



Global Discipleship Initiative

June 2022 Newsletter

Relationships Matter: Making Disciples a Few at a Time

PICTURE OF A SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLE MAKING JOURNEY



In a relational environment, with an intentional leader, following a reproducible process, a successful journey results in reproducing disciples of Jesus Christ!

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GDI Mission to the Balkans

What a privilege for Lily and me to share the *micro group* strategy of disciple making in Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. We hope that this gives you a taste of this opportunity that we enjoyed April 18-May 5th.

Belgrade, Serbia (April 19-25)



We were met at the Belgrade airport and were constant companions of Samuil Petrovski, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) Director for Serbia. IFES is the international ministry of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. If

there is a scale from introvert to extrovert, Samuil would be an “off-the-charts” extrovert. We were convinced that he knew every Christian in Serbia, whether an



evangelical church leader or government official. Getting somewhere on time was always delayed because Samui had to



have one more conversation! Serbia is a highly relational culture where there is a pre-gathering socializing and a post-gathering socializing. So, a

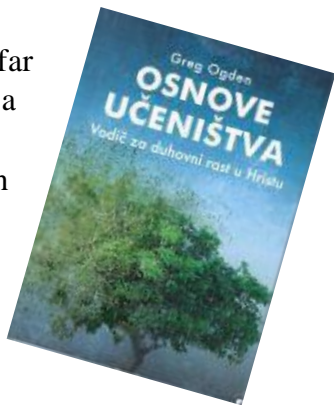


presentation of a relational approach to disciple-making was met with, “Of course! That is who we are!”



We traversed the country making 10 presentations on disciple-making as far south as Nis and as far north as the Hungarian border in Subotica with an

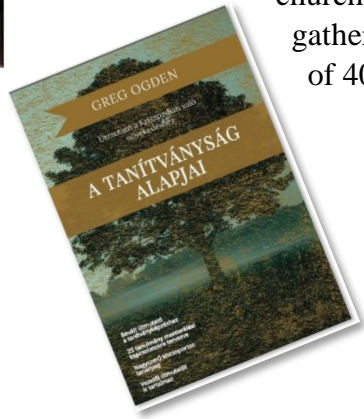
intermediate stop in Novi Sad. Everywhere we went we blessed the people with a free, “hot-off-the-press” publication of the Serbian translation of *Discipleship Essentials*.





and Hungarian-speaking students in Subotica, who now have *Discipleship Essentials* in Hungarian.

Other sessions included the Seventh Day Adventist Seminary students, a Baptist church gathering of 40,





largest evangelical



Then on Orthodox Easter Sunday morning, I



preached at the International Christian Fellowship, meeting in a hotel. In the evening I was privileged to address the church in Novi Sad.



Bar, Montenegro (April 25-29)

On Monday, April 25 we flew from Belgrade to Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. We were greeted by Jelena, an IFES worker and were accompanied by Daniel, the IFES director in Montenegro. We went immediately to a local church gathering of 4 pastors and 7-8 church leaders to share about DE and *micro groups*. As usual they were very eager. We were captivated by a very recent convert whose joyful grin and eager spirit radiated the Jesus that came to occupy her life. She asked the best questions.





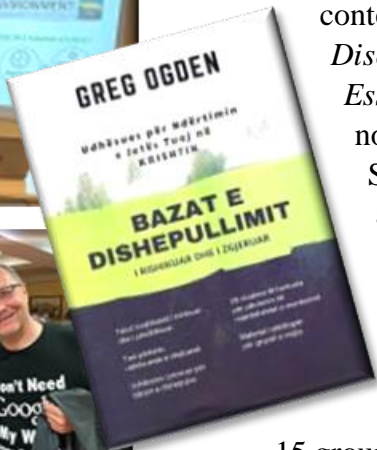
Then it was on to Bar (a seaside resort on the Adriatic Sea) for the IFES Balkan Consultation which was the centerpiece of our time. IFES representatives came from Slovenia,

Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, and Greece. What an opportunity! I received 4, one-hour sessions to clearly focus our attention: Grow multiplying disciples by combining the environment of a





micro group with the content of *Discipleship Essentials*, now in both Serbian and Albanian.



We had engaging conversations with 15 groups of 4, applying the concepts to our settings. The closing exhortation by

Samuil implored each person to pray about who to invite into their first groups and get started in these 9 new settings. (I can't forget that we celebrated Lily's birthday on the 26th right at the start of the conference.)

Tirana, Albania (April 29-May 5)



Zef Nikolla, the IFES Director for Albania, was our host and is now becoming a fast friend. Never a dull moment! Upon arrival in Tirana, we were invited to make a presentation to the Disciples of Jesus



Church, founded by Von Golder, a missionary for over 30 years in Albania. He now lives in Bellingham, Washington in the USA,

where Ralph Rittenhouse introduced him to *micro group* disciple-making. Mentioning Von's name at this gathering meant that I had an instant hearing.



