

## God's Hope for America Bus Tour - Men Who Can Think for Me

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On July 15, the God's Hope for America pilgrimage visited Valley Forge, PA, the winter headquarters of George Washington and the Continental Army during the winter of 1777/1778.

True Father had a strong appreciation of and interest in American history, and he was convinced that America was chosen by God for His holy purpose. He studied, learned and often spoke with great insight about the heroes of America, from the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, the patriots of the War of Independence, the Civil War as well as the great conflicts of the 20th Century.

The introductory video shown at the Visitor Center reminds us all of just how severe were the hardships faced by Washington and his men that winter at Valley Forge. They had little food, and many of the troops lacked proper clothing or even shoes. Disease was rife; and victory seemed impossible. Yet in the midst of the crisis, Washington kept his faith and offered serious, desperate prayers to God.

True Father elaborated on this in his speech "God's Hope for America" delivered in 1973—

"When he finally faced the last heartbreaking winter at Valley Forge, George Washington was serious. I am sure he prayed like this: 'God, it is You who led our people out of Europe and brought us over here to the New World. You don't want us to repeat the dull, gray history of Europe. You liberated us and gave us freedom. You don't want to see the mistakes in Europe repeated in this land. Let me give you my pledge. I will build one nation under God.' Thus George Washington made his battle God's battle, and therefore the victory won was a victory for God. I know that this victory and the independence of America came because God accepted George Washington's prayer, along with the prayers of many other Americans."

All this is true, yet the Valley Forge experience shows us that human responsibility is important too. I was most moved by a display in the old Valley Forge railway station showing George Washington at work in his 'office.' It made clear that the General was inundated by letters every day. Some of them asked questions of utmost national importance, but others pressed him with more mundane considerations.

"What I need most," he wrote in frustration in early 1778, "is not just men who can execute my commands, but leaders and officers who can think for me."

True Father, whose footsteps we are faithfully following in the 43-day, 48-state Holy Ground tour, often said the same thing. Anyone who has ever had to lead others know how important it is to have people who can take initiative, do more than asked and come up with creative solutions!