Saints Simon and Jude
28/10/26

This is really just a thought for the day, inspired by my current spiritual reading: a volume in the New Naturalist series called 'Ecology and Natural History' by Professor David Wilkinson. I'm usually very wary about importing terms such as Ecology into 'spiritual speak' - often done as it's a buzzword now, but without understanding anything of its complexity and tenuous status - a concept constantly being refined as new knowledge comes to light. It's unlikely we are going to get any new knowledge on Simon and Jude, and indeed on the meaning of 'apostle' in the very first days of the church - in this sense, they are a very unsure foundation for what happens next None of the Gospels even agree on a definitive list of the Twelve. But perhaps that doesn't matter so much as the dynamic of apostleship, the call to follow Christ and being sent out whoever we are.

In studying ecosystems of all sorts, David Wilkinson has come to realise that, in placing the emphasis on the most visible members of the biotic community (the animals), we may come to miss the importance of the less visible members of the community and of the abiotic environment in which we all live. It's this total interaction which produces *a sort of stability, currently hard to quantify. This suggests a view of ecology with a somewhat different emphasis from that traditionally taken by ecologists. For example, it implies a greater emphasis on processes rather than species, and a realisation that many of the key species are microbes, fungi and plants rather than the animals which often dominate ecology textbooks* (p. 26).

And dare one say the emphasis on 'apostles' as a distinct species in theological textbooks? They represent an ideal to be realised by all of us, the flip side of which is the importance of every one of us in the making of a body which necessarily has a sort of stability which will always be hard to quantify. It's a work in progress, as much about the microbes as the top predators. In this sense, all who are in Christ are keystone species.

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