



JUST DO IT

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Model of a Possible Future
of African Christian College

Learning

is a complex thing. And as we consider the future of African Christian College, we want to do learning well, because that's at the heart of our mission. This model — Just Do It Christian University — focuses heavily on creating a college that reimagines traditional higher education.

You've likely heard the phrase: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Or perhaps statistics like: "People remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear . . . and 90% of what they do."* The Just Do It model takes this seriously and creates an academic programme that bases its learning on doing as much as possible. If we want the students to learn it, they should *just do it*.

A common distinction in the world of higher education is between the research university, a teaching university, or a hybrid of the two. This model sets the path pretty firmly as a teaching institution — focused on the mission of African Christian College to *equip students for excellent service in God's kingdom*. This shouldn't effect the legitimacy of the university, but it does lead to a different vision than that of the traditional research or hybrid paths.

The best way to share the vision of this model is to tell you some stories. So, in the next few pages, you'll meet some students to learn about how Just Do It Christian University could work.

Of course, we want your feedback after you hear this model and consider it as a path forward.





Anaishe wants to teach.

She began her studies at university learning the basics of student learning, classroom management, and planning lessons. But this didn't take near as long as she expected. Instead of spending several years learning theory and sitting in class to earn her teaching degree, Anaishe quickly began learning by doing — in a primary school on campus.

This on-campus school for children was run by Master Teachers — experienced, certified teachers who also worked as lecturers, mentors, supervisors, and coaches for teachers-in-training. Students like Anaishe learned how to prepare lessons, teach where students learn, and how to manage classroom behaviour by observing the soon-to-graduate teachers and the Master Teachers as they taught their classes.

Anaishe was then given opportunities to practice what she was seeing for herself by teaching short lessons on various subjects at the school. Each time she received helpful feedback and coaching from one of the Master Teachers who was overseeing and assessing her skills and learning.

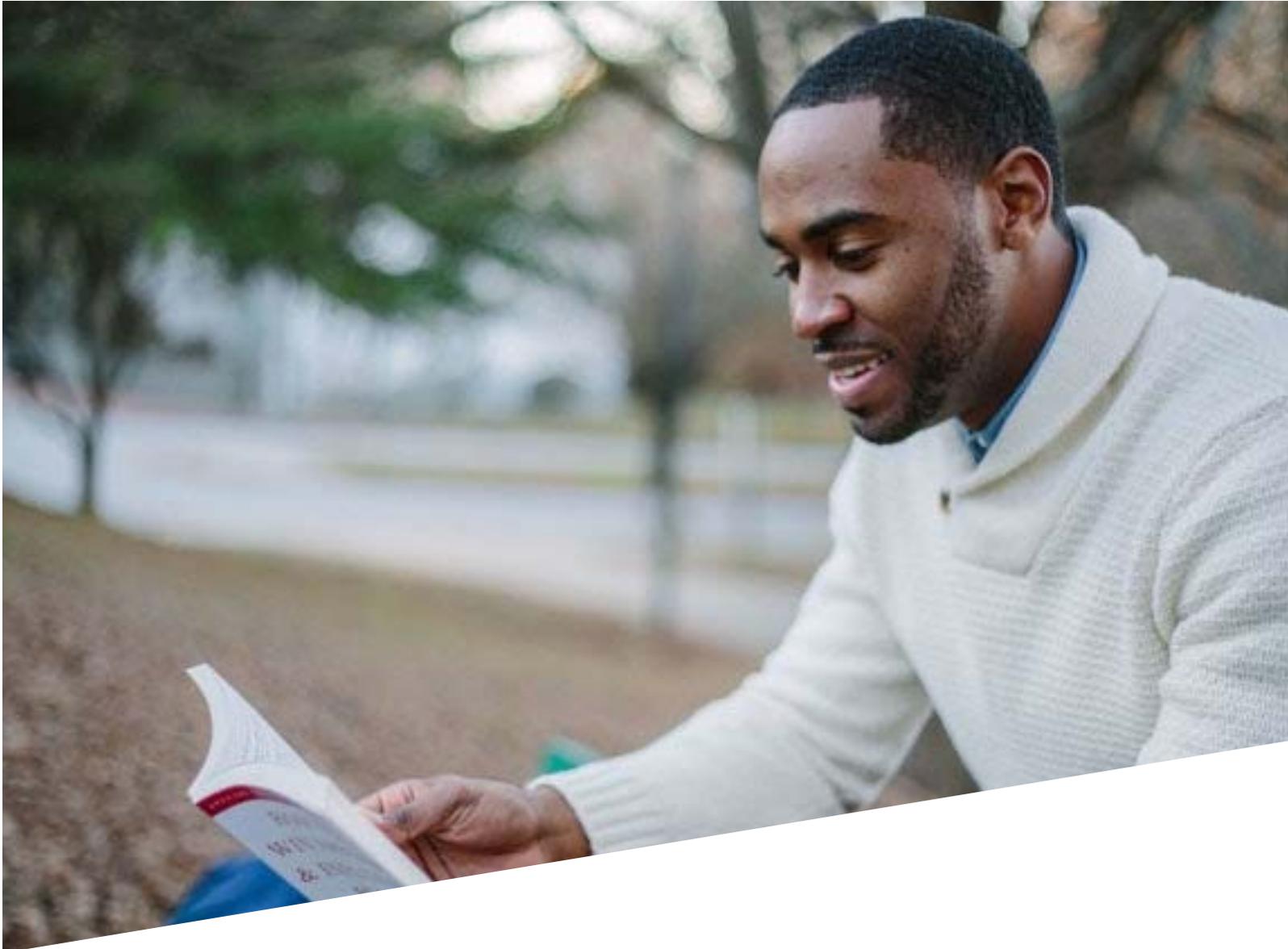
In the afternoons, evenings, and sometimes on school holidays — Anaishe attended classes for teachers to supplement her on-the-job learning. And, she took courses in Bible, theology, and other skills. These were part of her degree that prepared her not just for a career in the classroom, but also as a valuable member of her church and helping to strengthen the Kingdom of God.

