

## AWAKE MY SOLE

Using his love for running, Jim Ellis encourages people toward Jesus.

**I**saiah calls the feet of a messenger who brings good news “beautiful.” And Jim Ellis is a beautiful messenger—a runner whose passion has taken him on an amazing journey.

It all started when he offered up his love of running as a contribution to raise funds for a nonprofit organization in his community. That first year he chose to run from his home to the festival at the center of the fundraising endeavors—a distance of 32 miles. When the second year came, he had moved farther away, but he decided once again to run from his home to the festival. This time the distance was 62 miles.

When he stepped into the church where he worked on Monday after running 62 miles on Saturday, he was understandably walking a little funny. A woman noticed and asked him about it. That conversation planted the seed of an idea in Jim’s heart that would eventually sprout and grow into an audacious goal. The lady said, “Maybe you should run across America and speak to youth.”

During two years of prayer, preparation, and lots of running, Jim came up with a plan. His ministry was in Iowa. His sphere of influence was in Iowa. So his goal was to spend a year running across Iowa, speaking everywhere he went.

He started his journey on January 9, 2012, planning to finish on December 23. His rhythm and schedule had to be precise to endure the year.



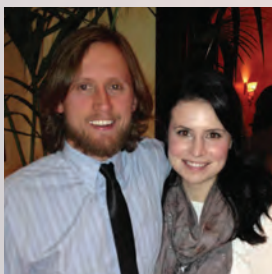
Every Monday he ran between 22 and 50 miles through blizzards and blinding heat, to take him from one host town to the next—20 in all. Tuesdays were rest days. Wednesdays through Saturdays he would speak at schools, churches, community centers, running groups, service groups, senior citizen centers, and even one insurance agency.

His Sundays were a mix of church services and resting up for the marathon (or more) the following day. Every fifth week he would take a rest week to allow his body time to recover from the four previous “marathon Mondays.”

The message he brought to faith-based groups and secular audiences centered on themes of running your race, whatever that might be, with passion, purpose, endurance, beautiful feet, and always toward the goal: Jesus. He wanted to inspire, challenge, and equip people for the race God had set before them.

By the end of the year, he had traveled 1,339 miles and had spoken 317 times to 18,000 people. He was interviewed more than 30 times by news outlets across Iowa, reaching tens of thousands more.

Now, as he studies at Denver Seminary, Jim can’t help but dream of the roads the Lord will lead him down next. This beautiful messenger still has miles to go.



JIM ELLIS IS PURSUING AN MDiv WITH A CONCENTRATION IN LEADERSHIP. HE WAS LED TO DENVER SEMINARY WHEN HIS WIFE, CHANTALLE, HAD HER OWN HOLY INTERRUPTION MOMENT. SHE IS IN THE COUNSELING LICENSURE PROGRAM.