



THE GEOGRAPHY OF FRACTURE: PROVINCIAL REALIGNMENT, MIGRANT CLERGY, AND THE RE-MAPPING OF GLOBAL ANGLICAN ORTHODOXY (1998-2026)

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Abstract	The Anglican Communion has experienced profound theological, institutional, and relational tensions since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, particularly over questions of human sexuality, biblical authority, and ecclesiastical identity. These tensions have contributed to significant realignments among Anglican provinces and the emergence of transnational networks such as the Global South Fellowship and the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON). While existing scholarship has examined these developments largely through theological, ecclesiological, and institutional perspectives, comparatively less attention has been given to their geographical consequences and to the role of migrant clergy in connecting emerging centres of Anglican orthodoxy. This article examines the changing geography of global Anglicanism between 1998 and 2026, focusing on provincial realignment, clergy mobility, and the emergence of alternative networks of ecclesiastical authority. Drawing on historical and documentary analysis of Anglican Communion, provincial, Global South, and GAFCON documents, together with relevant scholarship on religious transnationalism and the geography of religion, the study conceptualizes Anglican realignment as a process of geographical re-mapping rather than simply institutional fragmentation. It argues that theological conflict has contributed to the development of a more networked and multi-centered Anglican landscape in which provincial boundaries increasingly intersect with transnational relationships and alternative jurisdictions. Migrant clergy are particularly significant within this process because their movement across national and ecclesiastical boundaries facilitates the circulation of theological ideas, institutional affiliations, and claims to Anglican orthodoxy. The article concludes that contemporary Anglican realignment represents not merely a fracture within an established Communion but an ongoing reconfiguration of its geographical, institutional, and transnational centres of authority.
Keywords	Anglican Communion; provincial realignment; migrant clergy; GAFCON; Global South; religious transnationalism; Anglican orthodoxy.



¹1.0 Introduction

The Anglican Communion entered the twenty-first century confronted by a crisis that was simultaneously theological, ecclesiological, institutional, and geographical. The crisis became particularly visible following the 1998 Lambeth Conference and intensified after the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003. Although debates concerning human sexuality provided an immediate focus of disagreement, the underlying contest involved broader questions concerning biblical authority, theological interpretation, ecclesial identity, provincial autonomy, and the distribution of authority within global Anglicanism.¹ The significance of this development lies not simply in the emergence of disagreement between liberal and conservative Anglicans, but in the extent to which the disagreement has altered relationships among provinces, dioceses, bishops, clergy, and congregations across national boundaries.

The Anglican Communion is formally a worldwide fellowship of autonomous churches rather than a single centralized ecclesiastical institution. The Anglican Communion Office currently describes it as a global family of forty-two autonomous Member Churches, commonly referred to as provinces, operating across more than 165 countries². Its organizational structure has historically depended upon a balance between provincial autonomy and relationships expressed through the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. The absence of a central juridical authority has allowed considerable diversity within Anglicanism, but it has also made the Communion particularly susceptible to disputes over the boundaries of common faith and legitimate ecclesiastical authority³. Consequently, the contemporary crisis raises an important question: what happens to a geographically organized communion when theological affiliation begins to

² Compete with territorial jurisdiction as a basis for ecclesiastical belonging?

The 1998 Lambeth Conference represents a critical point of departure for answering this question. Resolution I.10 affirmed traditional Anglican teaching concerning marriage and sexual conduct while also calling for pastoral care for persons experiencing same-sex attraction⁴. The resolution subsequently became an important reference point for conservative Anglicans who argued that subsequent developments in some Western provinces represented a departure from the Communion's established teaching. GAFCON's own historical account explicitly identifies Resolution I.10 as an important antecedent to the movement's emergence⁵. The controversy

¹1. Joanna Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)," *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206. "Article and DOI record" (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2010.02.006?utm_

2. Anglican Communion Office, "Member Churches," accessed August 20, 2026. "Anglican Communion member churches" (https://www.anglicancommunion.org/member-churches/?utm_

3. Stephen Pickard, "Primacy and Communion," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 14, no. 1 (2016): 1–20.

4. Anglican Communion Office, "Lambeth Conference Resolutions, Reflections and Calls," including the 1998 resolutions archive. "Lambeth Conference resolutions archive" (https://www.anglicancommunion.org/lambeth-conference-resolutions/?utm_

5. ² GAFCON, "About GAFCON: Why GAFCON Began," noting the significance GAFCON assigns to Resolution 1.10 and the 2003 consecration.

6. GAFCON, "The Jerusalem Statement," Global Anglican Future Conference, Jerusalem, June 22–29, 2008. "The Jerusalem Statement" (https://gafcon.org/about/the-jerusalem-statement/?utm_

7. GAFCON, "Conference Statements," documenting the 2008, 2013, 2018, and 2023 conferences.



surrounding the Episcopal Church in the United States and the 2003 consecration of an openly gay bishop transformed an already developing disagreement into a major crisis of communion. Conservative provinces, particularly in Africa and parts of the Global South, increasingly questioned whether the established instruments of the Communion were capable of maintaining a common theological identity.

The emergence of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in 2008 represented a decisive institutional development in this process. More than 1,100 clergy and lay participants, including 291 bishops, attended the inaugural gathering, which described itself as a movement committed to preserving and promoting biblical Christianity within Anglicanism. ⁶ GAFCON subsequently developed into a transnational network with conferences in Nairobi in 2013, Jerusalem in 2018, and Kigali in 2023⁷. Its emergence is significant because it demonstrated that Anglican relationships could increasingly be organized through networks of theological affinity that crossed established provincial boundaries. Sadgrove and her colleagues have described GAFCON as a major expression of a transnational orthodox Anglican movement, arguing that it sought not only to define orthodoxy but also to negotiate cultural and geographical differences among its participants. ⁸

This development complicates the conventional geographical understanding of the Anglican Communion. Historically, Anglican identity has been strongly associated with territorial provinces and dioceses. The development of alternative networks and jurisdictions, however, has introduced a different spatial logic. GAFCON's 2008 Jerusalem Statement explicitly described the emergence of new relationships among Anglicans across geographical boundaries and acknowledged that realignment could involve faithful Anglicans leaving existing territorial parishes, dioceses, and provinces and becoming associated with other Anglican structures⁹. The significance of this development is therefore spatial as well as institutional. The issue is not merely that Anglicans disagree; it is that disagreement has contributed to the creation of new geographical relationships, overlapping jurisdictions, alternative centres of authority, and transnational ecclesiastical networks.

This process has also raised questions about the meaning and location of Anglican orthodoxy. Orthodoxy has traditionally been understood primarily in theological terms, referring to conformity with recognized Christian doctrine and ecclesial tradition. In the contemporary Anglican crisis, however, claims to orthodoxy have increasingly become connected to questions of institutional affiliation and ecclesiastical recognition. GAFCON, for example, identifies itself as a global movement committed to biblical faithfulness and describes the Jerusalem Declaration as a foundational expression of its theological identity¹⁰. Scholarly research has shown that the movement's construction of orthodoxy involved drawing boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable forms of Anglican belief and practice¹¹. Thus, orthodoxy is not

8. Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy," 193–206.

9. ³ GAFCON, "The Jerusalem Statement."

10. GAFCON, "About GAFCON," on its global movement, biblical foundation, and Jerusalem Declaration.

11. Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy," 193–206.

12. Keith Joseph, "The Challenge of GAFCON to the Unity of the Anglican Communion," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 20, no. 1 (2022): 3–21.

13. . Pickard, "Primacy and Communion."



simply a theological category; it has become a means through which ecclesiastical relationships, identities, and boundaries are negotiated.

The geographical dimension of this process becomes even more significant when the mobility of clergy is considered. Anglican clergy increasingly operate within contexts shaped by international migration, Diaspora communities, mission partnerships, and transnational ecclesiastical relationships. Clergy who move between Africa, Europe, North America, and other regions may carry theological traditions, institutional loyalties, ministerial practices, and ecclesiastical networks across provincial boundaries. Their movement can therefore connect otherwise geographically distant Anglican communities. Rather than viewing clergy migration simply as a demographic or labour phenomenon, this article treats it as potentially significant to the restructuring of religious space. Mobile clergy may become agents through whom theological identities and institutional affiliations are reproduced across borders.

This dimension remains comparatively underdeveloped in scholarship on Anglican realignment. Existing studies have made important contributions by examining the theological controversy surrounding sexuality, the emergence of GAFCON, the construction of conservative Anglican identity, and the challenges posed to the unity of the Communion¹². Other scholarship has considered the changing balance of authority within the Communion's institutional structures¹³. Yet the geographical consequences of these changes, particularly the interaction between provincial realignment and the mobility of clergy, require further examination. The present article addresses this gap by bringing together the study of Anglican realignment with insights from religious geography and transnationalism.

The article consequently advances the concept of “geography of fracture.” By this term, it does not mean simply the geographical distribution of Anglican disagreement. Rather, it refers to the spatial reorganization of ecclesiastical relationships produced when theological conflict generates new networks, jurisdictions, centres, and movements that operate across established territorial boundaries. The article further employs the concept of “re-mapping” to describe the

⁴ process through which the location and distribution of Anglican authority and claims to orthodoxy are being renegotiated. The argument is not that the historic structures of the Anglican Communion have simply disappeared. Rather, the evidence suggests the development of an increasingly complex ecclesiastical landscape in which territorial provinces coexist and interact with transnational networks and alternative structures.

The period 1998–2026 is particularly appropriate for examining this transformation. It begins with the Lambeth Conference that provided an important theological reference point for subsequent disputes and concludes with the major restructuring discussions associated with GAFCON in 2026. In March 2026, the GAFCON gathering in Abuja resulted in the development of a new Global Anglican Council, marking another significant stage in the movement's attempt to reorganize global Anglican relationships¹⁴. The development is especially important for this study because it

¹⁴14. The March 2026 GAFCON development and the formation of the Global Anglican Council are discussed in the contemporary literature on the Anglican realignment. See “New Installation, Same Old Problems,” *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 2026.



demonstrates that the process of realignment has moved beyond episodic disagreement toward questions concerning the institutional organization and future shape of global Anglicanism.

Against this background, this article examines how provincial realignment and migrant clergy have contributed to the re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy between 1998 and 2026. It asks three related questions: How have theological conflicts since 1998 contributed to the realignment of Anglican provinces and jurisdictions? How has the mobility of clergy facilitated the circulation of theological ideas and ecclesiastical affiliations across provincial and national boundaries? And to what extent has the resulting configuration transformed the geographical distribution of Anglican authority and claims to orthodoxy?

The article argues that the post-1998 Anglican crisis should be understood not merely as a theological dispute or institutional fracture but as a process of geographical and transnational reconfiguration. Provincial realignment has generated new networks of affiliation, while mobile clergy have helped connect these networks across territorial boundaries. Consequently, contemporary Anglicanism is increasingly characterized by a relationship between territorial provinces and transnational networks in which authority is negotiated through multiple, overlapping centres. The significance of this transformation extends beyond the immediate disputes over sexuality: it raises fundamental questions about how a global communion maintains identity, authority, and unity when theological affinity increasingly competes with geography as a basis for ecclesiastical belonging.

2.0 Literature Review

Scholarship on the contemporary Anglican Communion has expanded considerably since the emergence of intense disagreements over human sexuality in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Existing studies have examined the crisis from theological, ecclesiological, sociological, political, and geographical perspectives. Nevertheless, the relationship between provincial realignment, transnational clergy mobility, and the changing spatial location of Anglican orthodoxy remains insufficiently integrated within the literature. This review therefore considers five interconnected bodies of scholarship: Anglican realignment and theological conflict; GAFCON and the construction of Anglican orthodoxy; the changing geography of Anglican authority; transnational religion and migrant clergy; and the emerging concept of a polycentric global Christianity.

