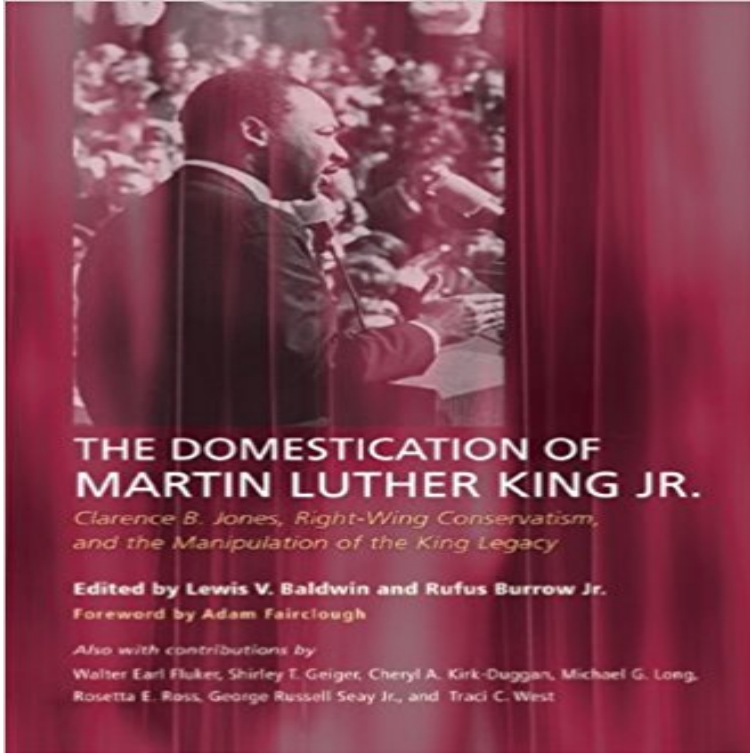


# The Domestication of Martin Luther King Jr.: Clarence B. Jones, Right-Wing Conservatism, and the Manipulation of the King Legacy



Clarence B. Jones, close King advisor and draft speechwriter, has done much to reinforce a conservative hijacking of Kings image with the publication of his controversial books *What Would Martin Say?* (2008) and *Behind the Dream* (2011). King emerges from Jones's books not as a prophetic radical who attacked systemic racial injustice, economic exploitation, and wars of aggression, but as a fiercely conservative figure who would oppose affirmative action and illegal immigration. *The Domestication of Martin Luther King Jr.* offers a critique of Jones's work and the larger effort on the part of right-wing conservatives to make King a useful symbol, or the sacred aura, in a protracted campaign to promote their own agenda for America. This work establishes the need to rethink Kings legacy of ideas and activism and its importance for our society and culture. Contributors include: Lewis V. Baldwin Rufus Burrow Jr. Adam Fairclough Walter Earl Fluker Shirley T. Geiger Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan Michael G. Long Rosetta E. Ross George Russell Seay Jr. Traci C. West In *The Domestication of Martin Luther King Jr.* a bracing colloquy of voices combat the conservative hijacking of Kings words and ways. Although the authors respond to a single figure's distortion of Kings legacy, their searching and provocative insights apply to the broader efforts to turn Kings image against the very progressive ideas he spent his life defending. A valiant corrective and call for a more perceptive grappling with Kings complicated life and stunning contributions. --Michael Eric Dyson, Georgetown University A fascinating variety of voices addressing the unanswerable question, what would Martin say? These alternatives to what Clarence B. Jones surmises address racism, affirmative action, immigration, homosexuality, and the applicability of Kings principled and situational nonviolence to a terrorist age.

Notwithstanding Kings imperfections, the human being who emerges from these pages remains an extraordinary agent of Divine purpose for our world. --Rabbi Everett Gendler, The Shomer Shalom Institute for Jewish Nonviolence Produced by a superb team, this study gives us access to deeper levels of understanding Martin Luther King, Jr., his concerns, his perspectives, and his person. A treasure trove of probing insights, it offers clarification, criticism, and appreciation, while tracing trajectories from Dr. Kings ministry to sharply enrich appreciation for his legacy as a leader. A fresh and pertinent contribution to King studies! --James Earl Massey, Anderson University School of Theology

The Domestication of Martin Luther King Jr. deftly puts to rest the mythology surrounding Martin Luther King, Jr. and his vision of a beloved community. Editors Lewis V. Baldwin and Rufus Burrow, Jr. have assembled a compelling set of essays challenging and contradicting the revisionist use of King for conservative and right-wing purposes. For all concerned about the continued legacy and history of the civil rights movement, this book is a must-read. --Anthea D. Butler, University of Pennsylvania

Lewis V. Baldwin is Professor of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University. He is the author or editor of eleven books on Martin Luther King, Jr., including *The Voice of Conscience: The Church in the Mind of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2010). Rufus Burrow Jr. is Indiana Professor of Christian Thought at Christian Theological Seminary. He has authored or coauthored three books on King, including *Martin Luther King, Jr. for Armchair Theologians* (2009).

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