

## Like-Minded Citizens: Reflections on our founding

Mid-year is always a good time to look back and see if you are still on course or if life and circumstances have changed your direction. It is a time to refocus on goals that you have set or recalibrate your thinking once again. We live in a day of immense and constant activity. The technology we have today overly engages our minds and forces us to encounter things not just daily but minute by minute that years ago may have only been occasional outliers. However some technology with its wealth of data offers us windows into history that can help us realign our thinking.

Having just celebrated the 240th anniversary of our independence and the writing of the Declaration of Independence, I took time to reflect and review the thoughts and driving principles that led our founding fathers to draft such an enduring document. In his speech in Philadelphia, PA some 90 years ago, Calvin Coolidge shared his views of the founding fathers and what motivated their thought as they birthed a new nation: "No one can examine this record and escape the conclusion that in the great outline of its principles the Declaration was the result of the religious teachings of the preceding period. The profound philosophy which Jonathan Edwards applied to theology, the popular preaching of George Whitefield, had aroused the thought and stirred the people of the Colonies in preparation for this great event. No doubt the speculations which had been going on in England, and especially on the Continent, lent their influence to the general sentiment of the times. Of course, the world is always influenced by all the experience and all the thought of the past. But when we come to a contemplation of the immediate conception of the principles of human relationship which went into the Declaration of Independence we are not required to extend our search beyond our own shores. They are found in the texts, the sermons, and the writings of the early colonial clergy who were earnestly undertaking to instruct their congregations in the great mystery of how to live. They preached equality because they believed in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. They justified freedom by the text that we are all created in the divine image, all partakers of the divine spirit." He concludes his speech with: "No other theory is adequate to explain or comprehend the Declaration of Independence. It is the product of the spiritual insight of the people. We live in an age of science and of abounding accumulation of material things. These did not create our Declaration. Our Declaration created them. The things of the spirit come first. Unless we cling to that, all our material prosperity, overwhelming though it may appear, will turn to a barren scepter in our grasp. If we are to maintain the great heritage which has been bequeathed to us, we must be like-minded as the fathers who created it. We must not sink into a pagan materialism. We must cultivate the reverence which they had for the things that are holy. We must follow the spiritual and moral leadership which they showed. We must keep replenished, that they may glow with a more compelling flame, the altar fires before which they worshiped." (Source: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=408>)

Coolidge's understanding of what formed the founding fathers thinking and his admonishment for his generation and future generations to continue in a like course should be a strong reproof to each of us and our entire nation. We are a blessed people, but we must remember from where those blessings derived or we are destined to the same fate of many nations that preceded us.

Views expressed or not necessarily those of Raymond James & Associates and are subject to change without notice. Information provided is general in nature, and is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision, and is not a recommendation or a solicitation

to buy or sell any security. Past performance is not indicative of future results. There is no assurance these trends will continue or that forecast mentioned will occur. Investing always involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss. No investment strategy can guarantee success.