In her final year at the university, Anaishe was working as a full-time teacher at the school. Now, still under the guidance of the Master Teachers, she was the model that incoming students were observing in how to be an effective teacher.

As she watched these new university students come into her class, she remembered when she first began her studies to be a teacher. And how she expected to spend her time in college listening to lectures and writing papers. She could hardly believe how far she had come and how much she had learned by *just doing it* — with effective lecturers and Master Teachers helping her along the way.

In a few months, she'll be preparing to graduate. She is excited about teaching back at home, but still anxious about finding a job. As she prepares her CV, she realises that not only will she have a degree in Teacher Education and a Certificate in Theology, she has actual classroom teaching experience in a real school as experience.

Anaishe is confident that she is prepared to be a great teacher. And, once given the chance, she will be able to prove her skills, knowledge, and readiness far exceeds her peers who studied Teacher Education at other universities.



Tanaka is called to ministry.

Tanaka feels strongly about his calling as a preacher, evangelist, and minister in a local church. He is active in his church, but decides that in order to best fulfil this calling, he needs to study the Bible more deeply. So he comes to university to study theology.

Several days each week, Tanaka attends classes on campus studying the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, theology, and church history. Each class expands his mind and challenges his thinking as he seeks to be a disciple of Jesus. The classes are taught by excellent theological scholars and also upper-level theology students at the university.

These upper-level students chose a scholarly path for their theological studies. Though they plan to be active in their congregations, their calling is to teach, study, write, or further African Christian theology across the globe. So, they work closely with the faculty in research, study, writing, and also teaching. This helps to better prepare them for the calling they have as scholars and teachers.

But Tanaka's calling is not to the academy, but to the church. He really enjoys his classes and learning and thinking about the Bible, God, and the church. But he wants to live out this learning as a pastor in a congregation. Quickly, then, he discovers the difference a *Just-Do-It* education makes.

While attending classes a few days a week, Tanaka is also placed in a ministry context with a qualified, experienced minister as his coach, mentor, and guide. He walks alongside this minister in

all his work — making house visits, leading Bible studies, evangelistic outreach, preparing sermons and lessons, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and partnering with poverty alleviation work in the community. Though he had been active in his church, he's never seen what's its really like to be the pastor of a vibrant congregation.

