



Lord, Give Us This Mountain

COMPANION BOOK • "MARY LOU, MARY
LOU": THE STORY OF EVELYN AND
FRED BALANAG

*From Lancaster County PA to Malvar Street
Baguio City Philippines*

Engle • Robson • Leonard • Haines

Ken and Mary Lou Engle • An Engle Family History

"Mary Lou, Mary Lou": The Story of Evelyn and Fred Balanag

Baguio City · 1968–2010

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COMPANION BOOK

"Mary Lou, Mary Lou"

The Story of Evelyn Balanag · 1968

UPDATED 13 OCTOBER 2026



Karen and Patrick on Romblon

Evelyn

[Evelyn Balanag](#) was born in Pakistan. Her father was British, an Anglican, and her mother was Pakistani. When she was a girl, her father told his children stories from the Bible. It was a seed planted early, and it waited many years.

In Pakistan she met **Federico Balanag**, a Filipino who was there on business. They married and made their home in the Philippines, where they raised six children.

In January 1968 Mary Lou went to visit Evelyn and invited her to take a Bible correspondence course. Within days Evelyn nearly died, and in that same hour she put her trust in Jesus Christ. With her, the Baguio church began.

Evelyn and Mary Lou became close friends. Evelyn had her own way of calling for her: "*Mary Lou, Mary Lou!*" Kevin can still hear her saying it.

Evelyn went home to be with the Lord in 1985. What follows is the account Mary Lou wrote at the time, word for word, exactly as she wrote it. After it come Evelyn's pictures, from Kevin's blog about her and the family albums.

In Mary Lou's Own Words

Evelyn Balanag - Pakistani - Deathbed Conversion and she lived to tell about it.

On Monday, January 29, 1968, Ken and I wanted to do visitation of BSA students for a rally on the 31st when Bob Harrison would be here, also Dad and Mom Brooks. Before we went out, I went to visit Evelyn Balanag to enroll her in WBT if she wanted, also to invite her and her husband to the Wednesday evening rally. She was most eager to study the course, and said she wanted to come to the rally. She had been ill for several days as she had had a miscarriage and was still feeling rather weak.

On Tuesday morning, the 30th, she brought me her whole course, completed and wanted to talk and ask questions. We had a good time of discussion over coffee and cookies. She wanted to enroll in the next course, Lessons for Christian Living. So she took that book home with her.

On Wednesday, her house helper came to tell me that she would not be coming to the rally as she had just been taken to the hospital because of bleeding.....She said that Evelyn would have an operation Thursday morning.

We had the rally with good attendance, Bob Harrison sang, Dad Brooks spoke and it was a very good evening.....But we were disappointed that Evelyn and her husband Fred had been unable to come. Bob Harrison prayed for her in the hospital...None of us really knew her true condition at that time.

Thursday, we found out that she had been very ill....that she had almost died Wednesday night. I went in Thursday morning just after she had come back from surgery, and stayed a bit. She was much improved by then.

Friday, I went to the house to visit her after she had come home from the hospital. She then told me her story:

She said that she was barely conscious at the hospital because of weakness due to lack of blood. But near midnight on Wednesday, she suddenly felt worse, and called "Doctor", then passed out. For the next two hours, doctors worked over her....oxygen, fluids, medication. They called her husband to the hospital because they said she was dying.....She came back to consciousness during these attempts to save her, and saw her husband crying at the side, and noticed a needle going in each arm with fluids....

While she was unconscious, she said all she can remember is a vision of God Himself...sensing that she was dying, that she was floating on stars.....then when she came to consciousness, her first thought was, "Oh, God has spared me! If I had died, I would be in hell right now."...."I want to accept Jesus this minute." And she, by faith accepted the Lord in the split second of consciousness.....All that she had studied in WBT flooded her mind, and she took that step of faith, believing in Christ as her own Saviour and was saved!

The doctor said to her, "We think you should have the priest here for last rites." But she told him that she did not want a priest...because she was right with God, could confess to God Himself, and anyway, why should she need a priest when a priest is a sinner, too. The doctor was somewhat shocked at this statement of heresy, but sadly nodded alright.

She told me that she knows that God has saved her physically so that she could be saved spiritually, and she was so happy, and so radiant!

