

The Resolute Leader

Among the many outstanding men of leadership in the American Colonies, Washington stood out above all. Once the War for Independence began, he was quickly and logically chosen Commander-in-Chief of the Colonial Forces. Washington had the impossible task of taking a few thousand untrained volunteers and leading them against the armies of the world's greatest empire. Great Britain was a powerful and progressive nation with colonies and influence around the world, and she had mighty armies and fleets to defend her possessions. To add to the difficulties was the fact that the American Colonies were not united, were economically weak, had no standing army and no navy, and had only three million people, who were seriously divided as to whether or not to fight for freedom.

It is not known what percentage of the Colonists genuinely supported the cause for freedom. Many of those who opposed independence constantly gave help, comfort and support to the enemy. Probably no more than 3% of the people in the Colonies actually took part in the fight for American independence. Then, as now, apathy, self-interests, uncertainty and fear prevailed among a large portion of the population.

Once the Declaration of Independence had been signed and Washington's forces were pitted against the British, his army was so greatly outnumbered and so ill equipped that many thought him foolhardy to even attempt to fight the most powerful nation in the world. Seldom in all of history has such a task been undertaken under such unfavorable conditions. However, Patrick Henry in his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech hit directly upon his reasons for hoping for ultimate victory when he said, "God will raise up friends to fight our battles for us."

General Washington led his men with a passion, courage and fortitude that could come only from total dedication. When the Continental Congress did not, or could not, send the funds for his soldiers' supplies and salaries, Washington paid for them out of his own pocket. He gained and held the allegiance of his men because he was fair, firm resolute and dedicated. Moreover, he was a devoutly Christian man who made no apology for prayer. He repeatedly called upon God for deliverance and victory in the struggle for freedom.

The Man of God

The paintings of George Washington kneeling in prayer in the snow-covered woods of Valley Forge are based on fact. He believed that God would lead him to victory, and anyone who has read his handwritten letters and documents cannot help but be impressed by his reliance on the Almighty and his deep belief in Divine Guidance.