2.1 Anglican Realignment and the Crisis of the Communion

The literature generally identifies the 1998 Lambeth Conference as a significant turning point in the contemporary Anglican crisis. Resolution I.10 reaffirmed traditional Anglican teaching concerning marriage and sexual conduct while simultaneously calling for pastoral care and respect toward persons experiencing same-sex attraction¹. Although the resolution was not itself a juridical instrument capable of binding autonomous provinces, it became an important reference point in subsequent debates concerning the limits of Anglican theological diversity. The controversy intensified after the Episcopal Church in the United States consecrated Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003. This development generated strong opposition from several African and



Global South provinces and exposed deeper disagreements concerning authority, biblical interpretation, provincial autonomy, and the nature of communion.⁵

Brittain and McKinnon argue that the Anglican crisis cannot be reduced to disagreements over sexuality because it reflects wider processes associated with globalization, technological change, institutional transformation, and changing patterns of authority within a worldwide church². Their analysis is significant because it places the sexuality controversy⁶ within a broader sociological transformation of Anglicanism. Similarly, the Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion demonstrates that contemporary Anglicanism must be understood through its global diversity, institutional structures, and competing interpretations of authority³. These studies provide an important foundation for understanding realignment but tend to concentrate more heavily on institutional and theological questions than on the geographical consequences of these developments.

The literature on African Anglicanism further complicates the traditional assumption that theological innovation flows primarily from the Western centres of Christianity to the Global South. The increasing numerical and institutional importance of African Anglican provinces has altered the balance of influence within the Communion. African provinces have become important actors in defining what they understand as orthodox Anglican Christianity rather than simply recipients of Western theological positions. This development is particularly relevant to the present study because provincial realignment is inseparable from the changing geography of global Christianity.

2.2 GAFCON and the Construction of Anglican Orthodoxy

One of the most important developments in the Anglican realignment has been the emergence of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON). Sadgrove and colleagues' influential study of GAFCON argues that the movement represents a transnational orthodox Anglican network that actively constructs and negotiates the boundaries of orthodoxy⁴. Their research is especially relevant because it moves beyond treating GAFCON simply as an institutional response to homosexuality. Through fieldwork, documentary analysis, and interviews, they demonstrate that the movement attempted to construct a shared vision of Anglican orthodoxy across substantial geographical, cultural, and ecclesiastical differences. They also show that the apparent unity of the movement involved continuing negotiations concerning issues such as homosexuality and women's ordination⁵.

⁵1. Anglican Communion Office, "Lambeth Conference Resolutions," Anglican Communion. "Lambeth Conference resolutions archive" (https://www.anglicancommunion.org/lambeth-conference-resolutions/?utm_source)

⁶2. Christopher Craig Brittain and Andrew McKinnon, *The Anglican Communion at a Crossroads: The Crises of a Global Church* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018). "Publisher information" (https://www.psupress.org/books/titles/978-0-271-08089-5.html?utm_source)

3. Ian S. Markham et al., eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). "Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion" (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118320815?utm>)

4. Joanna Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)," *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206.



⁷ This literature is particularly important for the present study because it demonstrates that Anglican orthodoxy is not simply a fixed geographical inheritance. Rather, it can be constructed through transnational relationships. GAFCON's own institutional narrative identifies its objective as gathering Anglicans around a common biblical and theological identity and identifies provinces and networks across Africa, North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia⁶. Its subsequent development of strategic networks, including theological education and global mission partnerships, further demonstrates an organizational model based on connections that transcend territorial provinces⁷.

The Kigali Commitment of 2023 illustrates the continuing significance of this development. GAFCON explicitly supported the recognition of new orthodox jurisdictions, including the Anglican Church in North America, the Anglican Church in Brazil, the Anglican Network in Europe, the Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Diocese of the Southern Cross⁸. This development is important because it suggests that the contemporary conflict involves more than disagreement within existing provinces. It also involves the creation and recognition of alternative ecclesiastical spaces. Consequently, the literature provides substantial evidence for institutional realignment but leaves room for a more sustained analysis of the spatial consequences of that realignment.

2.3 The Geography of Anglican Realignment

The geographical dimension of Anglican conflict has received important attention from geographers of religion. Valentine, Vanderbeck, Sadgrove, Anderson, and Ward argue that debates over homosexuality have generated new “power geometries” within the Anglican Communion⁹. Their study of Anglican communities in the United Kingdom, United States, and South Africa demonstrates that relationships between apparently distant places can influence local ecclesiastical debates through flows of money, resources, people, and theological discourse. This is particularly significant because it challenges the assumption that ecclesiastical power is necessarily organized according to territorial proximity.⁸

Their earlier work on GAFCON similarly demonstrates that transnational Anglican networks can construct connections that weaken the explanatory power of conventional geographical boundaries¹⁰. The significance of this literature for the present study is substantial. It establishes that Anglican sexuality debates have already generated new geographies of connection and disconnection. However, the present study extends this insight by asking what happens when such connections become institutionalized through provincial realignment and facilitated by clergy mobility.

⁷ 5. Joanna Sadgrove et al., “Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON),” *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206.

6. GAFCON, “About Gafcon.” “GAFCON: About” (https://gafcon.org/about/?utm_source

7. GAFCON, “Networks,” including its theological education and mission networks.

8. GAFCON, “GAFCON IV – The Kigali Commitment” (2023).

⁸ 9. Gill Valentine et al., “Transnational Religious Networks: Sexuality and the Changing Power Geometries of the Anglican Communion,” *Social & Cultural Geography*.

10. Sadgrove et al., “Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy,” 193–206.



The concept of “geography of fracture” builds upon this literature while shifting the analytical emphasis. Rather than treating geography merely as the location in which Anglican disagreements occur, it considers geography itself as something transformed by the disagreements. In other words, the question is not simply where Anglican conservatives and progressives are located, but how the boundaries, centres, networks, and routes of Anglican authority have been reconfigured since 1998.

2.4 Transnational Religion, Migration, and Clergy Mobility

The literature on religion and migration provides another important foundation. Contemporary religious communities increasingly operate within transnational social fields in which people, ideas, resources, practices, and institutional relationships circulate across national boundaries. Garbin's study of Congolese churches in London and Atlanta, for example, demonstrates how diasporic religious communities create symbolic and spiritual cartographies that connect multiple geographical locations¹¹. Although his study is not Anglican, its conceptual relevance is considerable because it demonstrates how religious communities can simultaneously belong to several social and geographical spaces.⁹

Anglican scholarship provides more direct evidence of this process. Kasibante's study of Ugandan Diaspora communities in Britain shows how migrant Anglicans establish congregations that preserve cultural and spiritual connections with their countries of origin while simultaneously adapting to the Church of England context.¹² The study demonstrates that migration does not necessarily weaken religious identity; rather, migration can create new forms of religious identity that operate between places.

Historical scholarship also demonstrates that mobility has long been integral to Anglican expansion. Wild-Wood's study of African Anglican missionaries highlights the importance of travel, translation, communication, and relationships between continental centres and local mission hubs¹³. This historical perspective challenges the assumption that mobility is merely a contemporary feature of global Christianity. Instead, mobility has been embedded in Anglicanism from its missionary expansion, although its contemporary forms operate within a very different postcolonial and transnational environment.

More recent scholarship strengthens the case for examining African clergy as transnational religious actors. Hirome and Kim's study of African missionaries in the United States identifies African Anglican clergy among the understudied actors involved in contemporary cross-cultural mission and argues that their activities illustrate the increasingly polycentric character of global Christianity¹⁴. This finding is particularly important for the present research because it indicates that African clergy should not be understood merely as migrants receiving ministry in Western contexts.

⁹ 11. Daniel Garbin, “Regrounding the Sacred: Transnational Religion, Place Making and the Politics of Diaspora among the Congolese in London and Atlanta,” *Global Networks* 14 (2014): 363–382.

12. Amos Kasibante, “The Ugandan Diaspora in Britain and Their Quest for Cultural Expression within the Church of England,” *Journal of Anglican Studies* (2009).

13. Emma Wild-Wood, “The Travels and Translations of Three African Anglican Missionaries, 1890–1930,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67, no. 4 (2016): 781–798.



They can also function as agents who carry theological traditions, missionary practices, institutional relationships, and claims to Christian authority into new geographical settings.¹⁰

The literature therefore suggests that clergy mobility deserves greater attention in studies of Anglican realignment. However, most research on migrant clergy examines questions of identity, diaspora, mission, cultural adaptation, or pastoral ministry rather than their role in the restructuring of Anglican ecclesiastical authority. This is the specific gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.5 From Territorial Anglicanism to Polycentric Anglicanism

A further body of scholarship concerns the emergence of polycentric Christianity. The growth of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has increasingly challenged older models in which theological and ecclesiastical authority was concentrated in Europe and North America. In Anglicanism, this transformation is visible in the increasing influence of African provinces and in the emergence of transnational networks linking African, North American, European, and other Anglican actors. GAFCON's institutional development illustrates this transition. Its current description of its movement identifies multiple provinces and emerging jurisdictions across continents and explicitly presents Anglican networks as operating beyond the conventional provincial arrangement¹⁵. Its theological education and mission networks further demonstrate the creation of institutional relationships that cross territorial boundaries¹⁶. The resulting configuration can therefore be understood as increasingly polycentric: authority is not necessarily located in one place but distributed among multiple ecclesiastical centres connected through networks.

This development also requires a reconsideration of the relationship between province and network. The traditional Anglican model assumes that geographical territory provides the principal framework within which ecclesiastical authority is organized. Contemporary realignment complicates this model because theological affinity can generate relationships that cross territorial boundaries. A bishop, priest, congregation, or province may therefore participate simultaneously in a territorial Anglican structure and a transnational orthodox network.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature reviewed above establishes several important conclusions. First, scholars have demonstrated that the post-1998 Anglican crisis is rooted in broader questions of authority, identity, globalization, and ecclesiastical governance rather than sexuality alone. Second, studies of GAFCON have demonstrated the emergence of transnational networks that actively construct and negotiate claims to Anglican orthodoxy. Third, geographical scholarship has shown that Anglican conflicts generate new connections and disconnections among places. Fourth, migration scholarship demonstrates that religious actors can sustain and reproduce identities across national boundaries.

However, these strands of scholarship have not been sufficiently brought together. In particular, the relationship between provincial realignment, migrant clergy, and the geographical restructuring of Anglican orthodoxy remains underexplored. Existing scholarship demonstrates that transnational Anglican networks exist, but less attention has been given to the role of mobile clergy

¹⁰ 14. David Hirome and Hansung Kim, "African Missionaries in the United States?" *Missiology: An International Review*, published online 2025/2026.

15. GAFCON, "Global Movement."

16. GAFCON, "Theological Education" and "Global Mission Partnership."



as agents who connect, reproduce, and potentially expand these networks. The present article addresses this gap by conceptualizing Anglican realignment as a process of geographical re-mapping in which institutional boundaries, transnational networks, and mobile religious actors interact.

