. But I noticed it not only gives me a restless feeling, it also destroys the harmony between this person and me or in the family and god cannot stay with us anymore.

“Staying with us” .. what does that mean, god can’t be with us if we argue?!

It is simple, God cannot relate, cannot connect to us any more if we feel hate or anger. All these are characteristics from our first fallen ancestors, and therefore God couldn’t reach, couldn’t speak or connect to them anymore.

What I want to say with that is, when we do good actions, when we help others or when we try to understand that “really strange” person, when we are able to transform hate to love etc. then we can come closer to God and we will resemble him more and more, which is the actual goal of every human being (at least it should be!).

We should become “little Gods”. We need to overcome our personal fallen nature.

If you remember, as I mentioned before, we had the challenge to fundraise 1000 CHF, or more, in order to go to Korea for foundation Day.

Through the invitation of our true mother, everyone from STF got the chance to fly to Korea for foundation day. Through this unexpected decision I could see and feel, how much god actually cared about us, therefore even though initially you might doubt, “can I achieve my goal” or “I will probably lose one year” or “I will waste my precious time on STF” or whatever, you should just go for it, go on with confidence and trust and try to invest 100% of your 5% responsibility, because if you sincerely, willingly help God, he will give you many blessings back. In many different ways, but he will give his blessings to you. After some time you will recognise and can value it.

Furthermore, I could deepen my understanding towards true parents and the reality of the spiritual world! The satanic world and also the good side.

An interesting experience towards the end of STF, during the 5 days of pioneering:

In the last night we slept once again at the train-station. But this night was really tiring, because during the night (around 3am) two people argued next to me.

I was so angry and annoyed about that, that I stood up and looked very angry to both of them, at least they spoke a bit more quiet but it still disturbed me.

In my anger, a thought came into my mind, what would true father do in such situation?

He would surely try to solve their conflict, try to help them to get along again with each other.

Immediately, when I had this one sincere and understanding thought in my heart, they became quiet, one of them disappeared and the other person got kicked out by the security, later on.

From one second to the other the situation completely changed, and only because I tried to understand and see these people from true fathers and gods point of view, even though I

was really angry before.

Another confirmation, how much a sincere good heart cause that spiritual world can work in order to help you, we lay conditions with our deeds!

Afterwards (finally), I could get some sleep and dreamt about the true family, which had some ceremonies and true father dancing in his beautiful korean dress (blue red and golden). I was so happy and laughed in my dream, but in the next moment tears came out of my eyes because I realised how much I missed true father.

I have to repeat myself again and again that I learned to understand so many things during this STF year!

What our precious true parents had given up and had sacrificed. Everything, only for us, in order to have the great chance to experience God and that we can stand on that incredible foundation to be the **2nd generation of a new era in history!**

Life in general is not easy, especially as second generation, but we need to make the best out of our circumstances. Doesn't matter in which situation we are living, because God and true parents will love us any way. Doesn't matter what we did wrong, what we didn't do, what we are doing, because they love us for **who we are!**

I understood that very deep inside of me and it became so real to me. Although it was just for one year, but it was full of realisations and gods guidance, until the very last moment. This year was like an incredible adventure with God, it opened my eyes!

Honestly I really don't understand, why so many dislike STF, also people which attended STF before. Through this, many prejudice are going around which are not correct and not ok. The truth is, STF gives you so much and you can experience the true heart of God, but only if you are willingly open up your heart to him.

I really want to inform all parents and encourage the 2nd generation as well, to consider to do at least one year of STF. It develops your relationship to your parents and you will understand your parents better and value them more than before. The most important fact is, it gives you the opportunity, to discover God and to work on your relationship to him and true parents! It sounds crazy, but it is real!

This is what makes us to true human beings, our relationship to God, what he desires the most. We need to recognize him as a real being and include him in our daily life, even though it might be difficult sometimes. You will never achieve that goal, when you never had a personal experience with God before.

Especially for us, 2nd generation, who have it three times harder. We have to grow up in this messed up world and should think about purity?!

This world shows us only the opposite and we are influenced all the time.

We need an inner stability, only listening to lectures during workshops doesn't help for a long term, but we need to substantialize it, we need to feel the necessity, urgency, we need to feel it with our utmost heart.

You can follow something because you are forced to it or you can willingly try to understand the value and follow that path by yourself. What is better? I think you know what has a long term effect.

I am so grateful for this year, that god guided me.

Even though I had difficulties, I struggled a lot and sometimes I got desperate,

I really have to say, STF it is like an education, for one, two or three years, a spiritual education. It helps you, to develop the two other aspects of god in yourself, your emotions and your will. This is what Laurentiu (my guest from Romania) told me, what he realised by himself.

In this sense, STF is like a training camp, to realise the first blessing, given by God.

Open your eyes and you will see a substantial difference at the second generation who did STF, because they are more aware of the responsibilities in our church.

Therefore these people need your help and support, that they don't feel or stand alone.

And I want to speak especially to the 2nd generation, to use this opportunity, when you are young you have the time for it! Later on, you will be occupied with other responsibilities.

I don't want to say, that this is the only way to find and to build a relationship to God, but more, that this helps you to experience and to find god much

faster and more effective and in your own personal way. It is a big help, when you had f.i. difficulties, to understand everything in our church or you could never value some things, which actually should be valued a lot.

In this year I could build a vertical relationship to God, which also helped me to understand the **true value of a prayer**.

It is not just a strange monolog, but someone is really listening to you. Of course you really have to mean, what you say, it should be the truth.

You need to say what you need or at least you should to think about it, in order to receive help from above. Exactly the same what Jesus said: "knock on the door and someone will open". If you express your sorrows, thoughts or your desires, someone will help you somehow.

Since the beginning of STF I was concerned about the fact what I should do after STF, because of this statement: that all STF members are living in a "bubble" and when this bubble pops up, when we go home, some of us will fall into a "whole" or become even worse than before. I was really afraid and wanted to avoid this, therefore I prayed several times to God.

God was working through my friend, she planned everything for me, what I could do after STF, that she will support me in many ways etc. I can say she build a net for me, in case I fall into this, so called „whole“.

But only when we seriously think about our problems or anything and pray with a sincere heart and show God how desperate and serious we are, he will help us. "Sincerity moves heaven", yes, that is really true.

You can see, with trust in God, he can help us and

won't let us alone.

Even though people might speak negative of this "bubble" but basically it is a beautiful "bubble" which gives us the opportunity to experience God and to realise how important it is to have a relationship to our heavenly father & mother. Therefore we shouldn't feel negative towards that "bubble".

Finally, I decided to do a second year of STF. I discussed with my parents, and additionally because of Dale's (director of STF 2012/13) remarks to us towards the end of our first year:

" We cannot sit in a chair and say We Love God!.. "

Of course, I could do something in my community, try to build up something, but I felt, it is more important to give the 2nd generation the same possibility to experience God like me during this year and help them, as much as I can.

I am sure the second year won't be easy, but I don't want to give up right at the beginning. At least I want to try it. The way home is always possible.

But I gained so much last year, it changed my life completely. **I found God!**

My final conclusion and for our 2nd generation:

STF completely opened my eyes about the truth and it helped me to understand our parents and the sacrificial way of our first generation! And a very important thing, it is an important preparation for our future, for **my future spouse**.

On STF we always said: „ STF prepares us and gives us the right tools for our journey afterwards, because the real journey of life starts after STF."

Thank you very much.