



***Keeping the Ink Wet* by Kevin G Yell**

Reviewed by Richard Frost

Subtitled ‘What the theater can teach the church about worship’, Kevin Yell clearly and expertly demonstrates just how much it could do just that. The British-born priest, playwright, performer and director, now serving in the USA, brings all his experience and knowledge to its pages and writes in a highly relatable and engaging way.

There are, of course, clear differences between being an actor on a stage and leading a service in a church – but there are also similarities.

Yell argues that, in both theatre and church, there is a clear intention: to enable those present to not simply sit as casual onlookers but to actively experience something. And to be drawn in to that experience with a gathered community of other people.

In theatre, the script is central. In church, we might call this the liturgy (although as he points out somewhat astutely, ‘God does not need liturgy, only the people do’). This is the invitation to the experience.

He covers issues such as tradition and change, silence and stillness, setting the scene, learning the script (and coping when forgetting our lines or making mistakes). He explores the history of the theatre and the church (sometimes perhaps in too much detail but it is valuable nonetheless).

Yell’s key point for those leading worship, preaching or presiding (whether lay or ordained) is in the book’s title: *Keeping the Ink Wet*. That our response to the invitation is to experience worship in a way that makes the words live. ‘Another way to think about this invitation is to approach each text every time as if the ink was still wet,’ he writes, ‘as if we were the first person ever to see and then say those words in public.’

And thus for everyone else present – be it audience or congregation – to be ones who hear those words as if for the first time. One that draws us in to an experience where we are not simply casual onlookers but by being in a gathered community of other people, we all play a part.

Kevin Yell brings a book which is inspiring, thought-provoking and practically useful. It is a must-read book for all who lead worship and minister to others. It is a wonderful book and one on which I related to on many levels.

More details at keepingtheinkwet.com/

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