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Immersion Baptism at Tirupati

Questions

What is happening here?

How is this different from photograph 20?

How do you think the young man feels?

What are the people who are watching him thinking?

This kind of immersion baptism is more like Jesus' own baptism which was in the River Jordan—you can read about it in Mark chapter 1 verses 9-11. Why do you think the Christians have not used a river?

The Christians in Tirupati do not have their own church building yet—do you need a special building to be a proper church?

Background

In Tirupati, Pastor Augustine is baptising a young man in a big tank. This kind of baptism is called immersion baptism, this means that the person being baptised is dipped (or immersed) in the water three times in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The young man is then welcomed into the church.

Most Christians in Vellore Diocese are baptised when they are children, but when people are born Hindus and then become Christians, then they can be baptised in the same way as in this photograph. You will find an English copy of the words of the service at: <http://www.csimichigan.org/PDF/HOLY%20BAPTISM%20OF%20ADULTS.pdf>

The young man will probably be confirmed very soon (see photograph 19) and will then be able to receive Holy Communion. Any pastor can baptise a person, but only a bishop can confirm someone, so this is why the young man will have to wait.

Tirupati is a large city which has only been part of the Diocese of Vellore for a few years. Although there are several large Christian congregations there, they have not yet raised enough money to build a church, this is why you cannot see a church in the photograph.



