

Presenter: Russell Fuller, University of San Diego

Title: **“Christian Antisemitism in Biblical Studies: The Continuation of Supersessionism in the Academic Study of the Hebrew Bible”**

Panel: Bible, Christianity and Anti-Semitism

This paper will focus on the persistence of Christian supersessionism in the study of the *Tanak*/Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Supersessionism or replacement theology is the Christian belief that Judaism is replaced or superseded by Christianity. This belief is found in earliest Christianity such as the letters of Paul and in many Christian writers and scholars down to the present, including in contemporary critical study of the Hebrew Bible. The origins and impact of Christian supersessionism has been well studied by scholars for example as in Rosemary Radford Reuther's, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (1974). Christian supersessionism has contributed to the violence against and the persecution of Jews through the centuries. The paper will first briefly explore the history of Supersessionism or replacement theology in Christianity beginning in the New Testament period, with select examples also from the church fathers. The paper will then move on to two examples of the persistence of this idea in the modern critical study of the Hebrew Bible. Even though many Christian denominations have officially rejected Supersessionism (beginning with *Nostra Aetate* in 1965), it still persists in many areas of Christian life, especially in liturgy and in Christian academic study of the Hebrew Bible. Simple statements on the part of Christian groups that the covenant between God and Israel has continuing, irrevocable validity are mere beginning points in rooting out this pernicious belief/dogma. The final solution is obvious, but far from simple. Supersessionism must be completely eliminated from every aspect of Christianity including all liturgical traditions and all aspects of the interpretation of Scripture.