The article therefore moves beyond the question of whether the Anglican Communion is divided and asks a broader question: what kind of Anglican geography is emerging from the fracture? It argues that the period from 1998 to 2026 has witnessed a movement from a predominantly territorial conception of Anglican communion toward a more complex and increasingly networked configuration in which provinces, alternative jurisdictions, migrant clergy, and transnational orthodox networks intersect. The concept of the “geography of fracture” consequently provides a framework for understanding contemporary Anglican realignment not simply as institutional fragmentation but as the ongoing reorganization of the spatial location and circulation of ecclesiastical authority.

3.0. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored primarily on Transnational Social Field Theory and Henri Lefebvre’s Production of Space Theory. The combination of the two theories is appropriate because the study examines two closely related processes: the movement of Anglican clergy and ecclesiastical relationships across national and provincial boundaries, and the consequent transformation of the geographical and institutional organization of Anglican authority. Rather than treating migration and spatial change as separate phenomena, the framework understands them as mutually connected processes through which contemporary Anglicanism is being reconfigured.

3.1.1 Transnational Social Field Theory

Transnational Social Field Theory, associated particularly with Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, challenges approaches that treat migration as a one-directional movement from one national society into another. Levitt and Glick Schiller conceptualize transnationalism in terms of social fields that connect people and institutions across national boundaries. Such fields allow migrants to maintain relationships, identities, practices, and institutional connections across different geographical locations¹. Their approach distinguishes between migrants’ “ways of being” and “ways of belonging,” thereby demonstrating that physical residence in one country does not necessarily eliminate continuing participation in social and institutional relationships elsewhere.¹¹

The relevance of this theory to the present study is considerable. Anglican provinces have traditionally been organized territorially, with bishops exercising ecclesiastical authority within defined diocesan and provincial boundaries. However, the development of GAFCON, the Global South Fellowship, alternative Anglican jurisdictions, diaspora congregations, and international mission networks demonstrate that Anglican relationships increasingly operate across these territorial boundaries. Migrant clergy are particularly important within this process because their movement can connect ecclesiastical institutions located in different countries and provinces.

¹¹1. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society,” *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002–1039.



From this perspective, an Anglican priest who moves from Nigeria to Britain, from Uganda to North America, or from another African province to a Western context should not necessarily be understood simply as a migrant who has left one religious environment and entered another. The priest may continue to maintain theological, professional, ecclesiastical, financial, and personal relationships with the original province while simultaneously becoming incorporated into another Anglican setting. This creates a transnational religious field in which ideas, practices, loyalties, and institutional relationships circulate between multiple locations.

The theory therefore provides an analytical basis for examining migrant clergy as agents of ecclesiastical connectivity. Their significance lies not simply in their physical movement but in the relationships, they carry and reproduce across borders. The theory also helps explain how theological identities associated with African Anglican provinces may become reproduced within diaspora congregations and alternative Anglican structures in Europe and North America.

The application of Transnational Social Field Theory to this study consequently involves examining three related processes: mobility, connectivity, and institutional reproduction. First, clergy mobility refers to the movement of priests and bishops across national and provincial boundaries. Second, connectivity concerns the networks linking migrant clergy to their provinces, dioceses, bishops, congregations, and transnational organizations. Third, institutional reproduction refers to the ways in which theological orientations, ecclesiastical practices, and claims to Anglican orthodoxy are carried into new geographical contexts.

The theory is therefore particularly useful for explaining why the geographical consequences of Anglican realignment cannot be understood simply by examining changes in formal provincial boundaries. The realignment also occurs through people and networks that cross those boundaries.

3.1.2 Lefebvre's Production of Space Theory

The second theoretical foundation is Henri Lefebvre's Production of Space Theory. Lefebvre rejects the understanding of space as a neutral or empty geographical container. Instead, he argues that social space is produced through social relations, practices, representations, and struggles over power². His approach consequently shifts attention from asking simply where something occurs to asking how particular spaces are produced, represented, controlled, and experienced. Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* remains a foundational work in spatial theory and has been influential across human geography and related disciplines.¹²

Of particular relevance is Lefebvre's spatial triad of spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces. Spatial practices concern the ways social actors organize and reproduce space; representations of space refer to the conceptual and institutional understandings through which space is organized; while representational spaces concern lived and experienced space³. Later scholarship has emphasized the usefulness of this triad for analyzing the relationship between institutions, discourse, practices, and lived experience.

¹² 2. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

3. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, particularly the discussion of spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces. See also Husik Ghulyan, "Lefebvre's Production of Space in the Context of Turkey: A Comprehensive Literature Survey," *SAGE Open* (2019).



Applied to Anglicanism, Lefebvre's theory permits the study of ecclesiastical geography as something actively produced rather than naturally given. Anglican provinces, dioceses, jurisdictions, conferences, networks, and congregations are not merely points on a map. They are institutional spaces produced through authority, doctrine, relationships, practices, and recognition.

Spatial practices in this study include the movement of clergy, establishment of congregations, formation of new dioceses, participation in transnational conferences, mission partnerships, and the development of networks linking Anglican actors across geographical boundaries.

Representations of space include the maps, institutional classifications, provincial boundaries, ecclesiastical constitutions, declarations, statements, and theological narratives through which Anglican actors define where legitimate Anglican authority is located.

Representational or lived spaces refer to the experiences of clergy and congregations who inhabit these changing ecclesiastical arrangements. A migrant priest serving an Anglican congregation in Britain, for example, may simultaneously experience belonging to a local diocese, an African province, a diaspora community, and a transnational network of conservative Anglicanism.

Lefebvre's theory is therefore particularly useful for understanding the article's central concept of the “geography of fracture.” The Anglican fracture is not simply a division between theological camps. It produces and reorganizes social and institutional spaces. When a province rejects another province's theological position, when a congregation changes jurisdiction, when a new diocese is created, or when clergy establish transnational connections, the spatial organization of Anglicanism itself is altered.

3.1.3 Complementarity of the Two Theories

The two theories perform different but complementary functions.

Transnational Social Field Theory explains movement and connectivity, while Production of Space Theory explains the transformation of the spaces through which those relationships operate.

This relationship can be expressed as:

«Theological conflict → institutional realignment → clergy mobility → transnational networks → production of new ecclesiastical spaces → re-mapping of Anglican authority.»

Transnationalism therefore helps explain how relationships move across boundaries, while spatial theory helps explain what those movements do to the organisation of Anglican space.

This combination prevents the study from reducing Anglican realignment either to institutional history or to migration history. Instead, it allows the research to examine the interaction between institutions, people, networks, territory, and authority.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The central concept of this study is the “geography of fracture.” The phrase refers to the spatial consequences of theological and institutional divisions within global Anglicanism. It does not imply that Anglicanism has simply broken into isolated geographical units. Rather, the concept captures the emergence of new connections, boundaries, centres, and networks following the intensification of Anglican disputes from 1998 onward. Four interconnected concepts are central to the framework: provincial realignment, migrant clergy, transnational Anglican networks, and the re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy.



3.2.1 Provincial Realignment

Provincial realignment refers to changes in the relationships among Anglican provinces and jurisdictions resulting from theological, ecclesiological, and institutional disagreements. The concept encompasses the strengthening of relationships among conservative provinces, the emergence of GAFCON and Global South networks, the formation or recognition of alternative jurisdictions, and changing patterns of inter-provincial cooperation.

The important point for this study is that realignment is not understood merely as organizational restructuring. It is treated as a spatial process because it changes the relationships between geographical territories and ecclesiastical authority.

3.2.2 Migrant Clergy

Migrant clergy are clergy who move across national or provincial boundaries and subsequently participate in ecclesiastical life in more than one geographical setting. The concept is used broadly enough to include clergy involved in diaspora ministry, international mission, trans-provincial ministry, and service within alternative Anglican jurisdictions.

Their significance lies in their potential role as carriers and connectors of ecclesiastical networks. Through migration, clergy can transfer theological ideas, ministerial practices, institutional relationships, and ecclesiastical identities between geographical contexts.

3.2.3 Transnational Anglican Networks

Transnational Anglican networks refer to relationships among bishops, clergy, dioceses, provinces, congregations, organizations, and theological institutions that extend across national and provincial boundaries.

These networks challenge a purely territorial conception of Anglican identity. An Anglican actor can simultaneously participate in a local territorial structure and a transnational network based on theological affinity.

This concept is especially important in analyzing GAFCON and related orthodox Anglican formations, where relationships frequently extend beyond the formal boundaries of individual provinces.

3.2.4 Re-mapping Global Anglican Orthodoxy

The phrase “re-mapping global Anglican orthodoxy” constitutes the principal dependent concept of the study. It refers to the changing geographical and institutional distribution of claims to legitimate Anglican identity and authority.

The study does not assume that one group possesses an objectively uncontested definition of orthodoxy. Instead, it examines how different Anglican actors claim, negotiate, institutionalise, and circulate competing understandings of orthodoxy.

Thus, the re-mapping of orthodoxy can occur when:

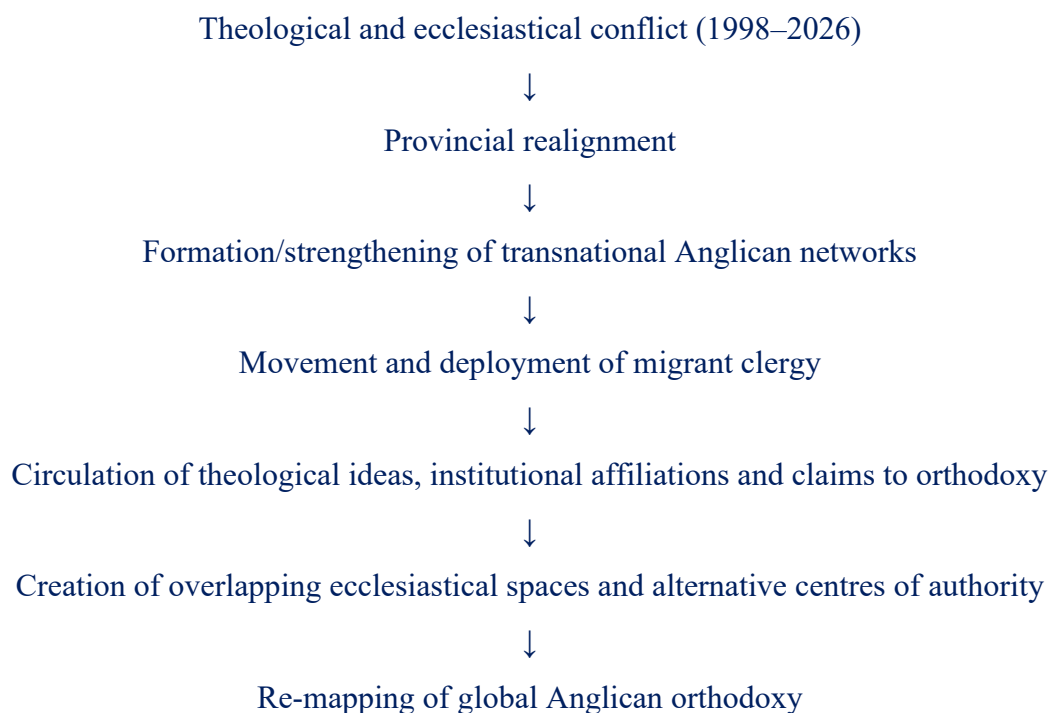
1. a province changes its institutional alignment;
2. a new Anglican jurisdiction is established;
3. a migrant priest establishes or joins a transnational congregation;



4. a theological network connects previously distant provinces;
5. Ecclesiastical recognition shifts from one institutional centre to another.

