

Episcopal bishops firm on pastoral 'oversight' Bishops will retain traditional jurisdiction: Bishops will retain traditional jurisdiction

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The bishops of the Episcopal Church have rejected a bid by disgruntled conservatives to recruit like-minded bishops from other dioceses to assume control over their congregations.

The church's House of Bishops, meeting last month in Camp Allen, Texas, said they will find ways to give "pastoral care" to conservative parishes, but will not surrender bishops' traditional "jurisdiction" within their dioceses. "In other Anglican provinces, the term pastoral 'oversight' signifies what we mean by 'pastoral care,'" the bishops said in a three-page statement. "In our Episcopal Church polity, 'oversight' does not confer 'jurisdiction.'"

The bishops added that they "recognize the constitutional and canonical authority of bishops and the integrity of diocesan boundaries." In other words, there will be no major changes in the status quo. The statement comes one week after five retired American bishops and a Brazilian bishop broke rank to preside at a confirmation service in Ohio, a direct challenge to the church's cherished lines of authority.

Conservatives say a plan put forth in 2002—which would allow bishops to cross boundaries while preserving the local bishop's authority and voice in the process—does not go far enough. They want parishes to be able to handpick their bishops without threat of a veto from the local bishop.

The process outlined by the bishops last month was termed "woefully inadequate" by the conservative American Anglican Council. "It gives no relief to orthodox beleaguered Episcopalians," the group's statement said. Noting the "reconciliation" theme of the bishops' meeting, the statement said: "It is impossible to achieve

reconciliation without repentance. . . . We will not be party to perpetuating the fantasy that 'all is well' or even 'shall be well.'" -*Religion News Service*