

Dear Friends of the Nygards,

Rather than replying individually to questions about our well-being, I will try again to draft a newsletter summing up our rapidly morphing situation here in Egypt. This will be the fourth time in 48 hours that I will have drafted or modified a regular newsletter, which shows how little we know and how quickly what we know changes. Live coverage of Tahrir Square is on the television before me as I write, and we are as aware as you are of the events occurring an hour's walk from here.

My taxi driver thought I should get a glimpse of it live, this morning on my way back from Arabic class. On his own initiative he stopped his car on the Sixth of October overhead freeway opposite the Egyptian Museum from the square itself, and we peered between the buildings toward the stopped cars and the crowds beyond. He said he was going to go down there himself after work today. So did my seminary student tutor, Amgad. Two of the international students at the International Language Institute had been on the square the day before, and Charlie, a Brit from Exeter, said it wasn't pretty what he had seen - bloodied faces and bruised bodies. Another student, Maya, used break today to announce the request for medical aid for the square at drop-off points around the city. Dr. Magdi, seminary vice president, counselled us to go home during the daylight hours this week. On my way this afternoon, I found the usually crowded parking places on Abbasia Street empty.

So... on the one hand, we are quite conscious of the conflict and we have stores of water, food, and money to try to be ready for any disruption that might be necessary. On the other hand, our days continue on under the press of our own schedules and ministries as if nothing at all was unusual. Fall semester classes are now two-thirds over, Aisha of Maa'di discusses connectors of direct and indirect objects to Arabic verbs, Philip Friesen of St. Paul offers November guest lectures on social change, I prepare for a Scholar's Seminar called "1960 and 2010: Missiology Then and Now," my Dutch colleague, Willem, offers a daring way better to manage our challenging curriculum, and in the midst of it all, a French missionary teacher friend needs us to babysit a kitten for five days, and this, in an apartment where pets are forbidden. Things don't simply shut down because a country is struggling to determine its destiny! Our life is full.

For those of you who have a few minutes and would like a more penetrating analysis of Egypt's political trauma, I invite you to look up an article called "Egypt's Democracy" at <http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/>. For those of you with less natural interest, what if you put a sign that says "Egypt" on your wall and remember Egypt in earnest prayer through the days and weeks ahead. Really good things can happen at moments like this.

Thanks for your partnership in this ministry.

Sincerely yours,  
Mark and Linda Nygard