

Will Egypt Crisis Lead to Christian Exodus?

On Friday, Egypt imposed a curfew as anti-government protests spread outward from Cairo.

Internet service and cell phone text messaging and data plans were disabled across the country.

Protestors spilled into the streets, angry over the pace of political and economic reform. Disillusionment over the lack of opportunity boiled over into rage and touched off by protests of a similar nature in Tunisia.

Demonstrators were at parliament, the prime minister's downtown office, the headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party and other government buildings, many of which were set ablaze.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton urged calm even as Egyptian authorities sent in troops to quell the increasingly violent anti-government protests. The U.S. is watching the situation with its formally stable ally with growing apprehension.

The potential for change is enormous, but not always favorable for freedom. We spoke with an Egyptian believer (name withheld for security reasons) who shared his distress over what's happening in his home. He says there's a deeper concern to consider, too. "We need prayer for the future of Egypt that it wouldn't be more aggressive toward Christians, because if an Islamic government came, we will have more problems and violence against Christians."

If the protestors are successful in overthrowing the government, there will be a power vacuum. That's especially dangerous, he says, because, "The group that is called

'Brethren Muslims' are not really there, but they are in the back rows. I think when something major happens, you will find them there, and they will start raising the slogan of 'Islam is the solution.'" What will happen to believers, who are already marginalized, in Egypt if this occurs? "They would want the Christians to submit totally to the Islamic system or to leave the country."

SAT-7, a Christian satellite television ministry to the Middle East and North Africa, has studios in the heart of the unrest. SAT-7's Rex Rogers says while there is concern for the safety of their staff, they are using their programming to try to counter the messages stirring up the anger. "We continue to try to present a positive view of Jesus Christ, and point people to forgiveness and love and hope that only results spiritually in the heart, and certainly more long term than any political solutions."

Their live programming allows a forum for viewers to vent frustration, or share their concerns. They can interact with the host through live call-in shows. It's an outlet to help people process what is going on. Most importantly, it's an opportunity to share a different answer to the rage that's fueling the demonstrations.

Rogers urges prayer. "God can use this. He's in charge of all these events, and sometimes when things are most unsettling, hearts are most open."

What's your take on the situation in Egypt? What is God saying to you about this?