

Christian Theology
Distinctions among Christians
October 4, 2009

Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)

- This is an example of a denomination (a self-labeled *movement*) that grew out of the 19th century Holiness Movement. Like many similar groups, it began in the *late* 1800s.
- As a result, this group is heavily influenced by the theology of *Wesley*.
- The person who spearheaded the formation of this group was Daniel S. *Warner*.
- The major problem of the day was *sectarianism*; the *form* of church life bothered Warner and his contemporaries. With such divisions, *unity* was impossible and *sanctification* – which is both individual and corporate – could not be achieved.
- Another major problem was the use of *creeds*, which were somewhat misunderstood.
- Warner sounded the call for people to “*come out*” of these “sects” and join the true church.
- Christian fellowship was not based on subscription to a set of *beliefs*. Instead, it was based on an individual’s *experience* of salvation and *confession* of faith in Jesus Christ.
- The theology of this movement was orthodox. What *was* new here was the combination of *Wesleyan* salvation and *Anabaptist* church life.
- This young movement printed a weekly newspaper, the “*Gospel Trumpet*,” which was first printed right here in Indianapolis, moved frequently, and settled in Anderson.
- After Warner’s death in 1895, the movement struggled to find its identity. In the 1920s and 1930s, a new *apocalyptic* identity developed. This faded away very slowly.
- By the mid-20th century, the Church of God (Anderson) looked and functioned like most other Christian *denominations*.
- The questions of *unity* and *identity* are of high importance in this group today.