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COVID-19 – CMEFS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Hello. I do hope that this week's edition of our newsletter finds you and your family as well as can be.

COVID-19, South Africa and a whole bunch of other things

This week I am going to turn things around a little bit, and maybe even more so than a little bit.

As a result of having been locked up in our homes and bombarded with all sorts of bad news about the virus, the deaths, the debt we're in, the out of control levels of corruption, it is little wonder that we have all maybe become more than a little depressed and negative about things "South African", and I include myself in this statement.

But I have been reflecting a lot more deeply on things of late and I have arrived at a point in my thinking that maybe we are becoming too negative about all things South African.

This is not to say we do not have significant challenges right now as well as far into the future.

We have, so let's not deny that.

And there is no need to go into what these problems even are; we know them all too well.

However, maybe what we need to do now is to reflect on the thought that the Chinese word for "crises" consists of two separate and distinct symbols, these symbols being

危 and 机

The first symbol 危 stands for "Danger", which makes perfect sense.

The second symbol 机 stands for "Opportunity" and it is perhaps this subtlety that many of us in the western world overlook in our thinking.

With this in mind, I took the “opportunity” of taking a look at SA Incorporated from a slightly different perspective than usual and this is where my thinking took me.

Nine and I are one of those fortunate few who can tune in to CNN, BBC or whatever to track how all of the many countries across the world are dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and although we all have our own very justifiable criticism and complaints about how it has been handled here, it became more than abundantly clear to us both that it has been handled a lot better here than it has been in MOST other countries, including many countries in the developed western world. Italy, Spain, the UK, the USA spring readily to mind.

Who knows how many of us would still be alive to read this if any of us had lived in any of these more developed countries as opposed to SA?

Further, having been able to spend a lot more time than usual watching international television coverage around the world (one of the perks of working from home) another thing that became clear is that we have it so much better here than in so many other countries.

What we persist in doing is to compare ourselves to what we believe to be better managed or better-run countries, and indeed they are.

No argument from me there. (To a point. I would not want to be faced with a lot the US and the UK are now faced with, for example)

But we forget that there are a whole bunch of countries that are a whole lot worse off than we are.

Who for example would want to be living in any of these countries right now?

Syria, Argentina (in debt default and inflation raging out of control), Afghanistan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Burkino Faso, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Columbia, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, and the list goes on and on.

Further to this, also joblessness and unemployment are major challenges we are going to have to face going forward, but even right now, our “per capita” income (that is the total GDP of the country divided by the number of persons in the country) places us at 113 out of 211 countries. That is to say, a total of 98 countries in the world have a significantly **lower** per capita income than we have.

This is not an insignificant number.

In so far as corruption and service delivery in and by the government is concerned, under the Zuma regime, things were bad and getting worse, whereas under the present regime things are still bad but at the very least not getting any worse, and if one brings to mind those very many institutions that were all but destroyed under the Zuma regime that are in the process of being rebuilt, then one could even argue that things are still bad but at least getting better.

We also sometimes conveniently forget that we still have a VERY free press, a constitution that is probably the most progressive in the world, an independent Reserve Bank and Judiciary as well as a functioning (if one ignores the antics of the EFF for the time being) parliamentary system.

And as a political analyst very recently said, we must not forget that South Africa is bigger than any one political party, no matter who the party is.

And added to this, we have a very strong and active civil society in place which keeps pushing against all that is rotten in either government or business.

And yes, we still have pockets of underlying racial tension, but by and large the vast majority of us, irrespective of colour, creed, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, etc. actually get along with one another extremely well.

Not only do we get along with one another, when any of us finds ourselves in a crises situation such as the recent drought, the starvation brought about by the steps necessary to contain the spread of the corona-virus, etc., we generally jump in to help one another “boots and all”.

Further, many of those more developed countries we so readily compare ourselves with have had at least 100 years (and many much more than this) exposure to democratic rule, whereas we are only in our 26th year this year, so maybe the direct comparison is not quite an “apples to apples” comparison and maybe we are being a little bit unrealistic in our expectations.

So yes, we have our challenges and they are not going to go away overnight, but it is apposite to keep in mind that over the fullness of time, one can never truly run away from poverty and suffering.

It will follow you, if not in your lifetime, then in the lifetime of your children or grandchildren.

One only has to think of the huge refugee problem Europe is facing right now.

And right on our doorstep, the migration into South Africa of other desperate Africans from so many other African countries.

And the challenges this presents us with.

Yes, again, we can leave for a better life for us and our family now, but if we all simply “just give up and pack our bags” what we are doing is simply passing the problem we are not happy to deal with now onto our children and/or grandchildren.

It is not going to go away.

To my mind, and acknowledging that we are all different to one another, I would rather do whatever is necessary to leave as a legacy a world that is better (even if only marginally so) for my having passed through it, than one that is worse, even marginally so.

So for those of us who are willing to, let's keep in mind those two Chinese symbols at all times, and let's look for the opportunity in all crises that present themselves, rather than simply succumb and surrender ourselves to the naysayers of this world.

I trust you enjoyed the read.

Nine sends love and thoughts to all, as always.

Until next time then, from all of us at CMEFS, do take good care of yourselves. Kind regards.
Charles.

Name	Division	Cell Number	Detail
Alicia	Wealth	063 434 8074	Learner. Servicing attaching to the following classes of business. Investment Accounts, Tax Free Savings Accounts, Retirement Annuities, Living Annuities, Pension and Provident Preservation Funds, Endowments.
Andrew	Wealth	063 321 7399	Intern. New business and servicing. Medical Aids & GAP Cover. In the process of migrating across to the Wealth Division.
Andrisha	Wealth	063 378 1473	Representative. New business. Investment Accounts, Tax Free Savings Accounts, Retirement Annuities, Living Annuities, Pension and Provident Preservation Funds, Endowments.
Bernelee	Tax	078 708 4536	Administrator providing admin support to Geraldine and understudy to Geraldine.
Brady	Wealth	071 843 3933	Representative. New business. Investment Accounts, Tax Free Savings Accounts, Retirement Annuities, Living Annuities, Pension and Provident Preservation Funds, Endowments.
Felicia	Risk	071 880 9576	Learner. Servicing attaching to Short-Term insurance, assisting Stella. Starting to obtain some exposure to Medical Aids, GAP Cover and Life Insurance.
Geraldine	Tax	083 754 1699	Head of tax division.
Jamie	Wealth	071 850 1389	Learner. Core responsibility being to produce and send out the monthly investment statements and to handle any queries connected to them. Satellite responsibility to assist where possible in the Wealth Division.
Luh	Bookkeeping	063 102 3313	Head of Bookkeeping Division. Professional Accountant (SA) SAIPA 30345
Nadean	Tax	063 026 1351	Intern. Administrator providing admin support to Bernelee and understudy to Bernelee.
Siso	Risk	060 376 6605	Learner. Starting to obtain some exposure to Short-Term insurance Medical Aids, GAP Cover and Life Insurance.
Stella	Risk	078 784 6462	Head of Short-Term Insurance Division.
Terisha	Books	071 858 3373	Intern. Bookkeeping Division. Data Capture and other functions relating to the bookkeeping Division.
Thabo	Risk	078 004 3864	Learner. Starting to obtain some exposure to Short-Term insurance Medical Aids, GAP Cover and Life Insurance.