Her father had laid the background for this decision many years ago, when he told his children stories from the Bible. He is a British Anglican, married to a Pakistani lady.

He has read the Bible through many times, although he himself gets drunk time after time. So we do not know if he is a born-again believer. But he realized the importance of spiritual matters, and of the reading of the Holy Word...and imparted this to his children. However, she knew nothing of spiritual life through Christ when this contact was made. What she had learned had been through the correspondence course, WBT, just 48 hours previous to this physical crisis in her life.

She completed the second course, brought it to me, and asked for the third, Guide to Christian Growth. She said that she used to read paper-back books, but they made her feel dirty. She said, the reading of these courses makes her feel so clean, inside and out....She has started a Quiet Time using Daily Bread of Scripture Union Notes.....She also is interested to begin a ladies class in her living room, teaching WBT first, with me there as an advisor.

It has truly been a work of the Holy Spirit in her heart and life because I have not really done much talking with her...there wasn't time. Things happened so fast. It has been thrilling to our whole family of what can really happen when a person accepts the Lord, and the change in her own life. She has begun witnessing to all who come in contact with her.

She finished GOG in three days, then went on to SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE which she did in 4 more days. Her husband stayed up late at night to help her as it was quite difficult. They both memorized quite a bit of Scripture....He was not saved yet, but was quite interested and sympathetic. She said that she felt so clean when she was studying these courses. On Feb 12th, she finished it, and took home WINNING SOULS THE BIBLE WAY, also she enrolled in the memory course of BIBLE MEMORY ASSOCIATION. She told me how distasteful the movies are to her now, and other amusements...that she has begun to use less cigarettes now...She used to smoke 20 in a day, but is down to 8 now. She hopes to be off them completely very soon! She had no prompting from me in all these decisions to drop things out of her life. Just the presence of the Holy Spirit has convinced her that she should not do certain things anymore. She is praying fervently that her husband will accept Christ soon so their family can be united. It is a wonderful thing that he is so sympathetic and is learning Scripture. They have pored over the Bible Atlas trying to straighten out in their minds the divisions of the land in Joshua! He is fascinated with the book. Tomorrow morning, I am going to teach her how to make bread!

Mary Lou Engle, January-February 1968

Mary Lou's account ends there, in February 1968. The pictures that follow carry Evelyn's story on.

55 Malvar

The Engles rented the house at 55 Malvar, on Aurora Hill, from 1967 to 1970. The first meetings of the little assembly were held there. It was there, too, that Evelyn came to visit Mary Lou and to pick up her Emmaus correspondence courses.



The Engle home at 55 Malvar, Aurora Hill, Baguio, 1967-1970.

Photograph by Ken Engle; Kevin's blog, 2008

The First Bible Study

One of the earliest Bible studies met at 55 Malvar in 1968. Evelyn shared a chair with Mrs. Jaleco, with Mrs. Badilla on her other side. Their husbands would soon be among the first men of the church.



One of the earliest Bible studies, 55 Malvar, 1968. Mary Lou is standing. Evelyn, in the checkered sweater, sits in the same chair as Mrs. Jaleco, with Mrs. Badilla on her other side.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

Singing at Malvar

Whenever the believers met, there was one chorus they always sang:
"Nothing Is Impossible."



A singspiration at 55 Malvar. Evelyn is in the center. [Rudy Ponce Deleon](#) is sitting next to the door.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

Fred

Mary Lou ended her account with Evelyn *"praying fervently that her husband will accept Christ soon."* In 1969 Fred and Evelyn were baptized together at the church's first baptism, with Sergeant Jaleco, Sergeant Badilla, and two of the Engle girls, Becky and Karen. [William MacDonald](#) (1917–2007), the Bible teacher, conducted the baptism and gave a word from the Scriptures.



The first baptism, 1969. Ken Engle with all who were baptized: Fred Balanag, Sgt. Jaleco, Sgt. Badilla, Becky Engle, Evelyn Balanag and Karen Engle.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

A Family

Fred and Evelyn raised six children: Polly, Dolly, Ferdie, Boy, Frankie and Molly.



Fred and Evelyn with a new baby. The album page says 1969 and names him Ferdinand; Kevin's blog wondered whether it might be Dolly, about 1963.

