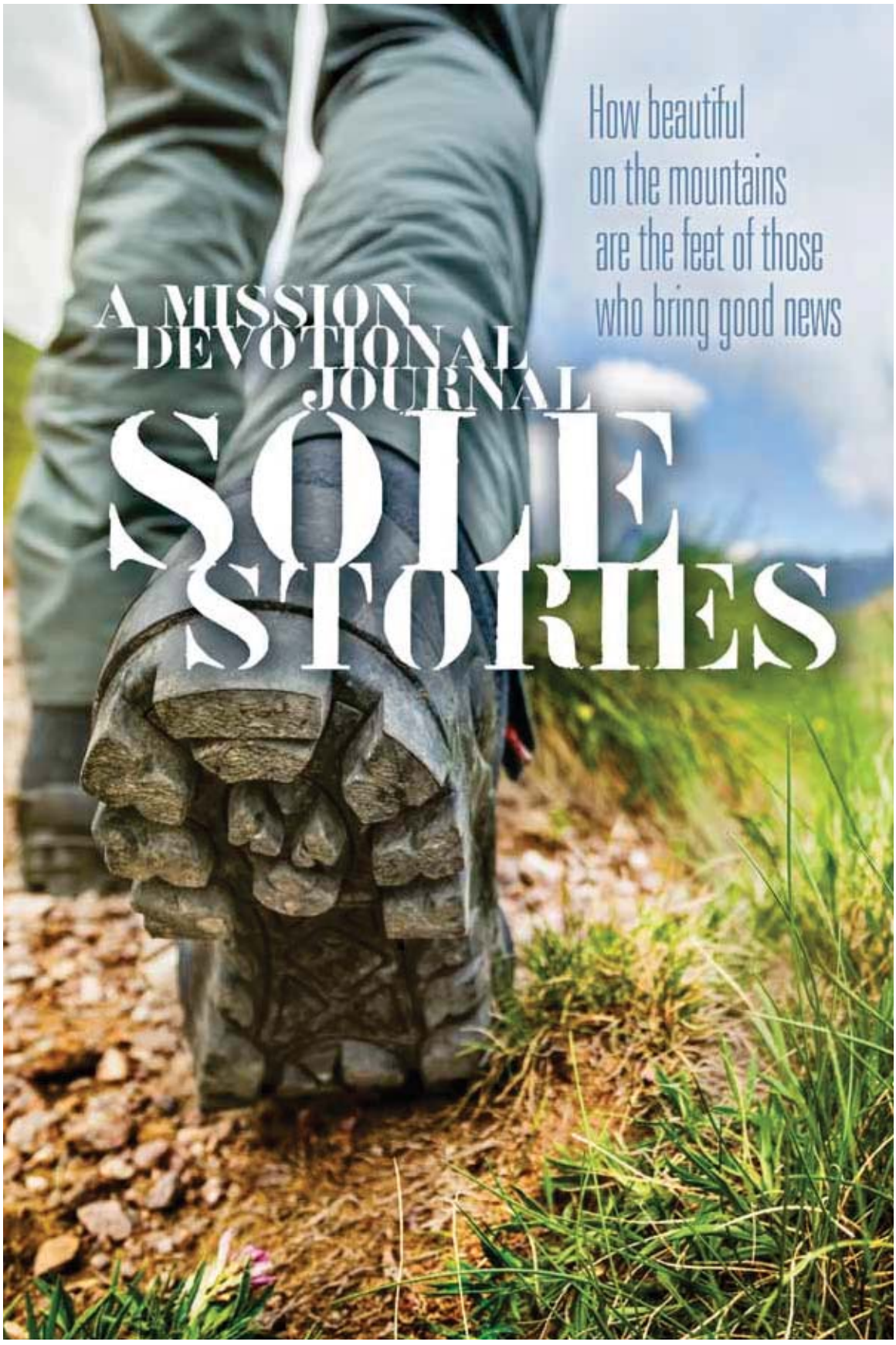
How beautiful
on the mountains
are the feet of those
who bring good news
A MISSION
DEVOTIONAL
JOURNAL
SOLE
STORIES

FROM THE AUTHORS

Three things have inspired the writing of this mission devotional journal.

