

October 12, 2011

One step forward, two steps back.

This is the overwhelming feeling of frustration among the Christian community in Egypt in light of the tragic clashes that erupted between Christian demonstrators and the Armed forces last Sunday. Many hoped for significant improvement for the state of Christians in Egypt after the Revolution, however, Sunday's catastrophe crushed many hopes.



Christian demonstrators in several cities across Egypt went out on Sunday protesting against the transitional government's sluggishness in investigating and penalizing the perpetrators of repeated incidents of violence against churches since the Revolution in January of this year, and the unjust coverage of the State media of these incidents, which fuels sectarian tension among Egyptians. The march in Cairo started out peacefully, but soon turned violent outside the State TV and Radio Broadcast building in Maspero, claiming the lives of 25 persons, and injuring 329.

The ETSC community of faculty, staff and students are saddened by these recent events, and the increasing culture of violence and insecurity that has unfortunately become a daily reality. We lament the loss of life and join the entire Egyptian Christian community in dedicating the next 3 days to fast and pray for God's comfort and peace for the families of the victims, and for our whole nation. We trust that our Triune God is sovereign over all events, faithful to His church, able even at this time of hardship, to cause His word to continue to spread and flourish (Acts 12)

We are encouraged by the supportive responses of several political activists, free journalists, and moderate Muslim leaders, and their condemnation of Sunday's incident. Together we long for the day when Egypt can securely live in a culture of freedom and democracy under the sovereignty of a just law, and the integrity of an unbiased state media.

We ask you to remember the hurting Egyptian Church in your prayers. Our grievances are deep, and our grief is even deeper. May the Lord fill our hearts with grace and forgiveness so that we can love as He loved us, even as we wait for the Lord.

We also ask you to pray for the upcoming conference on the Political and Social Responsibility of the Church cosponsored by ETSC and the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services. During these difficult days of transitioning to a new democratic nation, ETSC is committed to engage the local Egyptian Christian leaders in the ever changing political scene, so they've invited more than 100 pastors from across Egypt to attend this weekend's conference as part of their ongoing program of political formation and development in churches.