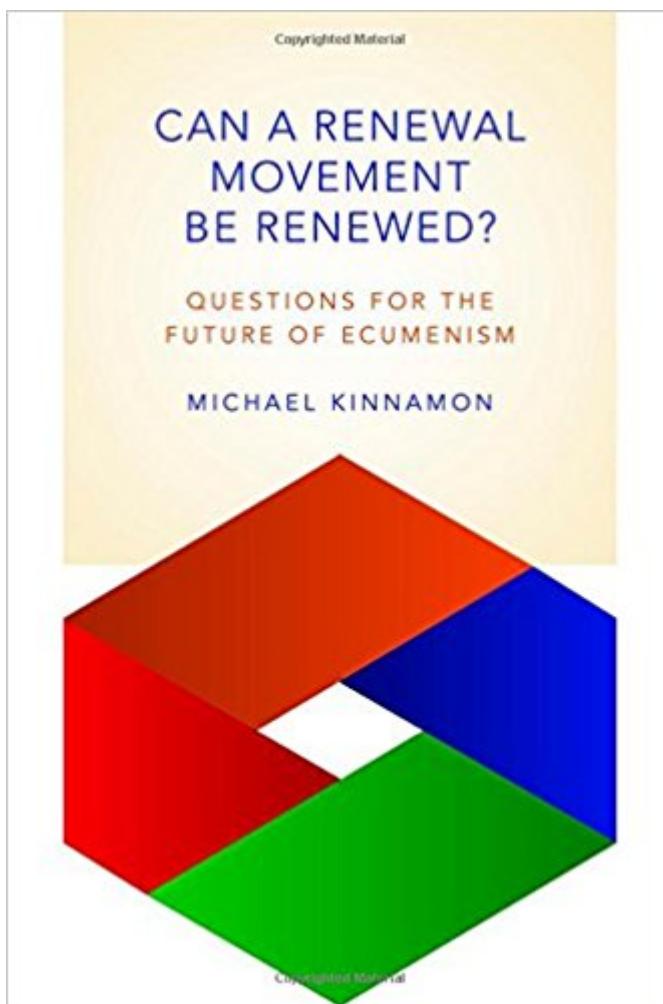


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# Can A Renewal Movement Be Renewed?: Questions For The Future Of Ecumenism



## **Synopsis**

There is no doubt that ecumenism occupies a prominent place in the history of the church in the twentieth century: countless churches have been renewed through encounter with Christian sisters and brothers in other confessions and cultures. But it is not clear that this ecumenical impulse will continue to figure prominently in the church's story. In this book Michael Kinnamon argues that the ecumenical movement, which has given such energy and direction to the church, needs to be reconceived in a way that provides renewing power for the church in this era • and he shows how this might happen. He names the problems with ecumenism, identifies strengths and accomplishments upon which the church now can build, and suggests practical, concrete steps we can take in the direction of revitalization, especially at the local level.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

John W. Crossin, OSFS --United States Conference of Catholic Bishops "Michael Kinnamon's well-resourced, clear, and thoughtful book reviews past achievements and proposes future directions for American conciliar ecumenism. His very practical, always informative, and sometimes disconcerting observations will challenge readers to deepen their own commitment to Christian unity." Stanley J. Noffsinger --Church of the Brethren "Calls us as the body of Christ to be a greater witness to God's shalom and Christ's peace together than we could ever hope to be as separate communities. . . . A helpful vision for a vital church in the twenty-first century." Tony Richie --Society for Pentecostal Studies "Kinnamon draws on an immense wealth of experience to ask

hard questions on what is hindering the ecumenical movement from moving forward as an effective and vital force. His suggestions are affirmative, bold, and clear -- and, perhaps more importantly, doable. This book is a must for any who are honest enough humbly to admit a crisis of diminishing energy in the formal ecumenical movement but are nonetheless committed to the renewal of authentic Christian unity as a central and critical task for gospel witness in today's world!"Rabbi Steve Gutow --Jewish Council for Public Affairs "Takes us on a remarkable journey investigating the division between unity and justice among religious movements and institutions. . . . A profoundly important guide."Sharon E. Watkins --Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) "If the road forward for the ecumenical movement is at times murky, Kinnaman here indicates a direction. He celebrates progress and identifies practical next steps on the way. Like the circle of light provided by the headlights of a car on a dark night, we see where next to move."S. Wesley Ariarajah --Drew University "Only a very few in the ecumenical movement today are as qualified as Michael Kinnaman to take on some of the thorny questions that plague the movement in our day, and only a few have the knowledge, commitment, and courage to discuss them the way Kinnaman does in this volume. . . . A must-read for those concerned about the future of the ecumenical movement."Marilyn Mecham --former president of Ecumenical and Interreligious Leaders Network "Insightful, direct, and greatly invested in the ecumenical movement, Kinnaman helps us traverse the changing ecumenical landscape with concrete steps and a positive, realistic global perspective. Can a Renewal Movement Be Renewed? is a must-read for all who care and want to do something about the revitalization that the church so desperately needs."Archbishop Vicken Aykazian --Armenian Orthodox Church Christian Churches Together "This book gives us a glimpse into the mind and heart of someone who has earned his place as a valued leader among America's diverse church traditions. It reveals Michael Kinnaman as both teacher and student, as having profound wisdom, humility, and magnanimity • qualities that can guide whole churches into a deeper engagement with each other and into a more dynamic engagement with the world."Religious Studies Review "Poses fifteen crucial questions about the nature and mission of the ecumenical movement, its political, economic, social, ecclesial dimensions, and practices. Kinnamon's ecumenical expertise shines in tightly packed essays offering answers, all of which can stand on their own, be it as classroom texts or as a conversation starter at ecumenical meetings."One in Christ "This book deserves both high praise and a wide circulation in university and seminary curricula, in ecumenical study groups and pastoral discussion. It will yield rich reward to anyone interested in the renewal of the Church • its ecumenical nature, life and mission • expressed in the call to unity and justice, holiness and the search for truth

