

THEME — SPIRITUALITY OF LANDSCAPES: SOUL ENCOUNTERS

Soulfulness is our ability to discover a vital connection with the ordinary details of everyday experience—what we share along our outermost edges with others. We are like trees, growing (and touching) at our periphery. The living core of a tree lies within an inch or so of its outer bark, where phloem and xylem tubes carry its life-blood up and down the trunk. The rest of the interior is deadwood, a ringed history of growth and struggle. We, too, most readily encounter the “other” at our physical extremities. Like trees, our perimeters are where body and soul become most vulnerable ... and most connected to the rest of the world.

(Belden Lane, *Backpacking with the Saints*, p. 49)

Read [read passage twice]

Silence 3-5 minutes - silently repeat a word or phrase that interests you...*

Sharing aloud (if in group): Simply share the word or phrase that spoke to you. No elaboration.

Reflect [read once]

Silence 3-5 minutes - reflecting on “Where does this touch my life?”

Sharing aloud: “I hear, I see, I was struck by...”

Respond [read once]

Silence 3-5 minutes - reflecting on “How is God calling me to Respond?”

Sharing aloud: Briefly pray - spontaneously expressing your response to God’s call.

Rest [read once]

Rest in God’s grace, in silence 2-3 minutes

** The time allotted for each period of silence can vary.*

Prompts:

1) The German Romantic poet Novalis argued that the human soul isn’t inside the body, hidden and encased, like a “seed.” Rather, he said, “The seat of the soul is where the inner world and the outer world meet.”

2) This passage invites us to learn from observing how trees interact with the world. What can trees teach us about ourselves?