

OUTSIDER DESIGNATIONS AND BOUNDARY CONSTRUCTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What terms did early Christians use for outsiders? How did they refer to non-members? In this book-length investigation of these questions, Paul Trebilco explores the outsider designations that the early Christians used in the New Testament. They include a range of terms, such as unbelievers, 'outsiders', sinners, Gentiles and Jews, among others. Drawing on insights from social identity theory, sociolinguistics, and the sociology of deviance, he investigates the usage and development of these terms across the New Testament and examines how these outsider designations function in boundary construction across several texts. Trebilco's analysis leads to new conclusions about the identity and character of the early Christian movement, the range of relations between early Christians and outsiders, and the theology of particular New Testament authors.

Paul R. Trebilco is Professor in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago. He is the author of five books on topics in New Testament and Early Christian studies, most recently *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*.

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Early Christian Communities and the
Formation of Group Identity

Paul R. Trebilco
University of Otago, New Zealand



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For Jimmy and Meta Dunn

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Preface

Originally, my book *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) was to have had a chapter on designations used by the early Christians for outsiders. However, it became apparent that that book was quite long enough and that outsider designations deserved a much longer treatment, which is offered here.

I have given papers associated with this project at Society for New Testament Studies Conferences in Perth and Amsterdam and at seminars or conferences at Macquarie University, Leipzig University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, King's College, London, the University of Cambridge, and the University of Durham. I am very grateful for the interaction and helpful discussions with colleagues on each of these occasions.

A huge 'thank you' to my former student, Dr Sean du Toit, who read through the manuscript with the utmost care and made lots of very helpful suggestions. My sincere thanks also to Beatrice Rehl at Cambridge University Press for accepting this book for publication and to Jonathon Lookadoo for doing the indexes. I am enormously grateful to my wife, Gill, for her patience and support as I have worked away on this project.

This book is dedicated to Professor James Dunn and to Mrs Meta Dunn. I first met Jimmy and Meta in 1983, when we arrived at the University of Durham to begin my doctoral studies. Jimmy was a most wonderful supervisor, and then became a treasured friend. Both Jimmy and Meta have been amazingly supportive to our whole family, and we will always be grateful to them for their friendship and support. This book is dedicated to them both as a token of our gratitude.