He observes his mentoring pastor and is able to ask questions and have helpful discussions where he learns more than he could imagine learning talking about ministry through lecture. In a short while, he's given assignments to teach lessons to the youth, the children, and lead the Bible study for the old men. He visits the sick himself. And reflects on all these activities with his mentoring pastor.

Tanaka begins to preach regularly. He loves this process because it is where he works with other students in his programme who are at other churches as well his classmates on the scholarly track, to study the texts together, discuss their application to their congregations, and encourage one another in their preaching. He learns the value of preparing messages for God's people in community with others — rather than alone. And he receives regular feedback — positive and critical — about the style and content of his messages.

As he nears graduation, Tanaka is amazed at his experience in university. He has learned so much — not only from the study of the Bible, but from having a true mentor in ministry along the way. He has seen the great joy and ugly underside of ministry. He feels ready to leave the loving protection of the mentoring pastor and his lecturers, but also reluctant to leave the church where he has been serving in eSwatini. Tanaka has learned how to preach, teach, visit, love, and minister not only through study, but by *just doing it*.



Malindi is called to lead and serve.

Before going to university, Malindi began noticing that many of the girls in her high school didn't finish. Pregnancy, finances, and abuse seemed to be regular parts of their lives. Malindi started reaching out to these girls to share God's love with them. But she began to realise that in many cases these hurting girls needed food, safe housing, and someone to help them through life's challenges.

Malindi felt a strong calling to grow her ministry into an organisation to help these girls. But she felt inadequate, so she decided to go to university to develop the skills she needs to succeed in making a positive, long-term difference in her community. She chose to go to a Christian university because she wanted to grow in her faith at the same time so she enrolled in the Organisational Leadership programme at the university because it fit her calling to lead and serve.

Several days a week and some evenings, Malindi took classes on leadership, community development, and theology. But soon after arriving she found herself immersed in community development projects run by competent Christian community development practitioners near the campus of the university.

In the beginning, she was placed to work in a variety of different settings. She was a youth leader at an after-school programme in the city, having fun and helping them with homework

assignments. She visited community projects in some rural areas with the programme leaders. She was learning a lot in her classes, but even more being part — even from the edges of these projects.

In her second year, she was given other tasks for the projects. She was able to research, write, and secure a grant to extend the reach of the after-school programme to another community. She completed a community development evaluation of one of the water projects as she learned about assessment, evaluation, and the importance of measuring success.

Because she enjoyed the after-school programme, she received assignments for leadership positions within this programme. This included supervising the incoming students who were tutoring the children, designing the programme's curriculum, and working with the budgets, evaluation, and funding issues.

Fortunately, she was not alone in this learning process. The Master Practitioners from the university were assessing her performance as they mentored, coached, supervised, and helped her reflect and learn even more from her experiences working in the community development projects.

Malindi is ready to take the project she began before university to the next level. And that's what she plans to do. She makes a CV as she nears graduation in preparation for raising funds for her project to help the girls. She is amazed not only at what she learned, but how full her CV is with experience and work while at university.

She thanks God for her university education. Especially because all her learning and experiences emphasised the restoration of all things that God was doing in the world. Her faith had grown and she was excited to also have new knowledge and understanding of theology and God's Word to share with the girls she would work with and her local congregation.



Sanyu wants to create mobile apps.

Sanyu still remembers the first time he figured out how to get his uncle's mobile phone to turn on — probably because of the pain from the beating he received for innocently making an expensive call on it. As he grew older and was able to even get a phone of his own, he was always amazed at the things these little pieces of plastic, glass, and metal could do.

In high school, he took a course on information technology and read about programming, app development, and technology. After listening to his uncle complain about problems selling his vegetables, Sanyu found an app that shared the local rates for all the vegetables and put it on his uncle's phone. He began to read articles about others who were creating apps for phones that were helping solve very real problems he and his family and friends were facing.

Sanyu knew that he wanted to spend his life creating solutions to big challenges.

