

More WCC members now paying dues: Overall financial situation described as positive

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Three-quarters of the World Council of Churches' 348 member bodies paid their membership contributions in 2005, compared with 55 percent in 1999, the main governing body of the world's biggest church grouping reports.

"I am pleased to confirm that the overall financial situation is positive," Anders Gadegaard of Denmark, the moderator of the WCC finance committee, told the central committee meeting in Geneva before his committee's report was adopted September 5.

Still, underlying income trends are down, the WCC reported, and Gadegaard urged member churches to take their financial responsibilities more seriously. He said that ecumenical commitment means "staying together, praying together and paying together."

The world church organization's main governing body then adopted a recommendation that said member churches should be declared "nonactive" if they have not paid membership contributions for three consecutive years and have had no contact with the WCC in that time.

Gadegaard also said that 2005 was the third consecutive year in which the WCC recorded an overall surplus, with general reserves totaling 6.3 million Swiss francs (\$5.12 million). "Although short of the longer-term target of 9 million Swiss francs set by the former central committee, this remains a satisfactory outcome following the difficult years of 2000-2002," said the Copenhagen cleric.

Increased spending is foreseen for 2007, Gadegaard noted, due to increased staff costs equivalent to about five new positions, and increased program and infrastructure expenses—in particular, maintenance costs for the WCC headquarters in Geneva. -*Ecumenical News International*