3.2.5 Conceptual Relationship

The conceptual relationship can therefore be represented as follows:



The framework does not assume that this process is linear or uniform. Realignment may produce cooperation in one context and conflict in another; clergy mobility may strengthen existing provincial relationships or facilitate the creation of alternative jurisdictions. The framework therefore treats agency, mobility, institutional power, and spatial restructuring as interacting processes.

3.3 Application to the Study

The framework will guide the analysis of the period 1998–2026. The study will first identify major moments of Anglican theological and institutional fracture, beginning with Lambeth 1998 and extending through the subsequent controversies surrounding sexuality, the emergence of GAFCON, the consolidation of Global South networks, the Kigali developments of 2023, and the institutional developments associated with the Abuja gathering in 2026.

It will then examine how provincial relationships changed and how clergy mobility intersected with those changes. Finally, it will assess whether these developments are best understood as simple fragmentation or as the emergence of a new, networked and increasingly multi-centred Anglican geography.

It will then examine how provincial relationships changed and how clergy mobility intersected with those changes. Finally, it will assess whether these developments are best understood as simple fragmentation or as the emergence of a new, networked and increasingly multi-centred Anglican geography.

The framework therefore provides the article with a clear analytical trajectory:



«conflict → realignment → mobility → networking → spatial restructuring → re-mapping. »

This theoretical and conceptual approach enables the study to make a contribution beyond existing accounts of the Anglican sexuality controversy. Its central concern is not simply why Anglicanism fractured, but how the fracture reorganised the geographical distribution, movement, and institutional location of Anglican authority and claims to orthodoxy.

4.0 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative historical and documentary research design, supplemented by a transnational network perspective (network-oriented analysis), to examine the geographical transformation of global Anglicanism between 1998 and 2026. The choice of this design is informed by the nature of the research problem, which concerns historical developments, institutional realignment, clergy mobility, competing claims to orthodoxy, and changing patterns of ecclesiastical authority. Rather than measuring attitudes statistically, the study seeks to explain how relationships, institutions, people, and theological claims have been reorganized across geographical and ecclesiastical boundaries.

4.1 Research Approach and Scope

The study covers the period 1998–2026, beginning with the Lambeth Conference Resolution I.10 and extending to the contemporary restructuring of global Anglican networks. The period is divided analytically into significant phases: the emergence of the sexuality controversy after 1998; the intensification of provincial tensions following the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson; the emergence of GAFCON in 2008; the consolidation of Global South and other orthodox Anglican networks; the Kigali developments of 2023; and the institutional developments associated with the 2026 Abuja gathering.

The study does not attempt to examine every Anglican province or every migrant clergy movement globally. Instead, it employs purposive case selection, concentrating on provinces, jurisdictions, networks, and clergy movements that have played a demonstrable role in Anglican realignment. Particular attention will be given to selected African provinces, including Nigeria, together with relevant Anglican structures in Britain, North America, and other locations where transnational orthodox Anglican networks have become significant.

4.2 Sources of Data

The study relies primarily on documentary and archival sources. Primary materials will include Lambeth Conference resolutions, Anglican Communion statements, Primates' Meeting documents, provincial communiqués, GAFCON declarations and conference statements, Global South Fellowship documents, provincial and diocesan publications, Episcopal statements, ecclesiastical constitutions, and official records relating to newly established or realigned Anglican jurisdictions.

Particular attention will be given to documents that reveal changes in recognition, affiliation, jurisdiction, and theological identity. Documentary evidence concerning migrant clergy will include publicly available biographies, institutional records, diocesan profiles, mission reports, and other reliable sources that establish patterns of movement and ecclesiastical affiliation.

4.3 Data Analysis



The documentary material will be analyzed using qualitative thematic and historical analysis. Documents will be coded around major themes including provincial realignment, ecclesiastical authority, orthodoxy, theological conflict, clergy mobility, transnational networks, jurisdictional change, and geographical reconfiguration.

A network-oriented analysis will then be used to identify relationships among provinces, bishops, clergy, dioceses, jurisdictions, and transnational organizations. Particular attention will be given to repeated institutional relationships and movements across geographical boundaries.

The analysis will be guided by the study's theoretical framework. Transnational Social Field Theory will assist in interpreting cross-border relationships and clergy mobility, while Lefebvre's Production of Space Theory will guide analysis of how ecclesiastical spaces, boundaries, and centres of authority are produced and transformed.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

The study will employ source triangulation, comparing official institutional documents with scholarly literature and, where interviews are conducted, participants' accounts. Priority will be given to primary sources and peer-reviewed scholarship, while claims obtained from institutional websites will be cross-checked against independent academic or documentary evidence. This approach will enhance the credibility of the findings and minimize dependence on the self-representation of any single Anglican organization.

5.0 Historical Context: From Lambeth 1998 to the Re-mapping of Global Anglicanism, 1998–2026

The contemporary fracture within global Anglicanism cannot be understood without reference to the institutional and theological developments that unfolded from the late 1990s. Although disagreements concerning doctrine, authority, sexuality, and cultural differences had existed within the Anglican Communion for decades, the period beginning with the 1998 Lambeth Conference marked a decisive stage in the transformation of these disagreements into sustained institutional realignment. Between 1998 and 2026, the Communion moved from a predominantly provincial model of ecclesiastical interaction towards an increasingly complex configuration involving transnational networks, alternative jurisdictions, migrant clergy, and competing claims to Anglican authority.

5.1 Lambeth 1998 and the Emerging Fault Line

The 1998 Lambeth Conference provides an appropriate starting point because Resolution I.10 became a major reference point in subsequent Anglican debates over human sexuality. The resolution affirmed traditional Anglican teaching concerning marriage while also calling for pastoral sensitivity, respect, and care toward persons experiencing same-sex attraction¹. Although Lambeth resolutions are not legally binding on autonomous Anglican provinces, Resolution I.10 acquired considerable symbolic and theological significance.

Its importance lay partly in the fact that different provinces subsequently interpreted its authority differently. Conservative provinces generally treated it as an authoritative expression of the Communion's existing teaching, whereas more progressive Anglicans questioned whether a Lambeth resolution could determine the policy of autonomous provinces. The disagreement



therefore moved beyond sexuality itself into questions concerning the nature of communion, provincial autonomy, Episcopal authority, and the meaning of common Anglican identity.¹³

The geographical significance of the controversy was already apparent. The debate increasingly revealed differences between Anglican provinces in North America and parts of Europe on the one hand and several African and Global South provinces on the other. This emerging pattern challenged older assumptions about where theological influence within Anglicanism was located.

5.2 The 2003 Consecration of Gene Robinson

The consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003 intensified the developing conflict. The event became a major catalyst for opposition from conservative Anglican provinces and contributed to the mobilisation of networks that subsequently developed into more formal structures of realignment. The Church of Nigeria's bishops, for example, issued a strong statement in November 2003 expressing opposition to the consecration and authorising the Primate to respond on behalf of the Nigerian Church².

The significance of the Nigerian response was greater than its immediate institutional reaction. It demonstrated that African Anglican provinces were increasingly willing to exercise theological agency in a controversy that had initially been associated primarily with Western Anglicanism. The geography of Anglican influence was therefore beginning to change: theological authority and initiative were increasingly being articulated from the Global South.¹⁴

The controversy also demonstrated the limitations of understanding the Anglican Communion purely through territorial provinces. Bishops and clergy increasingly formed relationships based on theological affinity that crossed provincial boundaries. These relationships subsequently became institutionalised through conferences, declarations, mission networks, and alternative jurisdictions.

5.3 From Global South Mobilisation to GAFCON

The years following 2003 witnessed growing coordination among conservative Anglican provinces. The Global South Primates and other Anglican leaders increasingly sought mechanisms through which orthodox Anglicans could cooperate beyond existing structures. The emergence of GAFCON in 2008 represented a decisive transition from episodic mobilisation to a more organised transnational movement.

The first GAFCON, held in Jerusalem in June 2008, brought together more than 1,100 participants, including bishops and other clergy and lay representatives from numerous Anglican provinces. Its Jerusalem Declaration articulated a theological identity centred on biblical authority, historic Anglican formularies, and opposition to what participants regarded as doctrinal revisionism within parts of the Communion^{3, 15}

¹³1. Anglican Communion Office, "Lambeth Conference Resolutions," Anglican Communion. "Lambeth Conference Resolutions" (<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/lambeth-conference-resolutions/>)

¹⁴2. Church of Nigeria, "Statement from the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Nigeria," November 2003. "Church of Nigeria statement on the 2003 developments" (<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2003/11/statement-from-the-bishops-of-the-anglican-church-of-nigeria.aspx>)

3. GAFCON, "The Jerusalem Statement," 2008. "The Jerusalem Statement" (<https://gafcon.org/about/the-jerusalem-statement>)¹⁵

4. GAFCON, "Conference Statements." "GAFCON Conference Statements" (<https://gafcon.org/about/conference-statements/?utm>)



GAFCON's emergence is particularly significant for the present study because it introduced a different organisational logic into global Anglicanism. Rather than organising Anglican relationships exclusively through territorial provinces and the established Instruments of Communion, GAFCON created a network in which theological affinity could connect actors across geographical boundaries. The movement's subsequent conferences in Nairobi in 2013, Jerusalem in 2018, and Kigali in 2023 strengthened this transnational orientation⁴.

This represented an important transformation in the geography of Anglicanism. A bishop in Africa could develop direct institutional relationships with clergy and congregations in North America or Europe without those relationships being mediated entirely through the traditional provincial structure. Consequently, geographical distance became less significant as a determinant of ecclesiastical affiliation.

5.4 The Consolidation of Alternative Anglican Structures

The period after 2008 witnessed a gradual institutionalization of Anglican realignment. One of the most significant developments was the establishment of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in 2009. ACNA emerged from networks of congregations and clergy who had separated from or were dissatisfied with existing Anglican structures in North America. Its subsequent recognition and support within the GAFCON network demonstrated the increasing significance of alternative Anglican jurisdictions⁵.

Similar developments occurred elsewhere. In Europe, the Anglican Network in Europe emerged as an alternative structure connecting congregations committed to conservative Anglican theology. In Brazil, the Anglican Church in Brazil became increasingly associated with the orthodox realignment. In Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, alternative jurisdictions also emerged or developed relationships with GAFCON-associated networks.

These developments are important because they demonstrate that the fracture was no longer simply a disagreement within provinces. It increasingly involved the creation of new ecclesiastical spaces alongside or across existing provincial boundaries. The resulting Anglican geography became layered: traditional provinces continued to exist, while alternative jurisdictions developed relationships that did not correspond neatly to conventional territorial organization.

5.5 The Role of African Provinces

The transformation of Anglican geography also reflects the growing importance of African provinces. Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and other African provinces became influential participants in the conservative realignment. Their influence challenged the historical pattern in which theological authority was frequently associated with European and North American centres.

The Church of Nigeria was particularly significant because of its strong theological response to developments concerning sexuality and its active participation in GAFCON and Global South structures. Its position demonstrated that African Anglicanism was not merely responding to

5. GAFCON, "About GAFCON." "GAFCON: About" (<https://gafcon.org/about/>)



Western theological developments but was actively contributing to the definition and institutionalization of what it regarded as orthodox Anglican Christianity^{6,16}

This shift is important for understanding the concept of re-mapping. The contemporary geography of Anglican orthodoxy cannot be represented simply as a movement from a European centre towards an African periphery. Instead, it increasingly resembles a network of interacting centres in which African provinces exercise significant theological, demographic, and institutional influence.