First, our love for hiking. Whether it's a walk in the neighborhood or a long and uphill trek through the mountains, the beauty of God's creation is everywhere.

The second inspiration comes from God's word, Isaiah 52:7:

> *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

And the third inspiration is from Stephanie Boyd who offered the theme for this devotional journal with these words:

> *Shoes tell a lot about a person and the soles on a person's shoe, if they could talk, would tell story after story about where they have been, what they have seen and experienced. Exploring our soles' stories of service, conversations/relationships, challenges and successes can help us understand why God takes our soles and our souls on these journeys. It helps us to move from sole stories to soul stories. Since we are Learners, Servants and Storytellers, let's remember our past sole stories, make new sole stories and share our sole stories on the mission field and beyond.*

So during your mission trek we pray that God will…

- Guide your steps,
- Strengthen your daily walk,
- Renew your soul and spirit,
- Help you to be faithful to the path God has given you,
- Clarify your purpose in life and ministry,
- Heal any blisters that may develop,
- And inspire your soles and your souls to walk the talk.

Happy Mission Trekking!

Frank and Brett, co-authors

USING THIS JOURNAL

14 PRE-TREK PAGES

During the 7 days before your trip, prepare for your mission trek by taking 10-15 minutes daily to complete the pre-trek pages starting on page 8. This daily time of devotion will help to prepare your heart to let God open you to the possibilities of stepping up to the challenges that lie ahead. A "Sole-to-Sole Stories Page" is available to you each day as a place for you to record new insights, scripture verses, songs, stories, experiences, sketches, commitments, and whatever the Lord leads you to put there.

20 MISSION TREK PAGES

While you're on the mission field, be prepared to step out of your comfort zone as you love and serve your new brothers and sisters. Use this devotional journal to pray and reflect on your experiences each day. For each of the on-site days, you'll find a page with suggestions to guide your prayer and scripture reading and a second "Sole-to-Soul Stories Page" to help you reflect on the experiences God is giving to you. It's a good idea to bring your journal to group gatherings, so you'll have a place to write down things you won't want to forget.

14 POST-TREK PAGES

It's not always easy to return home. The back home pages will guide you through re-entry into the "real world," the world of your church, family and community. Know that God will be with you in the new mission opportunities you'll discover when you return home. Keep in mind, also, that your mission trek doesn't end when the trip ends. Know that God will continue to give you new opportunities to step up to the challenge of serving your church, family, and community.

Before, during and after the trip remember the affirmation of Isaiah 52:7:

> *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

May you offer your feet, your hands and your whole life in service to Christ so that he might use you to bring good news, proclaim peace and proclaim peace and the salvation freely offered to a world that needs to know that God reigns.

PRE-TREK Day 1

TODAY'S DATE:

TODAY'S THEME: Beautiful are the feet of those who CHOOSE
KEY VERSE: *Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.* Joshua 25:15

REFLECTION (Write responses on the Sole-to-Soul Page)

1. List some of the reasons you chose to go on this mission trip.

2. What might be some of the reasons God has chosen you to make this trip?

3. I'm looking forward to…

SCRIPTURE (Take notes on the Sole-to-Soul Page)

- *But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve…But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua 25:15

- *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.* John 15:16

- *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.* Ephesians 1:4

If time permits read…1 Peter 2:4-12 and take notes on the Sole-to-Soul Page as you read and reflect.

PRAYER Take a deep breath, relax in God's presence, and pray this prayer:
Dear God, as I prepare for this mission trip, I know that I will need the power of your Spirit and your love during our trip. Thanks for the freedom and the courage you gave me to choose to say "yes." I know that I'll need to trust in your presence and your help today and during the days of the trip. Help me to take one step at a time when I choose to follow you and serve others in your name. And please give me and the rest of those who are going the health and strength we will need to make this mission trek a success. Amen. (Next, write your own prayer on the Sole-to-Soul Page by completing each of these phrases: Today, I'm thankful for… Forgive me for… Help me to… I praise you for…)

ACTION STEPS

- Begin to memorize the Isaiah 52:7 theme scripture found on the back cover. Write it down on a piece of paper and refer to it often while you prepare for your mission trip.

