

Kinnamon leaving NCC for health reasons

by [John Dart](#) in the [November 29, 2011](#) issue

Michael Kinnamon, a longtime ecumenical leader who has headed the National Council of Churches since 2007, announced that he will leave his post as general secretary of the New York-based NCC, following the advice of his cardiologist.

Kinnamon, 63, said that his physician insisted that the stress of his work, including its travel demands, must be reduced immediately and significantly, according to a November 9 statement by the NCC.

The announcement from Kinnamon "comes at a challenging time for the life of the council," said NCC president Peg Chamberlin, "but we're encouraged that Michael is willing to work with us on this important transition and be a resource to us going forward."

The National Council, founded in 1950, has 37 member communions including Protestant, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, historical African-American, evangelical and "peace church" denominations.

A clergyman in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Kinnamon has held an endowed chair at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis since 2000. He previously taught at Lexington Theological Seminary and Christian Theological Seminary.

Kinnamon brought his theological expertise to the Consultation on Church Union after playing major roles for the World Council of Churches in 1980s.

The National Council of Churches, despite financial difficulties and sometimes criticism over its progressive stances on social justice and peace issues, was reminded by Kinnamon that "unity is not synonymous with agreement." To applause at his last election as the NCC's top executive, he said, "We can fight like cats and dogs and still sit at the same table."

An NCC task force will draft a separation agreement for the council's executive committee, which meets in December. Chamberlin and president-elect Kathryn Lohre said that they will develop a proposal for NCC leadership during the time of transition.