

From: Simon Guillebaud [simon@greatlakesoutreach.org]

Sent: 29 November 2011

Brought to my Knees...

Dear Friends,

What crazy times we live in! Elections yesterday in Egypt, a few weeks back in Tunisia, and massive instability in Syria – all places where the Christian communities are living in deep fear of what new regimes may mean for their very existence. I feel a heavy burden and encourage you too to pray for them.

So I feel a bit feeble asking for prayers for the following, and yet it is an issue weighing heavily on me. We are doing lots of work to prepare for our coast to coast cycle ride in March (see www.bikeforburundi.com) – it is only 95 days away – and my knees are in a bad state, particularly the left one. I've been off injured for nearly four weeks now, and the physio is saying at least another month, maybe more, before I can resume training (the injuries came as a result of over-training). We are trying to raise \$1million, and already have about \$100,000 pledged, but it'd be gutting and impacting to our fundraising efforts if I have to pull out. I feel it the whole time, so I'm thinking about it the whole time – trying not to, but it's hard to be positive. Poor Lizzie, I'm a grump to be around! It's been a humbling time and the Lord has definitely been teaching me through it. So prayers from your healthy knees for my dodgy ones, particularly the left one, would be greatly appreciated!

Update on the murders: bit.ly/rv5RSV The two men will probably be publicly shot in the next week or so, if previous incidents are anything to go by. The security situation is definitely worsening.

Meantime our partners are doing stunningly beautiful, fruitful and holistic work which is a huge encouragement to witness. I hope you are encouraged too as you pray with and for them.

KCC is humming and full at the moment, which is great as it means more money to sow back into the Kingdom. Thanks to those of you who wrote to encourage Olivia, she greatly appreciated it. Please keep lifting her up, as life in Burundi is so draining and she has lots of responsibilities. Also we're looking for some significant financial backing to build the second phase. I won't tell you the numbers or it might scare you off! Please do pray for divine connections for funds to be released.

I've been asked to write a short book on the theme 'sacrifice' – massive theme, I know. Well, having put off the idea, four emails this week already from people impacted by previous books have convinced me to get stuck in. So I'd love you to send me any thoughts, quotes, anecdotes, ideas you have. The target audience is 18-28year-olds, looking at finances, time, career, marriage – that sort of thing, an entry-level teaching/discipling book with biblical principles, that's my brief. Any thoughts?

Our US visa runs out in May. We will make a decision in January on extending here or returning to Burundi. I preached three times on Sunday and they were deeply impacting times. But strangely because I am new to the USA, doors simply aren't opening as they have done in the UK and elsewhere, which I admit is frustrating and disappointing. Do pray for breakthroughs, and lots of opportunities to arise in the coming months.

As a family we are loving it here. Grace had her 4th birthday a few weeks back, Zac will have his 6th at the local firestation in two weeks, Lizzie's doing our church's discipleship year and enjoying that, Josiah (2) is a huggable delight (notwithstanding the early wake-up calls with him singing 'for the Bible tells me so' before dawn!), and each evening finds Daddy on the lounge carpet with each child scratching, licking, snorting over, punching, crushing a different part of my anatomy in violent and ruthless 'rough n tumbles' – despite the mandatory tears, it's a nightly highlight before story-time, tooth-brushing, prayers and bed. Such is life in the Gilbo household.

God bless you all, thanks so much for doing battle with us,

Simon