Photograph by Ken Engle; Engle family album

The Balanags



In their Navy Base house, about 1974. Left to right: Polly, Dolly, Fred, Ferdie, Evelyn, Boy and Frankie. Molly had not yet arrived.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008



The Balanag family, about 1974.

Photograph by Ken Engle

The Godhouse

Before long the believers were meeting in the Guardhouse on Navy Base, which they affectionately called the "Godhouse."



Walking down the road away from Navy Base after a meeting in the Guardhouse, 1971. Anna "Mom" Brooks and Evelyn are in the center.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

The First Elders

By 1974 Fred Balanag was one of the church's first three elders, with Ruperto Jaleco and Marcos Badilla.



The three elders, 1974: Jaleco, Balanag and Badilla.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008



Some of the leadership of the assembly, about 1974, at the Engle home, 30 C.M. Recto, Navy Base.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

Old Friends



Fred and Evelyn visiting Ken and Mary Lou at the C.M. Recto house, 1975.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

At the Chapel



Dad Brooks standing next to Evelyn, with Fred Balanag in the brown suit and Joyce Hardisty in the foreground on the left. Probably around 1977.

Photograph by Ken Engle; caption from Kevin's blog, 2008

Just Down the Street

In *Prays for Us Daily*, Gordon left a question on the step: who was Fred Balanag, and how did he end up at the President's plane with four books in his hands?

First, a small correction. He wasn't quite the man next door. Years later Ken put it this way, in a letter home:

When we moved to Baguio, Philippines in 1967 the first one to trust the Lord as personal Savior was a Pakistani lady. She and her husband, a professor at Baguio Tech, lived just down the street. She then asked us to pray for her husband.

Ken & Mary Lou Engle, letter to friends, 22 April 1972

Just down the street. And the story of Fred Balanag doesn't start with Fred at all. It starts with his wife.

A Big Week

Her name was Evelyn. On Monday, the twenty-ninth of January, 1968, Mary Lou wrote in her little planner:

Evelyn Balanag began to study W.B.T. Was very interested. Did 1 & 2 today

Mary Lou, Monday 29 January 1968

W.B.T. was the Bible correspondence course *What the Bible Teaches*. Ken wrote that the same day was the biggest of its kind since they had come:

Biggest day of visitation since coming to Baguio. Mrs Balinog begins WBT.

Ken, week of 28 January – 3 February 1968

And the next day, Mary Lou again:

Evelyn completed course and asked many questions about spiritual matters.

Mary Lou, Tuesday 30 January 1968

The whole course. In two days.

The Rally at Brent

Wednesday night was a big night for the Engles: a rally at Brent School, with the singer Bob Harrison. But the Balanags didn't come.

B.S.A. Rally. Bob Harrison sang at Brent.
Excellent program and some response. House filled
for rally. Dad Brooks spoke. Bob sang. Balanags
didn't come as Evelyn got sick.

Mary Lou, Wednesday 31 January 1968

Ken put down what happened at the rally:

We learned Mrs Balanog in hospital – prayed
(Evening BSA Rally) Bob prayed for Evelyn.

Ken, Wednesday 31 January 1968

On Thursday Mary Lou went to the hospital. She wrote
that evening:

Went to hospital to visit Evelyn. She ... was
improving, but had been very ill – had almost died
during the night.

Mary Lou, Thursday 1 February 1968

Evelyn Saved!

On Friday, the second of February, Evelyn came home, and told Mary Lou what had happened in the night:

Evelyn came home from hosp. She told me she had accepted the Lord during the time she was so very sick. Was really rejoicing in her new spiritual birth. Enrolled in LCL.

Mary Lou, Friday 2 February 1968

Ken heard it too, and wrote it down. Someone later ran a blue highlighter over the last words:

Got word – ML went to see Mrs B. She almost died Wed night when she knew she wasn't saved – when she came to she trusted the Lord.

Ken, week of 28 January – 3 February 1968

Ken's box for that Friday:

she had stayed up Tue night & finished WBT. Thinking much on it. Mom & Dad Brooks here in the evening – we rejoiced.

