



# **Trade Union Gospel: Christianity and Labor in Industrial Philadelphia, 1865-1915 (American Civilization)**

*Ken Fones-Wolf*

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This study traces the interaction of religion and the labor movement in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Exploring the ways that Protestantism mediated between the dominant and working-class versions of American society, Ken Fones-Wolf examines the ambiguity of Christianity as a social force in class conflict. Using Philadelphia as a case study, he shows that aspects of working-class culture and trade union activism were rooted in Protestantism and that religious feeling was a significant factor of working-class life. While religious values complemented a broad spectrum of political and class positions and helped people adjust to social change, Christianity itself was a dynamic force that adapted to emerging ideas of social responsibility and the jarring disjunctions between old beliefs and new realities.

Author note: Ken Fones-Wolf heads the archives and teaches labor history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He was formerly Manuscripts Curator at the Urban Archives Center of Temple University.

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