

Photo By Tevin Stinson

Members of the Minster's Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity listen closely to panelists during the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast Forum held at the Benton Convention Center on Monday, Jan. 18.

Chavis

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County. (See The Chronicle's 2016 MLK Jr. Holiday special section for details.)

Chavis said the Berlin Wall is a mindset.

"If you really want to know how someone feels about you, you have to see how they think about you."

While Chavis, an ordained minister, marveled at the diversity of the audience and the steps various leaders said they are taking to rid Winston-Salem of its ills, he said there are two North Carolinas, "one looking forward and one running backward."

He said North Carolina is headed in the wrong direction. For instance, race still plays an important part in deciding funding for schools; school ahave been resegregated.

Also, North Carolina has restricted voting rights through a 2013 law. Chavis urged the audience to support the N.C. NAACP and the Moral Monday movement in the fight to regain voting rights and spur voter registration.

The N.C. NAACP and others have sued the state of North Carolina over the

2013 law that requires registered voters to show a government-issued identification card before they can vote. This part of the lawsuit is scheduled to be heard Monday, Jan. 25. The N.C. General Assembly passed an amendment to the law this summer that provides a way people can vote without the required ID. The N.C. NAACP sought to defer the Jan. 25 hearing until after the March 15 primary elections but a federal judge denied an injunction in the case.

"If you want to celebrate and participate in keeping Dr. King's dream alive, you ought to support the N.C. NAACP and its Moral Monday Movement," Chavis said.

"The 2016 election ought to have the largest turnout in American history. We owe it to Dr. King, we owe it to Rosa Parks" and other stalwarts of the Civil Rights Movement.

Chavis said there are two Americas, one with President Obama at the head and the other against him. He said black-Americans must continue on the battlefield through it all.

Chavis said Dr. King would not be pessimistic today.

"He would be optimistic because more and more people in the United States want justice, want freedom, want equality."

Chavis said he is optimistic about the future.

"The reason I'm optimistic is because I see young people going back to the front lines" with the Black Lives Matter movement. He said King would support that movement, and he said he is proud of it.

Young people today need "the proper encouragement" to do their best, Chavis said.

"It's our responsibility to raise up a new generation of freedom fighters," he said.

Chavis, who once was executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), is now president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a trade organization of 206 black-owned newspapers. The Chronicle is a member of that organization.

Chavis said the NNPA-member newspapers have a duty.

"It's about doing what we think and know what's

right for all of God's people," he said.

Chronicle Publisher Emeritus Ernie Pitt spoke about Winston-Salem and The Chronicle.

He said that he has had a "crazy notion" Winston-Salem can be a model city in the United States.

"We have an obligation to make this city better and I believe we can," he said. However, "economic reciprocity" is needed to support the newspaper.

"We keep on pushing because we believe our city and this county needs someone to tell the truth

about what's happening," Pitt said.

Chavis said it appears Winston-Salem is part of the North Carolina that wants to move forward.

"That's the North Carolina that we all should be striving for," he said.

Photo by Tevin Stinson

Citizens carry signs as they make their way around the Benton Convention Center on Monday, January 18 during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day march and rally hosted by the Winston-Salem Ministers Conference and Vicinity.



March

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Forest store that left her with severe brain injuries.

Although this year's march was shorter and colder than it has been in the past, the Rev. Alvin Carlisle, third assistant vice president of the Ministers' Conference, seemed pleased with the turnout.

"We are happy to see so many members of the community join us for the rally," he said. "We hope the rally and other Martin Luther King Jr. Day festivities in the area continue to grow in the future."

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