Ken, Friday 2 February 1968

Asked the Lord to Save a Soul

At the back of that year's diary, on a yellow page where Ken kept the dates that mattered, he wrote it one more time, under Bob Harrison's rally, in green highlighter:

31 Jan 68 — Bob Harrison — 2 Feb 68 —
Evelyn saved!

Ken's 1968 diary, yellow end page

But here is the line that stops you. At the bottom of Mary Lou's page for that week, in the little box marked Notes, she wrote:

At beginning of this week, we had felt it was to
be a big week. Had asked the Lord to save a soul!

Mary Lou, notes for the week of 29 January 1968

They asked on Monday. By Friday, the answer was home from the hospital, rejoicing. We pray small prayers most of the time. Every so often it does us good to remember that God is not embarrassed by a big one.

And Thy House

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Acts 16:31

And thy house. Because the very next thing Evelyn did was ask them to pray for her husband.

On Sunday evening, the eighteenth of February, Mary Lou wrote:

Fred Balanag here to study John Ć Ken in evening.
Evelyn and I visited Brooks.

Mary Lou, Sunday 18 February 1968

Fred Balanog here for first study in John. ML took
Evelyn to see C. Brooks

Ken, week of 18–24 February 1968

Ken's quiet-time verse that month, written in his diary for Thursday 29 February, the week Fred and Evelyn first studied John:

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
that thou hast hid these things from the wise and
prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Luke 10:21

The Gospel of John

The next Sunday the Balanags came again, and brought five others with them:

730 The Balanags plus 5 others came, Sgt Jaleco + Sgt Hipol, Sonny + his mother. We all studied the Gospel of John.

Ken, Sunday 25 February 1968

Evelyn didn't slow down, either.

Mrs. Balanag has finished 8 courses – going on to Acts.

Ken, week of 18–24 February 1968

And she brought her friends. On the ninth of February she brought Pasing and Mely:

Evelyn brought Pasing & Mely to visit. Began W.B.T. Mely's husb. close to Mormon conversion. Brooks here – met Evelyn & spoke about Pakistan.

Mary Lou, Friday 9 February 1968

Sergeant Jaleco

A week or so later Ken wrote of a first sergeant at the Philippine Military Academy who was studying the course:

Sgt Jaleco PMA — 1st Sgt studying WBT — wants it. His wife had it. He is a man almost won by Mormons.

Ken, week of 18–24 February 1968

The same Sergeant Jaleco who would sit in the living room at 55 Malvar for years to come.

Then, three weeks later, Tuesday, the nineteenth of March:

Fred came over — we reviewed verses. He says he has really trusted the Lord — is using the verses in his classes.

Ken, Tuesday 19 March 1968

A professor, using John's Gospel in his own classroom. And on the last day of March, Ken added four words of his own:

Bible Class — Jaleco + PMA man back. Feel Fred is really born again!

Ken, week of 31 March 1968

At the Ramp

Now come to May. The kitchen fire was Saturday, the eleventh. Early the next morning, Sunday the twelfth, the telephone did the work:

We got up at 530. ML called Evelyn – Fred called aide of Pres. Said Pres. dressing – they are going early. We ate rushed to Airport. Within minutes Pres. came.

Ken, Sunday 12 May 1968

Mary Lou called Evelyn. Fred called the President's aide. And on the airfield, with the cadets of the Military Academy giving the twenty-one-gun salute, it was Fred, a believer for about eight weeks, who stepped forward:

went to the plane. Fred went to the Mayor. At ramp Fred presented Living Series (4 volumes) to him. Also introduced us.

Ken, Sunday 12 May 1968

Four Books



At the plane: Fred Balanag and President Marcos, Baguio airport, Sunday 12 May 1968.

Kevin Engle's collection

Mary Lou wrote it in one breath:

Another great day — Ken, Dad B. & Fred gave
Volumes of Living Writings to Pres. Marcos at 7
this a.m.!

Mary Lou, Sunday 12 May 1968

The John Class

A few days later Ken left on a trip. Before he went, he wrote:

Had prayer with Fred + turned over John lessons + Halleys to him.

Ken, week of 12-18 May 1968

The man who came for his first Bible study in February was teaching the John class in May.

So that is who Fred Balanag was. A professor just down the street. A husband his wife prayed for. A brand-new believer who walked up to a President with four books.

But something has been held back, and it is the best part.

