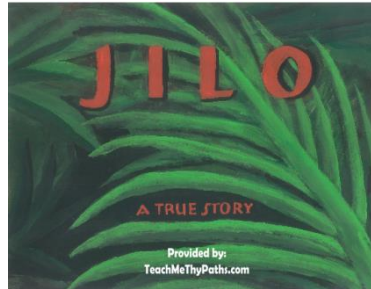


Jilo

A True Story from the Autobiography of Herbert E. Grings: Missionary to the Belgian Congo

Story written and Illustrated

By Sandra Means



1. Jilo squatted by the wall of his father's hut and heard the spiteful words of his brothers. His old father was near death and Jilo was the next in line to be the chief of the village. His father had many wives and many sons, but it was decreed that he was to be the next chief. His father was of the mighty ruling Bahema tribe, but his mother was of the lowly Balendu tribe. Jilo did not know if his brothers hated him because he would be the next chief, or because his mother was the favorite wife and he the favorite son.

His brothers' jealousy and meanness were hard to live with, but as he silently sat and listened to his brothers' talk he knew there was more. They were talking about different ways they could kill him. His heart filled with fright as they discussed how to make it look like an accident.



Jilo loved his mother and father, but as his brothers' evil plan unfolded before his ears he knew he had to do something. All he knew was his village. He did not have family anywhere else to hide with. Then he got an idea. He had heard about a "Muzungu" or white man at the Linga village. He had heard that the Muzungu bewitched and killed people. He had a great desire in his heart to go and see this white man, but he was afraid that he would die if he did so. However, if he stayed there his envious brothers would kill him. Jilo made up his mind he would take his chances with the white man.

2. In the still of the night Jilo crept out of the hut and walked the many miles to the Linga village. It was not hard to find the Muzungu, as everyone knew where the white man and white woman lived. He fearfully approached the door of the hut and asked the Muzungu if he could work for him.

The white man gave him a job of clearing a path from the hut to the water hole. Jilo's stomach rumbled hungrily as he diligently worked



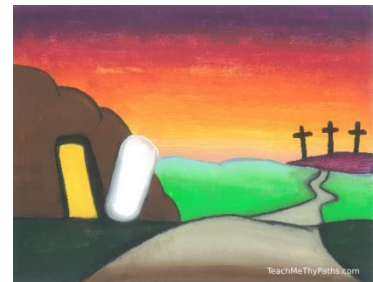
with the bush knife and hoe to make a good path. He hoped he did a good job. The white man came and inspected his work and seemed very pleased. The missionary tried to talk to him about an all-powerful God that created the earth, but all Jilo could think about was his empty stomach and the stories he heard about the white man bewitching people.

Jilo fearfully and nervously asked the Muzungu for his pay for working so he could go and buy food. As soon as the white man gave him the money, Jilo ran back to the village as fast as he could go.

Jilo passed that night fearfully. He expected some great calamity to happen. Sometime during the night he drifted off to sleep, but he sat up with a start. It was morning and nothing had happened to him. He looked himself over and he did not feel any different, so he again went to the Muzungu's house and asked for work. At the end of the day, he again nervously asked the missionary for his pay. The white man again told him a story about God. Jilo was still afraid the white man was trying to bewitch him so he hurried away as quick as he could. But nothing happened that night either.

By the fifth day, Jilo was breathing a little easier. Surely something would have happened by now. He had helped the Muzungu build a little cookhouse and when they were finished the missionary told him an exciting story about a man named Jesus who opened the eyes of a blind man. The missionary asked him to kneel with him as he talked to this invisible Lord Jesus for him. Jilo watched the missionary intently under lowered eyes as the white man bowed his head and talked to Jesus. It was all very scary, but it also touched his heart that the white man would pray to Jesus this for him. When he was finished praying, the missionary asked him if he would like to live in the cook house and work for them. Jilo was afraid to stay with the white people, but he wanted to learn more of this God who loved him so he fearfully accepted the offer.

3. As Jilo lived and worked for Herbert and Ruth Grings, he realized they had something that he did not have. Mrs. Ruth Grings knew his mother's tribal language as they worked around the house she would tell him Bible stories in his language. Jilo thought a lot about what he was learning about God. God loved him so much he sent His only Son Jesus to earth to die on the cross of Calvary for his sins. He has never heard of anyone rising from the dead as Jesus had done. The more he learned the more his heart burned within him showing him the missionaries had something that was real. Until one day he knelt on the ground with the missionary couple and Jilo prayed and gave his heart to the Lord Jesus.



Life became different for Jilo. The darkness in his heart was gone and he had joy within. He was the first one in the whole Linga Village to get saved. He started refuting the white doctor's lies about the missionaries and influenced the other boys to come learn their letters at missionary's school.

Jilo loved learning about God. The missionaries were teaching him to read the Word of God that they had translated into his language. Jilo thought about how thankful he was that he had come to stay with the missionaries. The more Jilo thought about this, the more he realized that he would not have

gotten saved if his brothers had not been trying to kill him. But how will his brothers hear about Christ? If they did not get saved they would die and go to hell.

4. Finally Jilo decided what he needed to do. He told the missionary: “Teacher, I want to go back to my village down by the lake and bring my brothers here to learn the words of God.” The missionaries knew Jilo’s story about his brothers’ jealousy and their plans to kill him, so they were concerned for him. They all prayed together before Jilo set out on the long trip home. As Jilo walked along he prayed and asked God to help him talk to his brothers. He did not know what his brothers would do when he came back.

As he entered the village there was a big commotion as everyone came running to see that he was back. His jealous brothers listened in amazement as Jilo told them about living and working for the Muzungu. He told them the stories of God he had learned and his desire for them to travel back with him and learn them also. The more they were around Jilo the more they were astounded at the change in him. Jilo rejoiced as he made the long trek back to the Linga village. For two of his brothers, the very ones who plotted to have him killed, walked beside him to go learn about God. It was not long before they too knew the God of love who sent His Son to die for them.



QUESTION FOR THOUGHT

1. Why did Jilo decide to leave his home village? What were some of the reason Jilo thought his brothers were jealous of him?
2. Who do you think it was that put the desire in Jilo’s heart to go see the Muzungu or white man? Do you think Jilo would have gone if his brothers had not wanted to kill him? If he had not gone to live with the white man do you think he would ever have gotten saved?
3. Why did Jilo have trouble sleeping after starting to work for the missionaries? Why do you think the witch doctor would spread lies about the missionaries?
4. What was it that made Jilo decide to live in the cookhouse and work for the missionary?
5. What were some of the things that Jilo did in the village after he got saved that helped the missionaries?
6. If you have Jesus in your heart do you think that everyone should see a difference in you like they did Jilo? If you have never asked Jesus into your heart, did you know that He will save you just like He did Jilo?