

How Has Egypt's Revolution Impacted Christians?

An Egyptian believer discusses the current state of the Egyptian church, the impact of the revolution and what's needed for the future. The identities of the interviewer and interviewee have been omitted for security reasons.

As an Egyptian, how do you feel about the revolution and its recent developments?

The revolution was necessary! Egyptian civilians were suppressed under Mubarak's 30 years of autocratic rule. The 25th of January played a significant role in shaping a new Egypt. The first 18 days of the revolution stemmed from a group of normal Egyptian youth acting out of pure motives, yearning for freedom and fed up with official corruption. The youth revolution was extremely successful, overthrowing the military regime that ruled Egypt since July 23, 1952. It fostered a spirit of liberty and broke the spirit of fear among Egyptians.

However, the way forward to stability and safety is less clear after developments over the past two months. The revolution offered a golden opportunity for some political forces and religious communities who were forbidden and persecuted under the former regime, to break their silence and achieve their agendas.

From your perspective as a Christian, how did the revolution and its development affect the Christian community?

Since the revolution, the presence of Christians in the country has been alive and well. The revolution has encouraged them to abandon their negative attitudes and seek participation in politics. The Egyptian Christians in Tahrir Square at the early stage of the revolution were really

respectful, active and constructive.

Egyptian Christian participation in the current events is ongoing. Their presence in the national conferences and popular committees reflects their concern for the nation's affairs and their readiness to cooperate in its development. However, the Christian community has mixed feeling towards recent developments of the revolution. They have a lot of questions about the upcoming elections. Sectarianism is feared among the Christian community, along with the inevitability of implementing Islamic law in new Egypt if an Islamic government were to form.

Many Christian families are seeking to immigrate to other countries. Praise the Lord for reviving His churches during the revolution! Instead of being fearful, true believers are witnessing in Tahrir Square and are involved in constructive dialogue regarding cooperation between Christians and Muslims to bring peace and harmony to the community. Of course, we can't ignore some external and internal forces that are seeking to destabilise the internal situation for sectarian and factional reasons.

Do you see any coming challenges that foreign workers in Egypt might face?

Visa extension is one of the challenges for the foreign workers. After the Jan. 25 revolution, there is a stricter policy from the Egyptian immigration for extending tourist visas to foreigners who have been in Egypt a long time. Therefore it will affect foreign workers already in the country, as well as potential workers.

With the visa restriction, please pray that the Lord will place strategic personnel with strong vision, rich experience and servant's hearts in Egypt. Then workers need to look for a long-term solution to this visa restriction.

What kind of strategies should be pursued in a new Egypt?

Prayer is powerful. Please spend more time in prayer for this region. Now is the most strategic time to work with Muslim background believers, to encourage and empower them with sound biblical teaching. The openness of the Arab heart in this region has created many opportunities to share about the Truth.

Foreign workers can equip many Christian young people for mission in the Arab world and strengthen partnerships with local churches. Promoting unity among the Christian community and bringing reconciliation between the Christian and Muslim communities is another big task the Lord has entrusted us with.

Egypt holds a very important role in the Arab world, both politically and spiritually. In the coming decade, the Arab world will still be in the process of rebuilding its countries. But the Egyptian believers have a clear message to present, and at the same time we have to be ready to face persecution.