

**NOTES FROM
MS. DOROTHY DAVIES-FLINDALL
RE DISCUSSION ON BLESSING OF SAME-SEX UNIONS**

We are here to help the Synod understand and follow the work and deliberations of the Council of General Synod regarding the St. Michael Report and a response to it, as well as the preparation of resolutions for General Synod.

The St. Michael Report was released in 2005 – sooner than the date originally set. Following its release, COGS spent time reflecting and working on a response with respect to the implications of the St. Michael Report. In the meetings of 2006 and again in the meeting at the beginning of this year (2007), the Council spent hours reflecting on and discussing the report. It was a part of every day and none of this was done lightly.

In 2006, Council members were offered facilitated discussions, both in small groups and in committee of the whole. At the November 2006 meeting, during these facilitated (or focus) group discussions, Council members were invited to express their fears, their hopes and then to propose their suggestions for action.

Amongst the fears expressed:

- Who will minister to these persons if we say No?
- Are we establishing a church for the elite?
- Whom do we serve – only those on the inside?

Questions were also raised about the church's role in justice-making?

At the Council meeting in March 2007, Council received a memorandum from the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee. This committee had also been doing a great amount of work, including hearing from Chancellor Falby about the work of the handbook concerns committee. Faith, Worship and Ministry brought to COGS some of its concerns about ways of proceeding.

Council of General Synod then spent some time in discussion of that report – and, later, Council spent a lengthy time in committee of the whole (in respectful consideration).

Both at this time and in later agenda time, when dealing with the decision about what motions to put before the General Synod, there were times of candor and respectful listening with no breakdown of community. And we hope that this will be the case here at General Synod.

We are, therefore, happy to pass this on to Synod as the way in which we should deal here with this matter.