

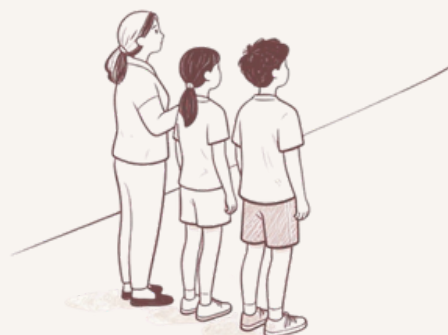
Reflections

ON "GOOD TROUBLE"

Reverend Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is a Senior Fellow for Divinity and Interdisciplinary Studies at Duke University Divinity School. An African American civil rights leader, author, and journalist, he served in his youth as a coordinator and assistant to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1971, at the age of twenty-three, Chavis gained international prominence as a leader of the Wilmington Ten, a group of civil rights activists in North Carolina who were wrongfully convicted of arson. Their convictions were later overturned, and in 1980 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ordered their release, citing prosecutorial misconduct. Chavis currently serves as president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

As someone who has spent more than six decades working in the Civil Rights Movement alongside courageous leaders such as Congressman **John Lewis**, I have learned that lasting social change begins with moral leadership. John Lewis inspired millions with his call to make "good trouble, necessary trouble." He taught us that "good trouble" means standing peacefully and courageously for justice, equality, and human dignity. It is not about creating conflict for its own sake; rather, it is about having the integrity to challenge unfairness with love, discipline, and hope. **Every student should know that one person, acting with courage and compassion, can make a positive difference in the lives of others.**

Throughout my life, I have also witnessed the problem of silence. Too often, good people see injustice, bullying, prejudice, or discrimination but remain silent because they are afraid or believe someone else will speak. Congressman Lewis challenged all of us to reject that silence. Ethical courage means speaking the truth with respect, standing beside those who are treated unfairly, and refusing to accept hatred or injustice as normal. **Teachers have a unique opportunity to help young people understand that their voices matter** and that kindness, honesty, fairness, and peaceful action are among the greatest strengths any leader can possess.



I believe our schools are places where future leaders are formed every day. In classrooms across America, educators help students develop not only academic excellence but also strong character, moral conviction, and a commitment to serving others. The legacy of Congressman John Lewis reminds us that democracy depends on citizens who are willing to stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult. My hope for every young person is that they will never be afraid to speak for justice, never remain silent when others are harmed, and always remember that the greatest "good trouble" is helping to build what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the "Beloved Community"—a society where freedom, justice, equality, and love are shared by all.