

Eleven bishops join U.S. Anglican network: Conservatives oppose Robinson ordination

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At least 11 Episcopal bishops have officially joined a fledgling “network” of conservative dioceses and parishes to oppose their church’s approval of an openly gay bishop. The new Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes will be headed by Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh and coordinated by the Washington-based American Anglican Council.

Organizers say the network already has the blessing of 16 of the 38 member churches in the Anglican Communion, of which the Episcopal Church is the U.S. branch. “We’re not leaving, we’re not separating ourselves,” Duncan told the *New York Times*. “What we trust is going to happen is that the rest of the world and the rest of the Christian community are going to bring such pressure to bear on the whole of this church that it steps back from this event.”

The group will have its formal kickoff January 19-20 in Plano, Texas, where some 2,700 conservative dissidents gathered in October to protest the elevation of openly gay Bishop V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. Dioceses in the network include Pittsburgh; South Carolina; Florida; Albany, New York; San Joaquin, California; Dallas; Fort Worth; Quincy, Illinois; Springfield, Illinois; Western Kansas and Rio Grande, which includes parts of Texas and New Mexico. Two additional dioceses—Central Florida and Southwest Florida—are likely to join to bring the total number to 13.

Episcopal Church officials, meanwhile, have proposed a system that allows conservative parishes to seek “pastoral care” from like-minded bishops, although local bishops would retain ultimate control and oversight. —*Religion News Service*