5.6 The Kigali Commitment and Intensification of Realignment

The 2023 GAFCON IV meeting in Kigali marked another significant stage in the development of this alternative Anglican order. The Kigali Commitment stated that the traditional Instruments of Communion had failed adequately to maintain biblical faithfulness and announced a stronger alignment among orthodox Anglican provinces and jurisdictions.¹⁷

The significance of Kigali was therefore institutional as well as theological. It strengthened the argument that GAFCON-associated Anglicans were developing an alternative structure of global fellowship. The movement's support for jurisdictions such as ACNA and the Anglican Network in Europe demonstrated that geographical territory was no longer the only basis for determining ecclesiastical relationships.

At this stage, the concept of provincial realignment became increasingly important. Realignment involved not only changes in personal allegiance but also the emergence of relationships between provinces, bishops, clergy, and congregations that operated outside traditional institutional channels.

5.7 Migrant Clergy and the Emerging Transnational Geography

The transformation of Anglican structures has coincided with broader patterns of international migration. Anglican clergy from Africa increasingly serve congregations outside their provinces of origin, particularly in Europe and North America. Their presence creates channels through which theological ideas, ecclesiastical identities, ministerial practices, and institutional relationships circulate across national boundaries.

Migrant clergy are therefore significant to the geography of Anglican realignment because they can operate simultaneously within several institutional and cultural spaces. A Nigerian or Ugandan priest serving in Britain, for example, may maintain professional and theological relationships with churches and bishops in the country of origin while participating in a British diocese or a transnational orthodox network in the country of residence.

This phenomenon complicates conventional territorial models of Anglican authority. Clergy mobility means that theological traditions associated with particular provinces can become embedded within new geographical settings. Migrant clergy can consequently function as agents of transnational ecclesiastical connectivity, linking provinces, dioceses, congregations, and networks across national boundaries.

¹⁶ 6. See Joanna Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)," *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206. "Article record" (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2010.02.006>)

¹⁷ 7. GAFCON, "GAFCON IV: The Kigali Commitment," 2023. "The Kigali Commitment" (<https://gafcon.org/communique-updates/gafcon-iv-the-kigali-commitment/>)



The importance of this development is heightened by the growth of diaspora Anglican congregations. Such congregations may retain strong relationships with their countries of origin while adapting to the institutional environment of the receiving country. They therefore represent hybrid ecclesiastical spaces in which national, provincial, cultural, and theological identities intersect.

5.8 Abuja 2026 and the Emergence of a New Institutional Configuration

The March 2026 GAFCON gathering in Abuja represents the latest major development within the period under study. The meeting brought together hundreds of bishops and other Anglican leaders from numerous provinces and jurisdictions and produced the Abuja Affirmation. More significantly, the gathering announced the development of a Global Anglican Council intended to provide a new coordinating structure for the orthodox Anglican movement^{8,18}. This development is significant for the historical trajectory examined in this article because it suggests that the realignment process has moved beyond protest against particular decisions within the Anglican Communion toward the construction of an alternative institutional architecture. The emerging structure does not necessarily mean that existing Anglican provinces have disappeared. Rather, it indicates the development of overlapping systems of ecclesiastical relationship and authority.

The Abuja development therefore provides an appropriate endpoint for the present study. Between 1998 and 2026, Anglicanism moved from a period in which theological disagreement was primarily negotiated through established Communion mechanisms towards a more complex environment in which multiple networks and structures compete and cooperate in defining Anglican identity and orthodoxy.

5.9 From Fracture to Re-mapping

The historical trajectory from Lambeth 1998 to Abuja 2026 demonstrates that the Anglican crisis has progressively acquired a spatial dimension. What began as disagreement concerning sexuality and biblical interpretation contributed to the mobilisation of provinces, the emergence of transnational networks, the establishment of alternative jurisdictions, and the movement of clergy and congregations across ecclesiastical boundaries.

The result is not adequately described as simple fragmentation. Anglican provinces remain territorially organised, and the established Communion structures continue to exist. However, these structures now operate alongside increasingly influential networks that cross provincial boundaries. The geography of Anglicanism has therefore become more networked, overlapping, and multi-centred.

This historical development provides the foundation for the article's central argument: the Anglican fracture has produced a re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy. The location of Anglican authority can no longer be understood exclusively through formal provincial boundaries. It must also be examined through the networks, movements, jurisdictions, and mobile clergy that connect different geographical spaces. The next sections therefore examine provincial realignment and migrant clergy as two interconnected mechanisms through which this new Anglican geography has been produced.

¹⁸⁸. GAFCON, "The Abuja Affirmation," 2026. "The Abuja Affirmation" (<https://gafcon.org/communique-updates/the-abuja-affirmation/>)



6.0 Provincial Realignment and the Reconfiguration of Anglican Space

Provincial realignment represents one of the most significant manifestations of the geographical fracture within contemporary Anglicanism. Since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, disagreements concerning human sexuality, biblical interpretation, ecclesiastical authority, and the limits of provincial autonomy have progressively altered relationships among Anglican provinces. These developments should not, however, be understood simply as a division between liberal Western provinces and conservative African provinces. Such a binary interpretation overlooks the emergence of transnational networks, alternative jurisdictions, and relationships that increasingly cross conventional provincial boundaries. Provincial realignment is therefore understood in this study as a spatial and relational process through which the geographical organization of Anglican authority is being reconfigured.

The Anglican Communion is constituted by autonomous churches or provinces, each possessing substantial authority over its internal affairs. Historically, this arrangement enabled Anglicanism to accommodate significant theological and cultural diversity while maintaining communion through shared institutions and relationships. However, the controversy surrounding human sexuality exposed tensions between provincial autonomy and the pursuit of a common global Anglican identity. The 1998 Lambeth Conference Resolution I.10 subsequently became an important reference point in this debate. Although Lambeth resolutions are not legally binding on autonomous provinces, conservative Anglicans increasingly regarded Resolution I.10 as an expression of established Anglican teaching¹.¹⁹

The situation became more acute following the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in the Episcopal Church in the United States. The event generated strong reactions from several African and Global South provinces and intensified existing disagreements concerning biblical interpretation and ecclesiastical authority. The Church of Nigeria, for example, strongly opposed the development and subsequently became an

important participant in the conservative Anglican realignment². What initially appeared to be a dispute centered on a Western province therefore acquired a distinctly global character.

The significance of this development lies in the manner in which theological affinity increasingly became a basis for Anglican cooperation alongside territorial proximity. Provinces began establishing stronger relationships through episcopal encounters, conferences, theological institutions, mission partnerships, and transnational organisations. Consequently, provincial identity became increasingly embedded within wider networks. This represented a movement from a predominantly territorial conception of Anglicanism towards a more networked form of Anglican affiliation.

The emergence of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in 2008 provided the most significant institutional expression of this transformation. The inaugural conference in Jerusalem brought together more than 1,100 Anglican participants from different parts of the world and produced the Jerusalem Declaration, which articulated a common theological identity based upon biblical authority and historic Anglican formularies³. GAFCON's significance, however, extended

¹⁹ 1. Anglican Communion Office, "Lambeth Conference Resolutions." Lambeth Conference Resolutions



beyond its theological declarations. It provided a transnational platform through which Anglicans from different provinces could develop relationships independently of the established structures of the Anglican Communion.²⁰

The subsequent GAFCON conferences in Nairobi in 2013, Jerusalem in 2018, and Kigali in 2023 strengthened these relationships and expanded the movement's geographical reach⁴.

The emergence of GAFCON consequently altered the spatial logic of Anglican cooperation. An Anglican bishop or priest could establish significant institutional and theological relationships with counterparts on another continent without those relationships being mediated entirely through the traditional provincial structure.

This development produced what may be described as overlapping ecclesiastical geographies. Provinces continued to exist as territorial institutions, but their members increasingly participated in networks whose geographical reach extended beyond provincial boundaries. Thus, geographical territory remained important, but it was no longer sufficient to explain the organization of Anglican relationships.

The changing role of African Anglican provinces is particularly important within this process. Provinces such as Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya became prominent participants in the conservative realignment. Their growing influence challenged the historical assumption that the principal centres of Anglican theological authority were located in Britain and North America. African Anglican provinces increasingly became active participants in defining theological norms, mobilizing ecclesiastical networks, supporting alternative jurisdictions, and shaping debates concerning the future of global Anglicanism.

The Church of Nigeria provides a particularly significant example. Its opposition to the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson and its subsequent participation in GAFCON and Global South networks positioned it as an important centre of conservative Anglican mobilisation⁵. The significance of Nigeria and other African provinces is therefore not simply that they represent a geographical bloc opposing Western Anglicanism. Rather, they demonstrate the emergence of multiple centres of Anglican agency and authority.²¹

This transformation is central to the argument of this article. The contemporary geography of Anglican orthodoxy can no longer be represented as a simple movement from a European centre towards an African periphery. Instead, it increasingly resembles a network of interacting centres. African provinces, North American jurisdictions, European networks, and global Anglican organizations participate in relationships that transcend conventional territorial boundaries. This process constitutes an important dimension of what this study describes as the re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy.

Provincial realignment has also been accompanied by the emergence of alternative Anglican jurisdictions. The establishment of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in 2009 was

²⁰2. Church of Nigeria, "Statement from the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Nigeria," November 2003. Church of Nigeria statement

3. GAFCON, "The Jerusalem Statement," 2008. The Jerusalem Statement

4. GAFCON, "Conference Statements." GAFCON Conference Statements

²¹5. Joanna Sadgrove et al., "Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)," *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206. Article record



particularly significant. ACNA brought together congregations and clergy who had become dissatisfied with existing Anglican structures in North America and subsequently developed close relationships with GAFCON and other orthodox Anglican networks⁶. Similar developments occurred in Europe and other regions where alternative Anglican structures emerged to provide ecclesiastical homes for congregations and clergy committed to conservative Anglican theology.

The significance of these developments is that the Anglican fracture was no longer simply a disagreement within established provinces. It increasingly involved the creation of alternative ecclesiastical spaces alongside or across existing provincial boundaries. Consequently, an Anglican congregation could be geographically located within the territory of one province while maintaining theological, institutional, or Episcopal relationships with another jurisdiction or transnational network.²²

This development gives substance to the concept of “geography of fracture.” Fracture does not necessarily produce isolation. Instead, institutional separation can generate new relationships and new spaces of belonging. When relationships between provinces become strained, bishops, clergy, and congregations may establish alternative connections with actors elsewhere. The geographical consequence is therefore not simply fragmentation but the creation of new routes of ecclesiastical affiliation.

The role of migrant clergy is particularly important in this respect. Anglican clergy increasingly move between African, European, North American, and other contexts. Such mobility provides channels through which theological ideas, ministerial practices, ecclesiastical identities, and institutional relationships circulate across national boundaries. A Nigerian priest serving in Britain, for example, may operate within the ecclesiastical structures of the receiving country while maintaining theological, professional, and institutional relationships with churches and bishops in Nigeria.

Migrant clergy may therefore function as agents of transnational ecclesiastical connectivity. Their importance is not simply that they move physically between countries but that they carry relationships and institutional identities across geographical boundaries. Through their ministry, preaching, theological education, conferences, mission activities, and professional networks, they can contribute to the reproduction of particular forms of Anglican identity in new geographical contexts.

This relationship between provincial realignment and clergy mobility is central to the present study. Realignment creates new institutional relationships, while clergy mobility provides human channels through which those relationships can be reproduced and extended. The two processes are therefore mutually reinforcing. The movement of clergy can strengthen relationships between African provinces and diaspora communities, facilitate connections with alternative jurisdictions, and enable theological networks to extend beyond their original geographical centres.

