“The ecumenical movement is ripe for reform and renewal,” writes Paul Avis in his preface to this volume on ecumenical theology. He writes very lucidly about the ecumenical movement, addressing issues of the ordination of women and homosexuals directly. Now is not the time to withdraw from ecumenical engagement, but to redouble our efforts, he advises. All is not lost. He provides some extremely helpful chapters that re-frame the conversation from an either/or standoff, addressing (among other topics) the role of diversity in unity, the role of reception, building and breaking communion, and ethics and communion. I was very busy with my highlighter.

Prior to reading this book, I have not really understood what reception was all about, and usually feel hurt and angry by talk of breaking communion but never had the theological tools to work my way out of the emotional pit. Avis writes of these things in an inviting way, clearly explaining what a concept ("reception" for instance) is about and how it relates to the current ecumenical situation. He is a great champion of patience, which is not the same thing as "wait and see" as patience in ecumenical dialogue obviously requires a lot of work. I feel more confident of my Anglican perspective in reaching out to Christians of other traditions as a result of reading this book.

As our rhetoric makes us stranger and stranger to each other, I feel readier to engage other Anglicans as well.

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