- Why wait until the mission trip to begin serving others? Think of someone who could use your help, and during the next 24 hours, choose to offer to help. (Maybe it's as simple as washing the dishes.)

SOLE-TO-SOUL STORIES

(A place for new insights, scripture verses, songs, stories, experiences, sketches, commitments, and whatever the Lord gives you during you mission trek)

MISSION TREK Day 1

TODAY'S DATE:

TODAY'S THEME: Beautiful are the feet of those who STEP UP
KEY VERSE: *I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.* (Psalm 16:8)

REFLECTION (Write responses on the Sole-to-Soul Page)

1. In this new place I'm excited to learn more about… And I'm looking forward to…

2. Write two brief stories, one describing a high point during the past 24 hours and the other describing a low point.

3. A time in the past when I "stepped up" to a new challenge was when I . . .

4. I know I will need God's help in the coming days when I'm asked to…

SCRIPTURE (Take notes on the Sole-to-Soul Page)

- *Am I now trying to win human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.* Galatians 1:10
- *The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid?* Psalm 27:1

If time permits read... Jeremiah 32:16-27; John 16:25-33; Psalm 27

PRAYER Take a few deep breaths, stretch your feet, and wiggle your toes. Thank God for the many steps you've taken in order to arrive at this place. Recite Isaiah 52:7 and pray this prayer: *Dear God, thank you for this opportunity to step up to a new challenge. I know that there will be times when I fall back or stand still. Please forgive me when I fail you and your people. I trust that you will be walking with me, step-by-step. In the days ahead challenge me to take your path as I offer myself in service to you and your people. Amen.* (Next, write your own prayer on the Sole-to-Soul Page. Begin with praise and thanks. Seek God's guidance and help for the challenges ahead.)

ACTION STEPS

- You took countless steps to get from home to here. As you step into the next few hours, be aware of your feelings, cares, questions, hopes and concerns. Notice others, too, as you work, worship and serve in this new place.
- Choose 2 or 3 words that will help you remember to be strong and motivated for the days of mission that lie ahead. Write the words on the bottom of your shoe. With every step let God be with you to give you strength and motivation during the days of your mission trek.

TELLING MY STORY

Many of your family and friends will want to hear about your trip. The following questions can help you put together some of your thoughts and be ready to tell others when they ask (and even if they don't ask). On page 45 is your "Elevator Speech." It's a great way to summarize your experience in less than 30 seconds, the time it takes to get from one floor to the next in an elevator.

Three words to summarize my experience include…

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I'm most thankful to God for...

Three positives about my experience…

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Three negatives…

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

POST-TREK Day 1

TODAY'S DATE:

TODAY'S THEME: Beautiful are the feet of those who GIVE THANKS
KEY VERSE: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (*Psalm 118:1)

REFLECTION (Write responses on the Sole-to-Soul Page)
1. Now that I'm home, I'm more thankful than ever for… (Make a top ten list.)

2. Some of the people I appreciate being with again include…

3. Because of the mission trip I have a new appreciation for…

SCRIPTURE (Take notes on the Sole-to-Soul Page)

- *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* (Colossians 3:15-17)
- *Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire.* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)
- *For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.* (1 Timothy 4:4)

If time permits read... Psalm 100; 1 Chronicles 16:27-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-14

PRAYER Take a deep breath, relax in God's presence, and remember the faces of those you met during your mission trip. Thank God for them. Recite Isaiah 52:7 and then pray this prayer: *Dear God, thank you for guiding my steps home. The soles of my feet have carried me long distances, and I have much more in my heart than when I left home. Thanks for being with me each step of the way. Thanks for the times you helped me and others to step up to the plate, and to love and serve even when it wasn't easy. Thanks for the new friends I met, and bless them. Most of all, thanks for the grace and love of Jesus Christ. Give me the courage to love others as Jesus would want me to love. In his name, Amen.* (Now write your own prayer including your personal gratitude, as well as, your heart's deepest desires as you have now returned to your home mission field.)

ACTION STEPS

- Use the Sole-to-Soul Page and make a list of the people at home you thank God for. Send thank yous by email, mail, phone, or in person, and try to write at least one or two during the next 24 hours.
- If you haven't completed "Telling My Story" on pages 42-44, try to complete it today.