Between 1914 – 16, two missionary doctors of the Church Missionary Society travelled to the eastern parts of Rwanda, they evangelised the region which led to setting-up of the first mission in 1925 that become the foundation of the Anglican Church of Rwanda.

The early work of the Anglican Church in the country grew with the revivals of the 1930s and 1940s. The spiritual journey started almost a century ago has seen the Church grow and establish 12 dioceses across Rwanda to cater for the 1.2 million believers.

To complete the spiritual mission, The Anglican Church of Rwanda (ACR or EAR in French) adopted three fundamental pillars which include evangelism as the key pillar, education and health.

The Most Reverend Dr. Laurent Mbanda, the Archbishop and Primate of The Anglican Church of Rwanda explains that as much as evangelism is the heart of the ministry, I like to do evangelism that is combined with addressing the needs of the people, social action is key and part.

“Many times people may misunderstand me or what I do because what I do is a combination of evangelism, preaching, social activities and development activities,” underlines Archbishop Mbanda.

The belief here is that when you are in education and health you are also in social development because you can’t talk about the two without talking about development.

Archbishop Mbanda as an entrepreneur and development oriented person brought into the church a new impetus towards social development. He has about 28 years working in non-profit and corporate organisations focusing on community and human development where he worked in about 26 countries and had exposure to more than 66 countries around the world which encompasses a rich experience of different countries, people, culture and backgrounds.

Becoming the leader of ACR in 2018, Archbishop Mbanda embarked on building the church through evangelism combined with addressing the needs of the people. To navigate the new course he came equipped with five key pillars for strategic direction.

These guiding pillars have provided a basis to operate and they include; i) equipping leaders, ii) evangelism, iii) early childhood education, iv) financial literacy, management and accountability and v) sustainability.

Focus was put in equipping leaders, the pastors and lay people of the ministry. It's under this pillar that the East African Christian College (EACC) in Masaka was established and was accredited in December 2020. The university opened in March 2021 with 254 students in theology education undertaking bachelor's degree and others will do post graduate diploma.

The goal is to build one of the best Christian Universities in the region and there are plans to start more programmes soon like education, monitoring and evaluation to which assessment has already been conducted by HEC while nursing and midwifery programme is still in the pipeline.

Evangelism as another pillar is the heart of the ministry, as the Archbishop explains from the example of what Jesus Christ did, this' an integral mission with social action combined. The focus here is on person in total, who is more than a soul, with intellect, social dimension, cognitive, the physical and who should be looked at it from a holistic approach.

Early Childhood Development (ECDs) as the third pillar is an area The Anglican Church of Rwanda has majored in. The church has started ECDs centres across the country and currently supports at least 614 centres.

Financial literacy, management and accountability are very important to ACR and this category is one of the main tenets of this ministry when it comes to managing money, accountability and integrity. The ministry wants to equip pastors and lay people to understand financials, gain financial literacy to be able to manage and be accountable. ACR has introduced financial software in all dioceses to be used to help improve financial management and how to be accountable to the people in all churches.

Sustainability; to maintain what has been gained there is need for self-sustenance as Rwanda has demonstrated in terms of 'Kwigira' meaning self-sustaining. Under this pillar the Church had made commendable developments like building

commercial buildings that generate income to support the Church’s operations.

The Archbishop notes that a business mind-set has set them on a course to uplift the church through social entrepreneurship. “The City of Kigali challenged us to change and transform Remera (Giporoso) because there were some houses that were not looking good for the city. This also inspired us and we agreed to do something to contribute to the development of the city and today its beautiful.”

The Anglican Church of Rwanda has made many investments across all dioceses becoming one of the top partners in implementing the country’s vision. Magnificent complexes put up by ACR like the complex in Remera (Giporoso), the Anglican Trinity plaza in Kibagabaga and mega complex under construction at the headquarters of ACR are among the latest additions to the on-going modernisation of the City of Kigali.

Some of these investments are fundamental to the operations of the church and to fund projects in the education and health sectors to which The Anglican Church of Rwanda has made many commitments.

“We are also looking for other investments so that the Anglican Church of Rwanda is able to support itself and it’s the same case you will find in other dioceses, with a strong desire for self-sustenance,” notes Archbishop Mbanda.
However, evangelism and discipleship continues to be the anchor, the strong hold of what ACR chose, its like the launch pad of everything from the early days of the church when schools were established.

Today, ACR has established early childhood centre, elementary schools, higher schools and polytechnics at Hanika, Muhabura as well as the Christian University in Masaka.

The Anglican Church of Rwanda continues to be a strong partner with the Rwandan government in areas of education, health and development uplifting the living conditions of Rwandans and the communities in general.
The church has a vision, its guided by the key pillars and to continue prioritizing

human development, keep developing leaders, contribute to the development and transformation of Rwanda through education, health and other relevant sectors.