and reconciliation • and the renewal of the ecumenical movement as a gift and call to the Church. It is not a heavy volume, but it invites study, dialogue and discussion and it will provide a sound foundation for ecumenical thinking and action. Theoria and Praxis are well met here in this slim yet substantive volume of essays that form a vital and coherent whole.

“In these pages are excellent suggestions for improving communication, forging trust, and creating hospitable working relations among diverse and disparate partners. . . . Kinnaman is a passionate and skilled ecumenical leader.”

Michael Kinnaman is the Spehar-Halligan Visiting Professor of Ecumenical Collaboration in Interreligious Dialogue at Seattle University’s School of Theology and Ministry. Among his other books is *The Vision of the Ecumenical Movement and How It Has Been Impoverished by Its Friends*.

This book is a powerful source of encouragement for Christians of any denominational background who yearn for evidence of Christ at the center of the Christian world. It offers a penetrating view of the contemporary issues at stake; and in doing so, it opens up new possibilities for progress. I happen to be a relatively new but earnest worker in the ecumenical movement, and I can see how Kinnaman is challenging my own attitudes and beliefs that I want to change. I cannot claim first-hand knowledge of more seasoned workers’ responses to these ideas, but the discussion of the long-term issues makes me grateful for those who have come before me. And I want to be part of the Æœrenewal Kinnaman calls for, in support of those who have given so much and who want to break out of the limitations of the past. One of Kinnaman’s methods is to specifically enumerate the challenges and tensions within each of the issues he addresses. The value of this approach is to give the reader a clearer understanding of the other side of an argument, thereby providing tools for better listening and problem-solving. And finally, the wide variety of topics covered in the book offers a hint of the impact this book ought to have on those who strive for Christian unity.

Michael Kinnaman’s collection of essays provides a rich review of the essential historical and theological questions that have been at the heart of the ecumenical movement’s quest for over a century. Each very readable chapter addresses a particular historical, theological, or cultural issue, providing a comprehensive review of relevant literature as well as a clear articulation of the challenges the movement faces today. Kinnaman’s broad ecumenical experience and scholarship makes him a most trustworthy guide through the history, personalities, and practice of this global

movement. As an active participant in numerous leadership roles, Kinnaman is neither aloof nor indifferent, but his critical eye makes this far more than a personal memoir. The book will be useful both to leaders in the church engaging the ecumenical vision locally or globally, as well as to students seeking an introduction to ecumenism's history, purpose, and vision. Students should consider purchasing Kinnaman's "The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices" as a helpful companion to the current book. Kinnaman remains deeply hopeful, but hardly naïf. In the end the book does not give a definitive answer to the question posed by its title. But the reader is left with absolute clarity about what's at stake for the integrity of the church and its mission.

Kinnaman's book of essays deserves a thorough review. In the meanwhile, this is the contemporary study that maps the current landscape of ecumenism and interfaith relationships among the churches and Christian tradition in the United States that descend from Europe. As cultural forces pressure denominations to re-consider their internal organizational relationships and public personas, the cause of Christian unity lies in the balance. Older models of unity fit older forms of church life; emerging models of church life will spawn emerging models of Christian unity. Indeed, concepts of unity themselves are re-forming.

A challenging look at the dilemmas facing the ecumenical movement....must read for all with a passion for the future of the ecumenical movement!

Kinnaman in this fantastically organized collection of chapters offers a program for the renewal of the ecumenical movement. There is nothing here that will particularly surprise anyone who has been paying attention to the ecumenical movement and its direction. The surprise lies entirely in how tightly Kinnaman organizes his topics, and how persuasive he is in making his case. This book would be an outstanding read for any group of Christians in any community to read together to begin movement towards greater church unity in their settings. If you are looking for very, very practical resources on how to work ecumenically with fellow Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jewish communities, the Orthodox, and the wider interfaith community, this book offers guidance.

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