As a faithful Christian, he struggled with his dream because he wanted to also serve God. Sanyu went to one of his church's elders to discuss his struggle . . . and he left energized. The elder reminded him that God doesn't call everyone to be a pastor and that there are many ways to serve the church and God's kingdom. Sanyu decided he could follow his dream of creating apps and solutions and also be an active member, volunteer, and financial contributor to his congregation.

As he prepared for university, he found a Christian university in eSwatini that had an IT Development programme. Sanyu enrolled there because he would not only learn how to create these apps that have always amazed him, but he would also get to study God's Word and theology to be equipped as a servant in his church after he graduates.

Sanyu was shocked to find that within a few weeks of arriving at the university, he had already learned to create a simple app. His high school IT course had been interesting, but all theory and reading in books. He expected the same from university. But here they expected him to immediately put theory to work. "Just do it!" his lecturers kept saying.

Sanyu and his classmates were given real projects to work on for real customers, including a global technology company the university partnered with. At first, he was given simpler tasks within these projects, while more advanced students worked on the things he had yet to learn. Overtime, he was working with multiple programming codes and tools and creating projects that were actually being used by companies.

He loved the classes he was taking about the Bible. He was learning so much about God's Word and could tell his own faith and commitment to following Jesus were also growing. He began teaching the youth at one of the nearby churches each week which gave him joy and good experience in serving the church.

As he worked on the projects assigned, Sanyu was mentored, coached, and taught by the Master Programmers who also served as his IT lecturers. His lecturers and fellow students shared close community and enjoyed troubleshooting problems as well as worshipping and praying together.

When Sanyu was nearing graduation, he finalised a portfolio of his work, knowledge, and skills. He could work in HTML, Python, Ruby, and other coding languages and tools. By then, he had led two teams on major projects for the technology company and had those apps to show as experience.

The global technology company had already offered Sanyu a full-time job immediately upon graduation. He could even move back to his home community and work from there! Several of his classmates were also offered positions and were taking them. Sanyu was pulled between the offer and creating something of his own that he thought would really help people and be profitable.

Whichever decision he made for work, though, he knew that with his Certificate in Theology he would be serving the church and sharing his love of God with others no matter what path his career would take.



Dembe cares about people in pain.

Dembe will never forget the day she sat in the hospital room, holding her grandmother's hand as God she faded away into the next life. Having lost her parents when she was very young, Dembe's grandmother had raised her, taken care of her, and loved her fully and deeply. That day, she lost her, too. Her faith kept her strong, but the event changed the direction of her life.

Throughout the many visits with doctors and nurses alongside her grandmother, Dembe began to appreciate the Medical Family Therapist at the hospital. When they didn't understand something from the doctor, the medical family therapist would help explain it in understandable terms and discussed with them the implications of the diagnosis. As her grandmother's health continued to deteriorate, the medical family therapist provided comfort, counselling, and prayer for Dembe.

That was a ministry and calling that helped people in the darkest moments of pain. And that is exactly what Dembe wanted to do. She asked the medical family therapist for advice on how to get a job like that and was told to go to university to study.

She was thrilled to find a Christian university that offered a Medical Family Therapy programme and quickly applied and enrolled. When she arrived, she began studying theories and practices of counselling, but she could hardly wait to finish with theory and start helping others.

But Dembe never imagined that the chance to move beyond theory would come so quickly! She quickly began to experience the difference a *just-do-it* education makes.

At first, Dembe and her classmates began work in the reception and payment areas of a medical clinic. She was reminded of the days going to the hospital with her grandmother — and her calling to work in this environment — and recognised that even such jobs at reception are more than just keeping people in line.

Later, she moved into other areas where she would complete interviews for intake assessments for the doctors and therapists. This gave her experience building rapport, listening well, and understanding the value of such tools and assessments for counselling.

She continued to move through various roles designed to teach her all the necessary skills for effective counselling. Dembe observed Master Therapists at work. And several days a weeks, she also attended classes with them. At the same time, she was studying theology and deepening her faith through the Christian community at the university.

Under the supervision of the Master Therapists and doctors, Dembe spent her final year practicing medical family therapy in the local clinic. She learned so much through this hands-on experience — more than she could imagine learning through lectures only. The Master Therapists who served as her lecturers, coaches, mentors, and guides gave her candid feedback and helped her grow in her skills as a counsellor and professional.