The Kigali Commitment of 2023 marked another significant stage in this process. GAFCON participants expressed serious concerns about the direction of the wider Anglican Communion and strengthened their commitment to orthodox Anglican structures and relationships⁷. The development demonstrated that the realignment had moved beyond opposition to particular

²²6. GAFCON, “About GAFCON.” GAFCON: About



decisions and towards the construction of a more coherent alternative framework for global Anglican cooperation.²³

The Abuja developments of 2026 provide the latest significant stage within the period examined in this article. The GAFCON gathering produced the Abuja Affirmation and announced further institutional development through a proposed Global Anglican Council⁸. The significance of this development lies in its indication that the realignment process has moved increasingly from theological protest towards the construction of an alternative institutional architecture.

The emergence of such structures does not necessarily mean that the historic Anglican Communion or its provinces have ceased to exist. Rather, it indicates that multiple systems of ecclesiastical relationship and authority now operate simultaneously. Traditional provincial structures coexist with transnational networks, alternative jurisdictions, and mobile clergy. Anglican affiliation is therefore becoming increasingly multidimensional. Provincial realignment should consequently be understood as more than institutional disagreement. It represents a process through which the geography of Anglican authority is being reorganized. The emergence of GAFCON, the increasing influence of African provinces, the creation of alternative jurisdictions, and the mobility of clergy have collectively produced a more complex Anglican landscape.

The central argument of this article is therefore that the contemporary Anglican fracture is better understood as a process of re-mapping rather than merely fragmentation. Fragmentation suggests that the Communion is breaking into separate and relatively isolated geographical units. Re-mapping, by contrast, captures the creation of new relationships, networks, routes, centres, and institutional spaces across existing boundaries.

Provincial realignment is one of the principal mechanisms through which this re-mapping has occurred. It has weakened the assumption that Anglican identity and authority are determined primarily by territorial province and has strengthened the significance of theological affinity, transnational networks, alternative jurisdictions, and mobile clergy. The resulting Anglican geography is increasingly polycentric, networked, and overlapping.

This transformation raises a fundamental question about the future of the Anglican Communion: can a communion organized principally through territorial provinces maintain a coherent global identity when its members increasingly construct relationships through transnational networks of theological affinity? Answering this question requires attention not only to institutional realignment but also to the people who move through and connect these spaces. Migrant clergy therefore constitute a crucial dimension of the geography of fracture, since their mobility provides an important human mechanism through which provincial realignment is reproduced and extended across geographical boundaries.

7.0 Migrant Clergy and Transnational Anglican Networks

The movement of clergy across national and provincial boundaries constitutes a critical but comparatively underexplored dimension of the contemporary Anglican realignment. Much of the literature on the Anglican crisis has concentrated on theological disagreements, provincial

²³7. GAFCON, “GAFCON IV: The Kigali Commitment,” 2023. The Kigali Commitment

8. GAFCON, “The Abuja Affirmation,” 2026. The Abuja Affirmation



autonomy, sexuality, GAFCON, and the institutional consequences of division. Less attention has been given to the human mobility through which theological identities and ecclesiastical relationships are transported, reproduced, and institutionalized in new geographical settings. This article argues that migrant clergy should therefore be understood not merely as individuals responding to opportunities for ministry abroad but as important actors in the reconfiguration of global Anglican space.

The concept of migrant clergy is used here to refer to ordained Anglican ministers who move across national or provincial boundaries and subsequently participate in ecclesiastical ministry outside their original context. Their movement may result from education, employment, missionary activity, family migration, church planting, Episcopal deployment, or the establishment of diaspora congregations. Whatever the immediate motivation, their mobility creates connections between ecclesiastical spaces that would otherwise remain geographically distant.

This process is particularly significant because Anglicanism has historically been organized around territorial provinces. A bishop normally exercises jurisdiction within a defined geographical area, while clergy ordinarily operate within diocesan and provincial structures. International clergy mobility complicates this arrangement because priests may retain relationships with their churches of origin while simultaneously becoming integrated into institutions in their countries of destination. Migration consequently creates overlapping ecclesiastical identities and networks.

The importance of such networks can be understood through Transnational Social Field Theory. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller argue that migrants frequently remain embedded in social relationships extending across national borders rather than simply moving from one society

²⁴into another¹. Applied to Anglicanism, this perspective suggests that clergy migration should not be understood as a complete transition from one ecclesiastical environment to another. Rather, migrant clergy may continue to maintain theological, professional, institutional, and personal relationships with their provinces of origin while participating in the ecclesiastical structures of their destination.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in the movement of African Anglican clergy to Europe and North America. The historical relationship between Africa and Britain already included the movement of African clergy for education and missionary purposes. Contemporary migration has expanded and transformed these relationships. African clergy now minister within diaspora congregations and other Anglican contexts while maintaining connections with churches and networks in Africa. Migration has therefore contributed to reversing aspects of the older missionary geography in which Christianity was imagined primarily as flowing from Europe to Africa.

The contemporary pattern is increasingly multi-directional. Missionary relationships can flow from Africa to Europe and North America as well as in the opposite direction. GAFCON's own Global Mission Partnership network explicitly identifies “massive immigration and people

²⁴1. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society,” *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002–1039. [Article record](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00227.x?utm

2. GAFCON, “Global Mission Partnership.” [Global Mission Partnership](https://gafcon.org/priorities/global-mission-partnership/?utm



movement” and the revival of the Global South as important contexts for twenty-first-century Anglican mission. Its regional structure links Africa, Europe, North America, Asia, Oceania, and other regions in what it describes as reciprocal mission partnerships².

This development is important to the argument of this article because it demonstrates that migration is not simply a demographic background to Anglican realignment. It has become part of the infrastructure through which transnational Anglican networks operate. Clergy provide personal connections through which ideas, practices, resources, and institutional affiliations can move between provinces.

A particularly revealing example is the development of the Anglican Missionary Congregations (Europe). The organisation developed from a Nigerian diaspora congregation in Manchester and subsequently expanded into a network of congregations across the United Kingdom and parts of Europe. In 2024, it became a diocese within the Anglican Network in Europe, with 39 congregations and 54 mainly self-supporting clergy, according to the Network's own account³.

²⁵The development illustrates how a migrant congregation can move from being primarily a diaspora religious community towards becoming part of a wider transnational ecclesiastical structure.

This case is particularly significant because it demonstrates the interaction between migration, provincial realignment, and institutional re-mapping. The congregations originated largely within a Nigerian diaspora context, maintained informal relationships with the Church of Nigeria, and subsequently entered a formal relationship with the Anglican Network in Europe under the wider GAFCON framework⁴. The movement therefore cannot be reduced to migration from Nigeria to Britain. It represents the creation of a new ecclesiastical relationship linking Nigerian religious identity, European geography, and a transnational orthodox Anglican network.

Migrant clergy can consequently perform at least three functions within the geography of Anglican fracture. First, they can function as carriers of theological traditions. Clergy trained and formed within particular provincial contexts may reproduce those theological orientations in their new environments. Secondly, they can function as institutional brokers, connecting congregations and clergy in receiving countries with bishops, provinces, and networks in countries of origin. Thirdly, they can function as agents of ecclesiastical expansion, helping establish congregations, dioceses, mission initiatives, and alternative jurisdictions in geographical spaces where particular Anglican traditions were previously weak or absent.

The development of African clergy networks in Western Anglican contexts also illustrates the importance of social relationships in sustaining migrant ministry. For example, the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts describes an African Clergy Caucus established in 2011 as a voluntary association through which African clergy in the diaspora support one another and maintain relationships between African clergy and the diocesan church⁵. Although this example operates

²⁵ 3. Anglican Network in Europe, “Rejoicing at What Gafcon Is Doing in Europe,” October 15, 2024. [Anglican Missionary Congregations and the Anglican Network in Europe](<https://www.anglicannetwork.org/resources/press-release-rejoicing-at-what-gafcon-is-doing-in-europe?utm>)

4. Anglican Network in Europe, “Significant Moment in Mission Partnership.” [Mission partnership and Nigerian diaspora congregations](<https://www.anglicannetwork.org/resources/new-diocese-amc?utm>)



within a different institutional setting from GAFCON-associated networks, it demonstrates the broader phenomenon: migrant clergy frequently construct organisational structures that enable them to maintain collective identity and relationships across geographical and ecclesiastical boundaries.

These developments complicate the conventional understanding of provincial authority. A migrant priest may be geographically located in Britain or North America, culturally connected to Nigeria or Uganda, professionally incorporated into a local ecclesiastical institution, and simultaneously linked to a transnational network such as GAFCON. Consequently, the priest occupies several overlapping spaces of belonging.

This phenomenon also illustrates Lefebvre's argument that space is socially produced. Ecclesiastical space is not simply determined by the physical location of a congregation. It is produced through relationships, institutional practices, authority, identity, and movement⁶. A Nigerian congregation in Manchester, for example, is geographically British, but its ecclesiastical identity may also reflect Nigerian theological traditions, African migration, ²⁶European Anglican structures, and transnational GAFCON relationships. The resulting space cannot adequately be described through geography alone.

Transnational networks therefore become particularly important. GAFCON has developed numerous networks concerned with mission, church planting, theological education, legal and canonical matters, and other areas of Anglican life⁷. These networks connect people with shared theological commitments across national boundaries. Their importance is that they allow ecclesiastical relationships to persist even when formal provincial relationships become strained.²⁷ The Kigali Commitment of 2023 and the developments surrounding the Abuja Affirmation of 2026 demonstrate the growing institutional significance of these networks. By 2026, GAFCON-associated structures had moved towards a more formal Global Anglican Communion, with the Global Anglican Council presented as a body responsible for doctrine, mission, fellowship, and recognition of provinces and dioceses⁸. This development represents a major step in the institutionalisation of transnational Anglican relationships.

Migrant clergy are potentially central to this emerging configuration because they provide the human connections through which transnational institutions become locally embedded. A global network requires local congregations, clergy, bishops, and lay communities through which its identity can be reproduced. Migrant clergy can provide precisely these connections.

Nevertheless, the role of migrant clergy should not be romanticised. Mobility can also generate tensions concerning jurisdiction, cultural adaptation, authority, financial sustainability, and the relationship between diaspora identity and the receiving church. Furthermore, migrant clergy are not necessarily uniformly conservative or uniformly aligned with GAFCON. Their theological

²⁶ 5. Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, "Immigration & Multicultural Ministries." [African Clergy Caucus](<https://www.diomass.org/immigration-multicultural-ministries?utm>)

6. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

²⁷ 7. GAFCON, "Priorities." [GAFCON Strategic Networks](<https://www.gafcon.org/priorities/?utm>)

8. GAFCON, "The Abuja Affirmation," March 7, 2026; and "Global Anglican Council." [The Abuja Affirmation](<https://gafcon.org/communique-updates/the-abuja-affirmation/?utm>) [Global Anglican Council](<https://gafcon.org/about/global-anglican-council/?utm>)



positions and institutional affiliations require empirical examination rather than assumption. This is why the present study treats migrant clergy as analytical actors rather than a homogeneous category.

The relationship between migrant clergy and transnational networks nevertheless provides a crucial explanation for the geographical transformation of Anglicanism. Provincial realignment creates new institutional alignments, while clergy mobility helps carry those alignments across geographical boundaries. Transnational networks then consolidate these relationships by providing structures through which clergy and congregations can maintain connections beyond their immediate territorial location.

The resulting process can therefore be conceptualised as:

Clergy mobility → transnational relationships → circulation of theological identity → institutional networking → alternative ecclesiastical spaces → re-mapping of Anglican orthodoxy.