We thankfully had a couple of down days, though Lily was not feeling well. This was prelude to the Albania Leadership Forum, meeting at the Premium Hotel

outside of Tirana on the Adriatic. About 200 people were in attendance. ALF patterns itself after the



European Leadership Forum (ELF) held in Wisla, Poland annually. ELF was the location where we met Zef in 2019. My role was to lead the Discipleship (Dishepullimi) Track, one of 10 options. I had 2, two-hour sessions with 13 faithful, eager participants, who seemed to have been blessed by what they could take back to their various ministries. I barely survived the last two-hour session, hacking and sneezing my way through.

This was just a sign of what I have been fighting ever since our return. (This too will pass.)

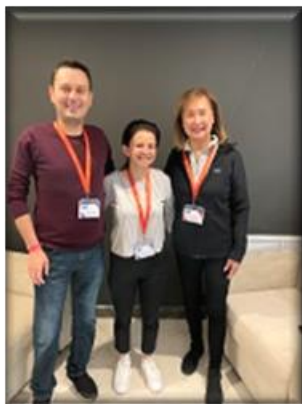
These health challenges do not at all diminish the fruit we expect to see from this multiple part, broad exposure. I am expecting that we will start at least two training groups of key leaders in various countries to further encourage the careful, relational, Jesus-style disciple making that is the heart beat of our ministry.

A Compelling Testimony

When Albania was a Communist country, written into their constitution was “There is no God.” Today the majority religions are as follows:

- Islam (60%)
- Catholic (10%)
- Orthodox (7%)
- Undeclared (14%)
- Other (5%)
- Atheists (2.5%)
- Christian evangelical (0.14%)

Clearly, evangelical Christians are in the minority. Yet this testimony shows that the Spirit is still at work to call people to Jesus.



This pastor and his wife, Endri and Dallandyshe (“Dyshe”) Tabaku, both came to faith in Jesus because of miracles they personally experienced. Endri had a broken leg that was healed without surgery, but it is Dallandyshe’s testimony that is compelling (Lily Ogden with Dyshe in the middle).

Dyshe came from a large Muslim family. She was the oldest girl with one older brother. As a teenager she had a strong desire to learn English.

A woman church planter from South Korea, living in Albania, invited her to church so that she could practice speaking English. A Muslim woman has to have permission from the male members of the family to go to places outside the home, so she told her father and

brother that she was going to church to better her English. While learning English was what motivated her to attend church, soon she also enjoyed the worship music and was hungry for God's word, and she was beginning to feel uneasy about having to lie to her father and brother.

One day on her way to church she was startled by a bright light. It was a sunny day, but this light was different from the sunlight, and she stopped in her tracks. She then heard a voice clearly say to her,

"Tell the truth, and remember that I am with you always."

When she arrived at church, she told the missionary what happened. The missionary opened the Bible to Matthew 28:20 to show her that what she heard were Jesus' words to his disciples. The missionary suggested that they both pray for one week for the Lord to soften the heart of her father, then she would tell him the truth about what she was doing in church.

After the week of prayer, she approached her father, explaining to him that the church has become a place where she is learning not just English, but also about Jesus. To her surprise her father said,

"I have heard about this Jesus, so I guess it's OK for you to continue."

Dyshe continued to grow in her faith and eventually attended Bible College in Tirana where she met her husband. They now minister together in a church in Tirana.

What a world in which we live! Even though we were in the shadow of the horrors of what is happening in Ukraine while we were in the Balkans, we could see the press of the Kingdom of God through his faithful, courageous, energetic people carrying the Gospel against considerable odds. We are grateful to be a small part of encouraging God's subterfuge in the former Eastern bloc countries. Keep on keeping on!

YouTube Videos: Disciples Making Disciples



The image displays a grid of eight YouTube video thumbnails, each with a title and a 'VIEW FULL PLAYLIST' link. The thumbnails are arranged in two rows of four. The first row includes: 'Discipleship Essentials Lesson Introductions' (25 videos), 'Preparation to Start Your Micro Group' (4 videos), and 'Making Disciples? More Christians or Better Disciples?' (5 videos). The second row includes: 'Why Micro Groups?' (7 videos), 'Essential Guide Chapter Intro Videos' (10 videos), 'Steps-by-Step Disciple Making' (5 videos), and 'Stories of Transformation Through Micro Groups' (5 videos). To the right of the first row, there is a legend for the GDI acronym.

G - Generational
R - Relational
I - Intentional
T - Transformational
S - Spirit-Led

[GDI – Greg Ogden YouTube Videos](#)

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