As she neared graduation, Dembe was overcome with gratitude. She came to university because she wanted to help people in pain — just like the therapist had helped her and her grandmother. She could not believe that she was already doing it before she even completed her studies.

Dembe was confident in her skills, had polished up her CV reflecting both educational and real-world experience, *and* her Certificate in Theology. Her time at the Christian university had prepared her as a professional therapist and deepened her faith in God. She knew that the work she would be doing in her field was the ministry God had called and equipped her to do.

She hoped to return to the person who had helped her long ago to give her a hug, share another prayer, and tell her about her experience and learning at university.



Musa wants to run a business.

Musa heads off to college to get his degree in business management. His dream is to run a big business. To be honest, Musa's dream is to have lots of money, and he sees business as the path to his riches. Several universities and colleges offer programmes in business, so he has options. He chooses the Christian university so that he can also learn more about the Bible along the way.

After the first week at university, Musa is not sure he chose well. As a business student, he and his fellow classmates were all given jobs in the first few days working as servers at a lodge the university operated. His new boss, an older student in the programme, told him that the job wasn't just about work, but it was also part of his business education.

But Musa was sure that setting tables, mopping floors, and taking out rubbish is not part of the dream of being in business. He was there to learn to be the boss, not to wipe tables. Clearly, this university didn't know how business really worked.

He enjoyed the Christian community at the university and his new friends. When he wasn't at work, Musa was in classes studying business and theology. These two topics seemed disconnected at first, but he began to realise that his relationship and desire for money may be at odds with his discipleship to Jesus. It was in a class about Jesus' life that he first connected the idea of Jesus as a servant to his role as a server at the lodge.

Soon after, Musa began to understand the importance of his work as a server to the lodge and to recognising the importance of customer service in every business. It was then that Musa knew he had made the right choice in a university.

As his education progressed, Musa worked in different businesses the university operated. Each provided valuable learning in various business management areas including production, sales, finance, planning, marketing, public relations, and legal compliance. With each role he learned not only how its done in that business, but also its importance to every business . . . while also learning about himself.

Musa's best friend really enjoyed the finance post he had for a few months and decided to focus on accounting. So, his friend worked as an accountant for one of the university businesses his final year with the coaching, mentoring, and teaching of a Master Accountant and a lecturer.

He wasn't interested in the accounting side, but in managing and leading a business. So, Musa's track led him through additional business management roles, eventually as the Assistant Manager of the university's lodge in his final year.

The smile on Musa's face as he told an incoming student that her job as a server at the lodge was also part of her business education almost burst into a laugh. He could hardly believe how much he had experienced and learned — not only about business, but also about how to live.

Musa was confident he had the skills to lead a business of his own or to find a job. His CV was filled with a business degree and a long list of jobs in every area of business management at various companies run by the university.

But he was most thankful and proud of his Certificate in Theology. Because, thanks to his spiritual growth and maturity at the university, Musa was no longer focused on being rich. He was more interested in serving in business in ways that honoured God. Now, he wanted to do business that would help others, share God's love, and make a difference in the lives of his employees and customers . . . while still making money.

***There's** something important you should know as we conclude: those statistics at the beginning about people remembering 90% of what they do and not what they read and hear and such — it's completely unproven and does not have research to back it up. And yet, learning while doing something does help us to practice and learn the skills and knowledge we really need over just studying theory. The apprenticeship model works.

Also, this model — and the other ones we're considering — **is doable**. It will take time and energy and putting resources into certain areas. Fortunately, that's what strategic planning and visioning is all about. So before you say, "That sounds nice, but it doesn't look like what we're doing now or what we know in other places," remember that this can be done.

To answer one of the expected questions: Yes, this is also something that can be legitimately accredited and degrees could certainly be credentialed. Some of these ideas are taken straight from other places.

The important questions are:

- ◆ How could this model help us to accomplish our mission *'glorify God by equipping students for excellent service in God's kingdom'*?
- ◆ How could this model help us accomplish our Ends priorities of (1) academic excellence, (2) Christian character, (3) servant leadership, (4) global awareness, and (5) personal resourcefulness?
- ◆ What part of this should be part of African Christian College's future?