Half a Million Pesos

Come forward eight years, to the autumn of 1976. The Engles were in Kansas by then, and Kevin was in the Navy. Kevin had been back to Baguio, and he sent his folks a cassette with news. Ken passed it on to the church at Woodside:

It is about Mr. Balanag, one of the elders. As some of you recall he was one of the first to be saved in 1968. Besides his teaching responsibilities at the University of Baguio he is Housing Administrator for the City. Recently he was offered a bribe of half a million pesos (\$75,000) if he would sign a certain paper. He refused and is in some danger. Pray for him.

Ken & Mary Lou Engle, letter to Woodside Bible Chapel, 27 October 1976

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house;
but he that hateth gifts shall live.

Proverbs 15:27

The President Called

Half a million pesos, and he said no. Then the very next lines of the letter:

When the Presidesnt of the Philippines was in Baguio not long ago he phoned Mr. Balanag giving him his support in this present tense situation. You may remember that some years ago Mr. Balanag gave some books of the Bible to the President.

Ken & Mary Lou Engle, 27 October 1976

The President of the Philippines picked up a telephone and called the man who had once handed him four books on a windy airfield, eight years before.

And what *"Fred presented Living Series (4 volumes) to him"* would turn out to mean is... the rest of the story.

From Ken's and Mary Lou's diaries, January–May 1968, and their letters of 1972 and 1976, in Gordon's story "Just Down the Street" (The Malvar Years, 10; sent 12 Oct 2026).

Evelyn's Church

Evelyn went home to be with the Lord in 1985. The work that began with her did not stop. In December 2010 her son Ferdie filmed the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Navy Base Chapel, and Kevin posted it on the blog.

There is nothing more Evelyn would have wanted than for the readers of this blog, and her family, to come to know and love the Savior she loved, who died and gave himself for her, and for you.

Kevin, on his blog about Evelyn, 2008

From Mary Lou's own account of January–February 1968, and the photographs and captions on Kevin's blog about Evelyn (2008).



Photograph coming

More photographs from the family collection are on their way.

Sources

Mary Lou's account of Evelyn Balanag (January–February 1968), sent by Kevin on 8 October 2026, with Kevin's notes on Evelyn's family; the photographs and captions on Kevin's blog about Evelyn (balanag.blogspot.com, 2008–2013), with the original slides and album pages from the family collection. It was first published as Part Two of Volume Three. Gordon's story "Just Down the Street" (The Malvar Years, 10; sent 12 October 2026), from Ken's and Mary Lou's 1968 diaries and their letters of 22 April 1972 and 27 October 1976.



Photograph coming

*More photographs from the family
collection are on their way.*

Companion Books

Seven companion books stand beside the five volumes of the story.

[In His Joy: The Life and Ministry of Ken Engle](#)

Dad's own letters · 1951–1987 · his life and ministry

[Herald of Christ: The Story of Rudy Ponce de Leon](#)

San Juan, Rizal · 1951–1996

[Cheryl](#)

Cheryl Lyn Engle · her life, her music, her own words

[Karen, Patrick, and Romblon: “Carrying the Vision”](#)

keepm.org · the Emmaus app · Moments to Remember · Karen and Patrick

[Family Stories and Friends](#)

Friends of the work · family stories · family reference

[Kevin's Recollections](#)

Kevin Engle · in his own words · Stewards Foundation · In Dad's Own Words

Faithful Men: A Library of Christian Classics, from
[PlymouthBrethren.org](#): Brethren writers and missionary lives,
searchable by author, Scripture and topic. [Open the library ↗](#)

[The Table of Contents for the whole series →](#)

[Every link in the series, in one place →](#)

What Comes Next

This is one of seven companion books to *Lord, Give Us This Mountain*. The [Table of Contents](#) lists every book in the series.

Keep them for Jesus for eternity.

the prayer behind KEE Philippine Missions

Edition of 11 October 2026 · through Gordon's "Prays for Us Daily" (10 Oct 2026), "ML + I," "Two Candles" and "The Wedding," Ken's War Years letters of 1943-45, the 1950-51 letters, "Herald of Christ" (the story of [Rudy Ponce de Leon](#)), "Mary Lou, Mary Lou," the story of Evelyn Balanag with her photographs, "The Landlord and the Projectionist," and a list of hyperlinks