This process is central to the article's broader argument about the geography of fracture. The Anglican crisis has not simply divided existing provinces. It has generated new routes of movement and new networks of affiliation. Migrant clergy are among the principal human agents through which these routes operate.

The significance of migrant clergy, therefore, lies ultimately in their ability to connect place and network. They demonstrate that contemporary Anglican geography is no longer adequately explained by maps showing provinces and dioceses alone. The emerging geography must also account for the movements of clergy, diaspora congregations, transnational conferences, alternative jurisdictions, and networks of theological affinity. The re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy is consequently both institutional and human. Institutions create new structures of affiliation, but mobile clergy and congregations give those structures geographical reach and social substance. Migrant clergy thus constitute an important bridge between provincial realignment and the emergence of a more networked, polycentric Anglican order.

8.0 Re-mapping Global Anglican Orthodox

The preceding discussion demonstrates that the contemporary Anglican crisis is not simply a theological disagreement that has produced institutional division. It has also transformed the geography through which Anglican identity, authority, and claims to orthodoxy are organised. This section therefore develops the article's central concept of the “re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy.” The argument is that, between 1998 and 2026, the location and organisation of Anglican orthodoxy have increasingly shifted from a predominantly territorial and Communion-centred model towards a more complex, transnational, networked, and polycentric configuration.

The concept of “re-mapping” is deliberate. It does not suggest that one geographical centre has simply replaced another. Rather, it describes the emergence of new relationships between provinces, dioceses, jurisdictions, clergy, congregations, and transnational organisations. The result is an Anglican landscape in which territorial provinces continue to exist, but their authority and relationships are increasingly intersected by networks based on theological affinity.

8.1 From a Territorial to a Networked Geography

Historically, Anglican identity has been closely associated with geographical provinces. The Anglican Communion consists of autonomous churches organised largely around territorial



jurisdictions. This structure remains important, but the conflicts that intensified after 1998 exposed the limitations of a purely territorial understanding of communion.

The controversy following Lambeth Resolution I.10 and the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson encouraged Anglican actors to form relationships that were not determined exclusively by geographical proximity. The emergence of GAFCON provided an important institutional expression of this development. Its 2008 Jerusalem Declaration sought to articulate a common theological identity among Anglicans from different geographical contexts^{1,28}

Academic analysis of GAFCON has demonstrated that the movement did more than unite conservative Anglicans. It actively constructed and negotiated the boundaries of what it regarded as Anglican orthodoxy. Sadgrove and her co-authors argue that GAFCON became a significant site for defining “orthodox” Anglican identity while simultaneously negotiating cultural differences among participants from different parts of the world². Thus, orthodoxy itself became a transnationally negotiated category.²⁹ The geography of Anglicanism consequently became increasingly networked. Nigeria could be connected to North American and European Anglican actors; Uganda and Rwanda could participate in relationships extending across continents; and clergy and congregations could establish links with institutions outside their traditional provincial structures.

8.2 The Emergence of Multiple Centres of Orthodoxy

One of the most important consequences of this process has been the emergence of multiple centres of Anglican authority. The historical prominence of Canterbury and other Western Anglican institutions has not simply disappeared, but their position is increasingly accompanied by influential African and transnational centres.

GAFCON's current self-description identifies Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Anglican Church in North America, Brazil, and other jurisdictions as part of its network of provinces and emerging structures³. This is significant because it demonstrates the extent to which the movement's understanding of Anglican legitimacy has become geographically distributed. Nigeria is particularly important within this re-mapping. Its role in the conservative Anglican movement demonstrates that African Anglicanism is not merely responding to theological decisions made in Europe or North America. It has become an important source of theological leadership and institutional mobilization.

The consequence is a shift from a centre-periphery model towards a more polycentric model.

Anglican orthodoxy is increasingly claimed, negotiated, and institutionalized in several geographical locations simultaneously. This is not simply a demographic phenomenon. It represents a redistribution of ecclesiastical agency. The significance of African provinces lies not only in their numerical strength but also in their capacity to influence institutional relationships, theological discourse, episcopal networks, and the organisation of global Anglicanism.

²⁸ 1. GAFCON, “The Jerusalem Statement,” 2008. [The Jerusalem Statement](<https://gafcon.org/about/the-jerusalem-statement/?utm>)

²⁹2. Joanna Sadgrove et al., “Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON),” *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206.

3. GAFCON, “About GAFCON.”



8.3 Orthodoxy as a Contested Spatial Category

The term “orthodoxy” itself requires critical treatment. This article does not assume that there is a universally uncontested definition of Anglican orthodoxy. Rather, orthodoxy is treated as a contested theological and institutional category through which different Anglican actors establish boundaries of belonging and legitimacy.

Sadgrove et al. demonstrate that GAFCON sought to define orthodox Anglican identity while simultaneously negotiating internal differences concerning issues such as sexuality and women's ordination⁴. More recent scholarship similarly demonstrates that claims to Christian orthodoxy can function as forms of power through which particular understandings of legitimate Christian identity are established⁵.³⁰ The re-mapping of Anglican orthodoxy should therefore not be interpreted as the objective relocation of an uncontested theological substance. It refers instead to the geographical redistribution of claims to define, represent, and institutionalise Anglican orthodoxy.

This distinction is important. The article is not asking simply, “Where is Anglican orthodoxy?” It asks a more analytically useful question: Who claims the authority to define Anglican orthodoxy, where is that authority located, and through which networks is that claim transmitted?

8.4 The Role of Migrant Clergy in Re-mapping

The movement of clergy across national boundaries adds a human dimension to this re-mapping process. Migrant clergy can carry theological identities and institutional relationships from one geographical context into another. Their presence means that theological traditions associated with particular provinces can become embedded within new social and ecclesiastical environments.

A Nigerian priest ministering in Europe, for example, may remain connected to Nigerian Anglican networks while operating within a European ecclesiastical setting. The priest therefore participates simultaneously in different geographical and institutional spaces. Such mobility challenges the assumption that ecclesiastical identity is necessarily tied to the territory in which ministry takes place. The importance of migrant clergy lies particularly in their ability to connect province, diaspora, and transnational network. They can establish relationships between congregations and bishops, facilitate church planting, participate in international conferences, and transmit theological ideas across geographical boundaries. Migration therefore contributes to the production of what may be described as portable Anglican orthodoxy: theological identities and institutional relationships that can be reproduced outside the geographical territory in which they were originally formed.

8.5 Alternative Jurisdictions and New Ecclesiastical Maps

The emergence of alternative Anglican jurisdictions further demonstrates the re-mapping process. The Anglican Church in North America and the Anglican Network in Europe illustrate how new ecclesiastical structures have developed in response to disputes within established provinces. GAFCON's own description identifies ACNA and the Anglican Church in Brazil as jurisdictions that it regards as part of the emerging orthodox Anglican configuration⁶.

³⁰4. Sadgrove et al., “Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy,” 193–206.

5. Charlotte Dalwood, “Orthodoxy and the Politics of Christian Subjectivity: A Case Study of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON),” *Journal of Anglican Studies* (2020).



These developments are significant because they introduce alternative centres of ecclesiastical recognition. Anglican identity is no longer necessarily dependent upon membership in the historic provincial structure alone. Alternative jurisdictions can provide episcopal oversight, congregational belonging, theological formation, and transnational relationships.

The resulting map is consequently layered rather than simply divided. A congregation can occupy one geographical territory while participating in an ecclesiastical network whose ³¹

authority extends across several continents. The same territory can therefore contain competing or overlapping claims to Anglican legitimacy. This is precisely what makes the concept of “geography of fracture” analytically useful. Fracture does not simply destroy existing structures; it creates new spatial relationships and institutional routes.

8.6 Kigali and Abuja: From Network to Institutional Re-mapping

The Kigali Commitment of 2023 represented a further consolidation of the transnational orthodox movement. GAFCON's conference statements show a continuing effort to coordinate Anglican provinces and jurisdictions around a shared theological identity and institutional direction^{7,32}. The developments at Abuja in March 2026 represent an even more significant stage. According to the Abuja Affirmation, 347 bishops and 121 lay and clerical leaders from 27 provinces gathered in Abuja and formally celebrated the inauguration of what the organisers describe as the reordered Global Anglican Communion. The Global Anglican Council was assigned responsibility for strengthening the faith of Global Anglicans and recognising or authenticating provinces and dioceses seeking participation in the new structure⁸.

This development is arguably the clearest evidence yet that the Anglican realignment has moved beyond the creation of informal networks towards the construction of an alternative institutional configuration. The significance of Abuja for this article is therefore geographical as well as ecclesiastical: Abuja has become a significant node in the emerging map of global Anglican authority.

The development also reinforces the argument that the new Anglican geography is polycentric. Abuja does not simply replace Canterbury. Rather, it represents another centre around which claims to Anglican identity, authority, recognition, and orthodoxy are organized.

8.7 Re-mapping Rather Than Simple Fragmentation

The evidence therefore suggests that the term fragmentation alone is inadequate for explaining the contemporary Anglican situation. Fragmentation implies separation into relatively distinct units. What has occurred within global Anglicanism is more complicated.

Existing provinces remain operational. The Anglican Communion continues to exist. At the same time, new networks and jurisdictions have emerged, and relationships increasingly cross provincial boundaries. Consequently, Anglicanism is simultaneously territorial and transnational, provincial and networked, institutional and mobile. The concept of re-mapping captures this complexity. The map of Anglicanism has not simply been redrawn by replacing old provinces with new ones. Instead, new lines of connection have been superimposed upon the old map.

³¹6. GAFCON, “About GAFCON.”

³²7. GAFCON, “Conference Statements.”

8. GAFCON, “The Abuja Affirmation,” March 7, 2026.



The resulting configuration can be represented conceptually as:

Theological fracture → provincial realignment → transnational networks → clergy mobility → alternative jurisdictions → competing centres of authority → re-mapping of Anglican orthodoxy.

This process also confirms the usefulness of Lefebvre's Production of Space Theory. Anglican space is being produced through institutional practices, theological representations, human movement, and struggles over authority. At the same time, Transnational Social Field Theory explains how relationships extend beyond national and provincial boundaries and remain active across multiple locations.

8.8 The Emerging Polycentric Anglican Order

The central implication of this re-mapping is the emergence of a polycentric Anglican order. Authority is increasingly distributed among historic Communion institutions, African provinces, GAFCON-associated networks, alternative jurisdictions, migrant clergy, and diaspora congregations.

This does not mean that all centres possess equal institutional power or recognition. Nor does it mean that the future configuration of Anglicanism is settled. Rather, it indicates that the relationship between territory and authority has become increasingly complicated.

The contemporary question is therefore no longer simply whether Anglicanism will remain united or become divided. A more important question is what kind of global Anglicanism is emerging from the fracture.

The answer suggested by this study is that Anglicanism is becoming increasingly networked, mobile, and polycentric. The geography of Anglican orthodoxy is being reconstructed through provincial realignment, transnational networks, migrant clergy, alternative jurisdictions, and new centres of ecclesiastical authority.

Thus, the “re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy” represents the central outcome of the geography of fracture. Since 1998, theological conflict has progressively altered not only what Anglicans argue about, but also where authority is located, how relationships are organised, who can claim to represent Anglican orthodoxy, and how those claims travel across geographical boundaries. The significance of the 1998–2026 period therefore lies in the emergence of a new Anglican geography in which place still matters, but networks increasingly determine how place is connected to authority.

