



# Preaching the Gospel Without Blaming the Jews A Lectionary Commentary

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## Preaching the Gospel Without Blaming the Jews

A Lectionary Commentary

by Ronald J. Allen and Clark M. Williamson

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Professors Allen and Williamson, both of Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, have co-authored five previous volumes, including, in the field of Christian-Jewish relations, *Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching* (1989). This latest publication may be viewed as their own effort to apply the principles laid down in that earlier volume. *Preaching the Gospel Without Blaming the Jews* provides a brief commentary on each of the appointed Gospel readings in the three-year ecumenical lectionary, including both Sundays and special days, i.e., a total of about 180 lections. The first purpose of the commentary is to bring out the Jewishness of the Gospel texts, by pointing out how they reflect Jewish traditions, concepts, practices, and institutions, whether prior to or contemporaneous with the New Testament. In some cases the authors also

refer to later rabbinic discussions on similar issues. The commentary thus enables preachers or other interpreters of the text to stress the dependence of Christianity on its Jewish matrix and the continuity between the two traditions. The second purpose is, as the authors state, "to reflect critically on points at which the lections caricature Jewish people, practices, and institutions." They urge interpreters to place such polemic in historical context, thereby undercutting any tendency to consider it universally relevant, and when necessary to engage in a vigorous moral and theological critique of the very texts upon which they may be preaching.

Clark Williamson is the author of *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (1993) and *Way of Blessing, Way of Life: A Christian Theology* (1999), among other works. Ronald Allen is the author of *Patterns of Preaching* (1998) and *Preaching: An Essential Guide* (2002), among other works. Books they have co-authored include *The Teaching Minister* (1991) and *The Vital Church* (1998).

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