

## **A Reflection from Master's Student on COVID-19**

The current situation of Covid-19 is a unique health and economic crisis that changed our lives in this time of our generation. The entire world is in confinement, gratefully able to follow sermons and other daily news through information technology with no choice but to respect all measures taken by governments to curb the spread of the virus.

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the world's economy and killed many people around the world. It has caused human physical, mental, emotional and spiritual suffering in most affected countries with the massive loss of jobs. As long as this virus has neither medicine nor vaccination yet, the known safe options remaining is to stay at home and keep distance. This has not been easy for many especially those who survive on daily basis based on daily income. So far Rwandans are grateful to the government and philanthropic organizations that have been providing food to the families in need.

Scientists are working day and night to discover medicine and vaccination for Covid-19. We hope that one day this pandemic will come to an end. However, the severity of Covid-19 and its long term consequences are already felt, yet not fully known, though through observing, we can forecast both economic and social challenging time for the days to come. Projections and estimations of economic and human loss have been made and different initiatives to restart life and sustain economy are undertaken. For example, the African Union has put in place a Commission that will strategically and diplomatically raise funds that would contribute in rebuilding African economy after Covid - 19. Domestic and international goals were set before the breakout of Covid-19. They are compiled in SDGs, Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063 and other guiding strategic development plan's documents. These documents explain the journey that the world has to accomplish in order to reach at a sustainable development. With the breakout of Covid-19, this has to completely change, although it is too early to argue on how much the world social economic and political strategies will be affected. We don't have to wait until when Covid-19 will be over before we adopt new strategies.

Rehabilitating the world in post Covid-19 period will require collaboration of experts from different fields and re-positioning references and foundation. Peacemakers, Economists, Psychologists, sociologists, theologians, policy makers, social worker, e.t.c, should work together in order to go beyond what has been planned in existing development plans. The complex development issues of

post Covid-19 cannot be addressed through usual ways of dealing with ordinary development concerns. They require innovative solutions from effective networking of interdisciplinary practitioners and all people committed to participate in addressing consequences of this pandemic.

It is now a challenging moment for graduates and Master's Program to apply skills and knowledge acquired from PIASS in contributing to the fighting of Covid-19 and the process of rebuilding the church of Christ and of Rwandan society thereafter. How are we equipped? Of course different skills are already acquired, with capacity to imagine and create new ideas, but I still maintain the attained competence of team work and collective efforts for this. Alone I am not, but together we can. A strong and effective networking has to be created in order to allow all people to give their contribution according to their expertise, capacity, and context as well as based on each one's responsibility.

Could we say that the theology of reconstruction is regaining its place in the journey of rebuilding Rwanda and the world? The notions of reconstruction had attracted too many countries which had faced economic, social, and or political crises. Theologians such as Mugambi, and Chipenda have developed a reconstruction theology routed from Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament. In front of the crises, the reconstruction theology became very relevant because it allowed churches to formulate a public-social theology which meets the demands of society through its deed-oriented model.

As people who are called to serve in the challenging time as this, we are equipped and called to put our bit in the reconstruction of the society. Looking at the mission of PIASS, it offers some light on today's challenges: *"to provide to the society inquisitive, solution oriented, committed and equipped graduates with intellectual tools and ethical values that enable them to meet specific needs of societies"*. This is an inspiring mission with strong commitment in directing a holistic and sustainable development for students, equipped and sent to the institutions and communities. With social economic and spiritual skills acquired, we are capable and confident for action. Most importantly, we are not alone at the front line. Developing an effective networking will create a favorable environment for working together with people from other scientific fields and achieve more together. Lockdown has imposed new way of living for people depending on technology with its facilities though played a vital role in maintaining a working mode for many and inspired us to adopt new technological tools to keep on with daily business.

This is my call that the struggle is not only for scientist but also social scientist to reflect together on the challenges we are facing and make commitment to act together for a positive change. As we follow all instructions that help not spreading the virus while protecting ourselves, and as we keep the innovative spirit, we are also to be guided by God's wisdom. Yes, the world is shaken, but the Bible remains our foremost reference, and God remain the giver of all wisdom and knowledge we need to deal with the present life's challenges. We still believe that the foundation of our life, Jesus Christ is alive and remains capable and will always be. With this reference we can intervene in the process of prevention and rebuilding our society even in the post Covid-19.

Please, rejoice, Jesus Christ arose from the death and through him we have life.

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