

Ervin Farewell Note Hails Power of Faith

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In a farewell statement before his retirement, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), said fear is America's great enemy, a corrosive and destructive force that can be overcome by truth and faith and courage.

In his last newsletter to North Carolina constituents, the former chairman of the Senate Watergate committee set forth a personal philosophy:

"The canny Scotsman, Thomas Carlyle, made a profound observation when he said, 'Man lives by believing in something: not by debating and arguing many things.'

"Faith and courage constitute two of our most basic needs. . .

"Faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, proves to men and women the reality of the positive beliefs by which we live and for which we are willing to die.

"Faith is not a storm cellar to which men and women can flee for refuge from the storms of life. It is, instead, an inner force which gives them the strength to face those storms and their consequences with serenity of spirit. In times of greatest stress, faith has the miraculous power to lift ordinary men and women to greatness.

"Faith is exhibited at its best in the lives of those men and women who trust the promises of God. . .

"Fear has been the devastating enemy of mankind in all generations.

"We must distinguish between fear which is foolish and anxiety which is wise.

"Anxiety causes one concern about future events likely to occur and induces one to take provident steps to prepare for them, whereas fear fills one with dread of dangers which are imaginary or dangers which cannot be avoided.

"People are probably more fearful today than they were at any time in the past. They are assailed on all side by the old fears such as fear of economic insecurity, fear of unemployment, fear of loss of stature, fear of sickness, and fear of death. But if we are to overcome the fears which beset us, we must have courage.

"Joanna Baillie described courage aright in this verse:
*The brave man is not he who
feels no fear,*

*For that were stupid and
irrational;*

*But he, whose noble soul its
fear subdues,*

*And bravely dares the danger
nature shrinks from.*

"Courage falls into two categories. These are physical courage, which enables one to brave physical dangers, and moral courage, which empowers one to carry the burdens and take the heavy blows of life without losing heart. . .

"Courage often comes through the realization that the alternative to the impending danger is more dreadful than the danger itself. . .

"Finally, courage results from having faith in ourselves, faith in the righteousness of our cause, and faith in the promises of God.

"If we will seek truth, keep faith, and have courage, I have no doubt that this nation can overcome all challenges from within and without."