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## What would Martin say about this book?

By **DEMETRIA IRWIN**

*Special to the AmNews*

Clarence B. Jones, who was part-owner and editor of AmNews in the early 1970s, has just released a new book titled "What Would Martin Say?," a series of "what ifs" about what the famed civil rights legend would say about some of today's pressing issues.

So what qualifies Jones to right such a book? Well, being a trusted top advisor to Dr. King for many years and co-writer of several speeches—including "I Have a Dream"—seems to suffice as credentials for attempting such a seemingly audacious task. With the help of co-author Joel Engel, Jones elegantly and plainly makes his case with a treasure trove of lean, muscular sentences and well-reasoned

arguments.

Jones applies the title question to six issues (not including the chapter on Jones): Black leadership, affirmative action, illegal immigration, anti-Semitism, Islamic terrorism and the war in Iraq, and King's assassin. Some of Jones' imagined Dr. King quotes are pretty much expected, such as Dr. King's stance against anti-Semitism.

Some of the arguments are a bit more nuanced, though. Jones' Martin has a lot to say about today's Black leadership, and most of it is not good. "Martin, I assure you, would be appalled at the behavior of some Black leaders, pointing out that the role of a leader is yes, to lead—that is, to guide others to a better place, a place worth going, not to keep them stagnant

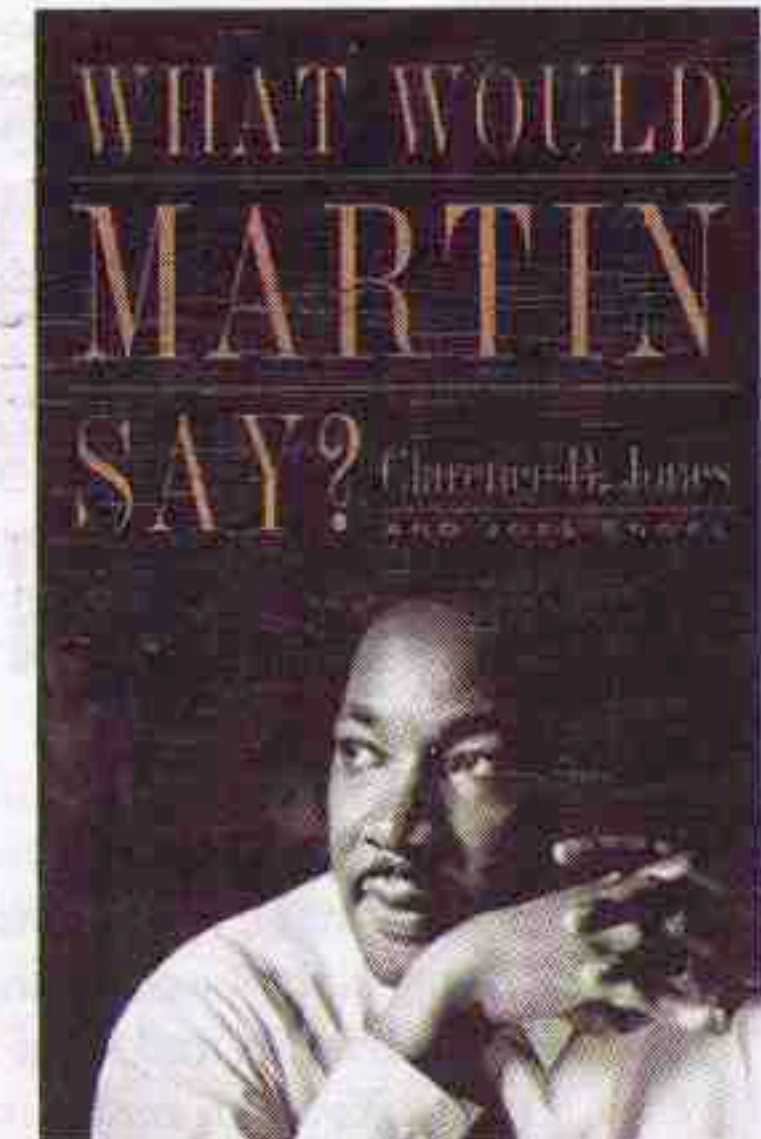
and hopeless by convincing them that they're powerless in a world that's been stacked against them solely because of their skin color." Jones goes on to point out what he perceives to be missteps by Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson on several issues, including the Jena 6, the Duke lacrosse team rape case and several other high-profile incidents.

Dr. King, as framed by Jones, would be against illegal immigration (Jones thinks illegals should be kicked out and the borders sealed) on the grounds that illegal immigrants are unjustly snatching jobs from hard-working Americans (especially Blacks) and offering themselves up for exploitation by corporate interests. Jones' Martin is against affirmative action, but

for reparations and equal, quality education in its place.

Whether you agree with Jones' somewhat conservative stance on the issues or not, he does an excellent job of backing up his arguments with well-written, logical, fact-filled reasoning. Additionally, Jones really shines when sharing illuminating anecdotes about Dr. King, such as the unique way that he recruited Jones to be on his team or how Dr. King's father went back to elementary school at 21 years old, eventually going on to graduate from Morehouse college.

Though it's not always clear how much of the book is really just Jones dispensing his own views of the world, it is an enjoyable, enlightening, surprisingly quick (232 pages) read



nonetheless. Just in time to mark the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, "What Would Martin Say" offers a unique and insightful perspective on today's issues through the lens of a man who was much more than a dreamer.