

[Download] American Evangelicals and Modern Israel: A Plea for Tough Love

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Frederic M. Martin

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Frederic M. Martin : American Evangelicals and Modern Israel: A Plea for Tough Love before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Evangelicals and Modern Israel: A Plea for Tough Love:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Joan C. FrondorfVery well written!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lucid, readable and informative. A must-readBy rhona tolchardScholarly and accessible at the same time - a rare find and a lucid treatment of a complex subject. This is a timely and thoughtful book that

sheds light on a much-needed problem - the lingering legacy of Dispensationalism and its influence on the attitude of the modern Church to Israel and the Palestinians. Martin is not afraid to tease out the complexities of theology and history, but he does it in a thoroughly readable and engaging way - even a non-theologian like me has a better understanding of the problem after reading the book. I particularly liked Chapter 7, in which he debunks the sloppy, pseudo-scholarship applied to Biblical prophecy by writers like Hal Lindsey and Tim La Haye. As Martin himself says, the prophets of doom have been wrong so many times in their predictions that their dangerous nonsense needs to be exposed for what it really is. One hopes that books like this go some way towards dispelling the anxiety and division created by such publications. I liked this book not only because it sheds much-needed light on a tricky subject but also because it shows what real Bible scholarship is, and how much it adds to the understanding of something that often elicits a cursory, knee-jerk response inadequate to addressing the issues thoughtfully and properly.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Tough Love" in Mid-Eastern Politics By Dean Fredrikson It is said that the greatness of an author is to be judged by the importance of the problem he addresses. In this small book, Dr. Martin attends to a very large problem: that of Evangelical support of American foreign policy regarding Israel. In this book, he is attacking a major item of ingrained evangelical theology, especially as it is mixed into American civil religion. It is entirely reasonable to ask why American politicians have, in recent history, favored the modern State of Israel. Only yesterday, Hillary Clinton promised continued economic and political support of Israel. And there are, the author holds, reasonable answers: the persecution of Jews culminating in Hitler's holocaust was unjust; the Jewish people deserve a nation of their own rather than continue forever as a persecuted minority; Israel is our one dependable ally in a turbulent and dangerous Middle Eastern situation; more than six million talented, articulate Jews form a significant voting block in favor of Israel that politicians seeking office must consider. Many evangelicals add religious reasons for American support of Israel. Dr. Martin is informed and fair in his listing of such reasons. After all, Israel is "God's Chosen People." Bible believing people will take very seriously the biblical statement, "I will bless those who bless you [Israel], and whoever curses you will curse." Martin gives careful consideration, both of the truth of this statement, made to Abraham more than three thousand years ago, and how it might, or might not, apply to the nation that now bears the name of Israel. But, primarily, in the name of Christianity, the author asks about justice for the Palestinians, including Christian Palestinians. Is Israel motivated by the biblical mandates of seeking to "be blessing" to all nations, or is it seeking ever expanding control of mid-eastern real estate, without consideration of the families who are helplessly displaced by such occupation? Dr. Martin seeks to balance justice for both Israelis and Palestinians with a political application of "Tough Love." The book is relevant to American foreign policy and to evangelical interpretation of the Bible. It is an excellent beginning on a much larger issue: that of the nature of biblical Christianity as a composite vision of the purpose and destiny of humanity, Jew and Gentile together. Julie Galambush, "The Reluctant Parting" and James D. G. Dunn, "The Partings of the Ways," have written of this historic separation. Karl Barth and particularly N.T. Wright have written of their common roots and conceivable unification.

"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse." Evangelical Christians are often reminded of God's strong proclamation to Abraham and his descendants, recorded in Chapter 12 of Genesis. And we continue to be taught that to criticize or even question modern Israel's policies is to invite God's judgment. Early in his Christian life, author Frederic Martin endorsed this popular pro-Israeli position. But over thirty-six years of pastoral ministry, he slowly-reluctantly-realized that most evangelicals understand little of the Holy Land's past and present. They've been misled about God's promise to Abraham and the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. American Evangelicals and Modern Israel: A Plea for Tough Love makes a clear case: Christians need not turn against Israel, but it's time for us to turn from our unquestioning, uncritical, and unconditional support of modern Israel. It's time to reconsider the unqualified support we presently give to that nation's unjust policies.

"Frederic Martin's book comes at a crucial time in history when the Evangelical Church is waking up and realizing the huge negative impact of Christian Zionism on the Church, on America, and on politics in the Middle East. It is my hope that Martin's clear, easy-to-read style and his fairness in presenting the argument will cause many of us Evangelicals to search our hearts and lead us to repent for all the pain, wars, and injuries our theology and eschatology has inflicted on millions of people in the Middle East and in North Africa." -Rev. Alex Awad, Dean of Students, Bethlehem Bible College; Pastor, East Jerusalem Baptist Church "Dr. Fred Martins blend of pastoral experience, along with keen academic abilities, makes him eminently suited to write this book. A majority of Christians today would still give the present nation of Israel their unqualified and unquestioned support, politically and otherwise. Martins book is a desperately needed and sane call to reexamine those assumptions from a sound biblical, theological, and pastoral perspective. Hopefully this book will receive a wide reading." -Dr. David Mathewson, Associate Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary "This book brings joy to me and heartache. The joy: this is a thoughtful, scholarly, and biblical analysis of issues swirling within the evangelical community regarding prophecy as well as politics. It is readable and succinct, a welcomed resource for the concerned person. Then the heartache: Among many evangelicals, there is a brittleness, even harshness, when it comes to responding to the Israeli-Palestinian situation. The concern to

defend the biblical narrative has, too often, resulted in a misappropriation of that narrative. Will we be willing to look anew at the Scriptures and humbly allow them to speak to us trustworthy as they are, without our preconceived 'stances'?" -Dr. Thomas J. Bower, Past President, Oak Hills Christian College

About the Author
Frederic Martin did not want to become a "professional Christian." Just believing in Jesus was good enough. So he was surprised when, after graduating from Vanderbilt University (BA in history, religion, and philosophy), God led him first to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.Div., D.Min.) and then to a pastorate where he served for thirty-six years. During those years, he read-early in the morning and late at night, in shopping centers while his wife took care of practical necessities, and in school parking lots as he waited to pick up their four children. He even remembers the book he took along with him on his honeymoon. Fred loves to study the Bible, theology, and history, as well as the adventures of Sherlock Holmes and the careers of his favorite Indy 500 drivers. Fred and his wife, Berta, live in northern Minnesota.