9. Discussion

The evidence examined in this article demonstrates that the fracture within global Anglicanism since 1998 is more than a theological disagreement over sexuality. It represents a profound reorganisation of ecclesiastical relationships, authority, mobility, and geographical space. The central argument emerging from the analysis is that the Anglican crisis has produced a “geography of fracture” in which provincial realignment, migrant clergy, and transnational networks have collectively contributed to the re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy.

The significance of this finding becomes clearer when the three principal dimensions of the study are considered together. Provincial realignment provides the institutional mechanism; migrant clergy provide an important human mechanism; and transnational networks provide the connective



infrastructure through which the realignment extends across geographical boundaries. These processes have consequently transformed the relationship between territory and Anglican authority.

9.1 Beyond the Conventional Liberal–Conservative Binary

One important implication of the findings is that the contemporary Anglican crisis should not be reduced to a simple liberal–conservative or Global North–Global South binary. Although disagreements over sexuality have frequently been represented in these terms, the evidence indicates a more complex configuration. The growing influence of African provinces demonstrates that the Global South is not simply reacting to decisions made by Western Anglican institutions. Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, and other African provinces have become active participants in defining theological positions, organising networks, and shaping institutional responses. GAFCON has provided an important platform through which these actors exercise transnational influence¹.³³

This challenges older assumptions about the geographical distribution of Anglican theological authority. Rather than authority moving unidirectionally from established Western centres to African churches, the contemporary situation involves multiple centres of theological agency. African provinces increasingly influence debates in Europe and North America, while Western diaspora congregations maintain connections with African ecclesiastical traditions. The implication is that the geography of Anglicanism is becoming polycentric rather than simply divided into opposing geographical blocs.

9.2 Provincial Realignment as Spatial Reorganisation

The findings also support the argument that provincial realignment should be understood as a spatial process. The emergence of GAFCON and alternative jurisdictions such as the Anglican Church in North America demonstrates that theological disagreement can produce new institutional geographies. This finding corresponds closely with Lefebvre's argument that space is socially produced through institutional practices, representations, and social relationships². Anglican provinces are not merely geographical containers. Their boundaries acquire meaning through claims to jurisdiction, recognition, identity, and authority. When alternative jurisdictions emerge, these meanings are contested and potentially transformed.³⁴

The creation of alternative Anglican structures therefore does not simply add new organizations to an existing map. It changes the meaning of the map itself. A geographical territory can contain congregations associated with different ecclesiastical networks, while a single transnational network can connect congregations across several territorial jurisdictions. The result is an increasingly layered ecclesiastical geography.

9.3 Migrant Clergy as Agents of Transnationalisation

The analysis further demonstrates that institutional realignment cannot fully explain the contemporary transformation without considering clergy mobility. Migrant clergy provide an

³³1. Joanna Sadgrove et al., “Constructing the Boundaries of Anglican Orthodoxy: An Analysis of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON),” *Religion* 40, no. 3 (2010): 193–206. [Article record](<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2010.02.006?utm>

2. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).³⁴



important human mechanism through which theological identities and ecclesiastical relationships move across national boundaries.

This finding supports Levitt and Glick Schiller's concept of transnational social fields, in which migrants remain embedded in relationships that extend across national territories³. Applied to Anglicanism, clergy do not necessarily sever their institutional and theological relationships when they migrate. Instead, they may maintain connections with their churches of origin while becoming incorporated into New Ecclesiastical contexts. The significance of this process is particularly evident in African Diaspora Anglicanism. A priest who has moved from Nigeria to Britain, for example, may minister in a European setting while maintaining relationships with Nigerian clergy, bishops, theological institutions, and congregations. The priest consequently occupies several ecclesiastical spaces simultaneously. Migrant clergy therefore function as connective agents between territorial provinces and transnational networks. They can facilitate the movement of theological ideas, institutional practices, and ecclesiastical identities. Migration thus contributes directly to the re-mapping process.³⁵

9.4 Transnational Networks and the Transformation of Authority

The development of GAFCON and related networks further demonstrates that theological affinity has become an increasingly important basis of ecclesiastical organisation. The traditional provincial structure remains important, but it no longer constitutes the only significant framework through which Anglican relationships are constructed.

GAFCON's evolution from a conference movement into an increasingly structured global network illustrates this transformation. The Kigali Commitment of 2023 and the developments associated with the Abuja Affirmation of 2026 indicate a movement towards greater institutional coordination among orthodox Anglican provinces and jurisdictions⁴. The significance of this development is not simply organizational. It raises fundamental questions about who has the authority to recognize, define, and represent Anglican orthodoxy. The emergence of a Global Anglican Council in the GAFCON-associated structure indicates that claims to ecclesiastical authority are increasingly being organized through alternative institutional channels. This creates a situation in which competing structures may make claims to represent authentic Anglicanism. Consequently, the contemporary Anglican crisis is increasingly a crisis of jurisdiction and recognition, as well as a crisis of theology.

9.5 Re-mapping Rather Than Fragmentation

The findings support the article's central proposition that “re-mapping” is a more accurate concept than “fragmentation.” Fragmentation suggests that Anglicanism has simply broken into separate groups. The evidence indicates something more complicated. Traditional provinces continue to exist, but new networks have developed across them. Alternative jurisdictions have emerged, but they remain connected to wider Anglican networks. Migrant clergy have moved geographically, but they frequently maintain relationships with their provinces of origin. Diaspora congregations are

³⁵ 3. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society,” *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002–1039. [Article record](<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00227.x?utm>)

4. GAFCON, “GAFCON IV: The Kigali Commitment,” 2023. [The Kigali Commitment](<https://gafcon.org/communique-updates/gafcon-iv-the-kigali-commitment/?utm>)



physically located in new countries while retaining cultural and theological connections to their places of origin.

The resulting configuration is therefore neither complete unity nor complete separation. It is a networked and overlapping ecclesiastical order. This finding is theoretically important because it demonstrates the usefulness of combining Transnational Social Field Theory with Lefebvre's Production of Space Theory. The first explains how Anglican relationships persist and circulate across borders, while the second explains how those relationships contribute to the production of new ecclesiastical spaces. Together, the theories provide a stronger explanation than either would provide independently.

9.6 The Changing Meaning of Anglican Orthodoxy

The analysis also suggests that “orthodoxy” should be treated as a contested and spatially situated category rather than an uncontested theological label. Different Anglican actors make competing claims about what constitutes authentic Anglican belief and practice.

The significance of GAFCON is therefore not simply that it represents conservative Anglicanism. It is that it has participated actively in defining the boundaries of what it regards as orthodox Anglican identity. Previous research has similarly shown that GAFCON has functioned as a site

for constructing and negotiating the boundaries of Anglican orthodoxy⁵. The re-mapping of orthodoxy therefore refers not to the geographical movement of a single universally agreed theological position but to the emergence of competing geographical centres from which claims to Anglican orthodoxy are articulated and institutionalized. This distinction strengthens the analytical contribution of the article. It shifts the question from “Which side represents Anglican orthodoxy?” to “How are competing claims to orthodoxy organized geographically, institutionally, and trans nationally?”³⁶

9.7 The Emergence of a Polycentric Anglican Future

Taken together, the findings point towards the emergence of a polycentric Anglican future. Canterbury and the historic Anglican Communion institutions remain significant, but they increasingly coexist with African provincial centres, GAFCON networks, alternative jurisdictions, diaspora communities, and other transnational structures. The Abuja developments of 2026 are particularly important in this regard because they suggest that the orthodox realignment is moving towards a more formal institutional configuration⁶. Whether this produces permanent parallel Anglican structures or eventually encourages renewed negotiation remains uncertain. What is clearer is that the geographical organization of Anglican authority has already changed substantially.

The article therefore concludes that the most significant consequence of the post-1998 Anglican fracture may not be institutional separation itself but the reorganization of the geography through

³⁶ 5. Charlotte Dalwood, “Orthodoxy and the Politics of Christian Subjectivity: A Case Study of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON),” *Journal of Anglican Studies* (2020). [Article record](<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-anglican-studies/article/abs/orthodoxy-and-the-politics-of-christian-subjectivity-a-case-study-of-the-global-anglican-future-conference-gafcon/3C0C2D902D4FF5E4BEECCD09535FF9C1?utm>)

6. GAFCON, “The Abuja Affirmation,” March 7, 2026. [The Abuja Affirmation](<https://gafcon.org/communique-updates/the-abuja-affirmation/?utm>)



which Anglican identity and authority are produced. Provincial realignment created new institutional relationships; migrant clergy carried those relationships across geographical boundaries; and transnational networks consolidated them. Together, these processes have produced a new Anglican geography in which territory remains important, but network increasingly determines how territory is connected to authority.

The concept of the geography of fracture consequently provides a useful framework for understanding contemporary global Anglicanism. It captures the paradox of an Anglican Communion that remains territorially organized while simultaneously becoming increasingly transnational, mobile, networked, and polycentric. The central transformation since 1998 is therefore not simply that Anglicanism has become more divided, but that the map of Anglican authority itself has been redrawn.

10. Conclusion

This article has examined the geography of fracture within global Anglicanism between 1998 and 2026, focusing particularly on provincial realignment, migrant clergy, transnational networks, and the consequent re-mapping of global Anglican orthodoxy. The analysis demonstrates that the contemporary Anglican crisis cannot adequately be understood as a theological disagreement alone. Although disputes concerning human sexuality and biblical interpretation provided important catalysts, the consequences have extended into questions of jurisdiction, institutional legitimacy, geographical authority, clergy mobility, and the future organisation of the Anglican Communion.

The article has argued that provincial realignment represents the institutional dimension of this transformation. Since the 1998 Lambeth Conference and particularly following the 2003 consecration of Gene Robinson, relationships among Anglican provinces have increasingly been shaped by theological affinity as well as territorial location. The emergence and consolidation of GAFCON, the development of alternative jurisdictions, and the strengthening of relationships among African and other Global South provinces demonstrate the emergence of new forms of Anglican alignment that operate across traditional provincial boundaries.

The study has further demonstrated that migrant clergy constitute an important human dimension of this reconfiguration. Through their movement across national and provincial boundaries, clergy can carry theological identities, institutional relationships, and ecclesiastical practices into new geographical contexts. They therefore function as significant connecting agents between provinces, diaspora congregations, and transnational Anglican networks. Their mobility illustrates how Anglican identity can be simultaneously rooted in a particular province and connected to a wider global ecclesiastical field.

The article's central contribution is the concept of “re-mapping global Anglican orthodoxy.” Rather than describing contemporary Anglicanism simply as fragmented into opposing camps, re-mapping captures the emergence of new centres, networks, jurisdictions, and routes of ecclesiastical authority. The evidence points towards an increasingly polycentric Anglican order, in which historic Communion institutions coexist with African provincial centres, GAFCON-associated networks, alternative jurisdictions, diaspora communities, and mobile clergy.

The developments culminating in the Kigali Commitment of 2023 and the Abuja developments of 2026 suggest that this process has moved beyond informal theological networking towards increasingly structured institutional realignment. Yet the final shape of global Anglicanism remains



unsettled. Whether these developments produce permanent parallel structures, renewed negotiation, or further institutional fragmentation cannot yet be determined.

Ultimately, the article concludes that the most significant consequence of the Anglican crisis since 1998 is not simply division within the Communion but the transformation of the geography through which Anglican authority is produced and contested. Territory remains important, but it increasingly operates alongside transnational networks, human mobility, and alternative structures of recognition. The geography of Anglicanism has therefore not merely fractured; it has been re-mapped.

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