



Lord, Give Us This Mountain

COMPANION BOOK • HERALD OF CHRIST:
THE STORY OF RUDY PONCE DE LEON

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

Engle • Robson • Leonard • Haines

Ken and Mary Lou Engle • An Engle Family History

Herald of Christ: The Story of Rudy Ponce de Leon

San Juan, Rizal · 1951–1996

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COMPANION BOOK

Herald of Christ

*The Story of Rudy Ponce de Leon · San Juan, Rizal ·
1951–1967*

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Karen and Patrick on Romblon

Rudy

Whenever Ken came home on furlough and stood up to speak in a church, there were names he always mentioned. **Reny Garantuza** was one. **Lino Aragon** was another. But the name he came back to most was **Rudy Ponce de Leon**, of San Juan, Rizal.

Rudy was one of the boys in the very first boys' club Ken started after he reached the Philippines in March 1951. That club became the **Christian Service Brigade**. Rudy grew up in it, was baptized out of it, and became the first in the Philippine Brigade to reach its highest honor, the **Herald of Christ**. In time he led the whole work, which grew to some forty Brigade chapters across the country. He studied for several years at a seminary in New Zealand, and he has served the Lord among the assemblies in San Juan and far beyond ever since.

Rudy was born about 1939. As this is written he is still living, in his late eighties, and the stories that follow are for him as much as for anyone.

Kevin says that as far as the development of the Brigade program goes, "*Rudy was the one.*" Evelyn Balanag is the heart of the Baguio story. Rudy is the heart of the Manila one.

"Is There a Cost?"

Ken reached Manila on Saturday 17 March 1951 and moved in with Cyril and Anna Brooks in San Juan. Within weeks he had children's classes going on Saturday afternoons. By July he was teaching gym to the boys at Grace Christian High School: exercises, games, and stories of Christian athletes and missionaries told between the drills.

That fall he began to talk about something more.

Talked to Steve about Brigade. Later talked to Noel. I'm very encouraged, step by step as He leads.

Ken, Sunday 30 September 1951

Among the San Juan boys who came to the new club was Rudy, a boy of about twelve. As Ken told it in the churches back home, and as Kevin remembers it, Rudy came up to the young American with one question first.

"Is there a cost to attend the boys' club?"

"There is no cost," Ken told him.

So Rudy came. He kept coming for the rest of his life.

Bright and Keen

What did the boys do? Everything. Ken led them in calisthenics and strength challenges. They memorized Scripture and worked through Bible correspondence lessons. They went swimming and played ball, and they sat around a council ring while a leader gave a short word from the Bible.

The Brigade had a motto, *Bright and Keen for Christ*, and a plain purpose, which the Philippine Brigade later printed on its brochure: "*To win and train boys for Christ.*" A boy earned awards as he went, and each time he came to his leader to pass a test, there was a chance to talk. The brochure called it "man-boy contact" and said its possibilities were limitless.

Ken's 1955 diary shows the Saturdays:

Took Brigade swimming to Balara. 7 boys and 3 leaders. Dominy & Arturo passed swimming test.

Ken, 29 January 1955

Brigade tests of strength.

Ken, 5 March 1955

Brigade fellow passing tests for camp contest.

Ken, 9 April 1955

Not everyone was pleased. When Ken went out to Welfareville about starting a club there, he wrote that the priest "*surely opposes our coming in with a good boys' program.*"

Brigade Boys



Kevin, about eleven, with Eddie Alfonso in his Brigade uniform, about 1968. Eddie's father, Eleazer "Ely" Alfonso, helped Ken when he first came to the Philippines: he showed him the ropes, taught him the customs and helped him with his Tagalog. The Brigade Ken started grew to some forty chapters across the country under Rudy Ponce de Leon.

Kevin Engle's collection

The Faithful Three

By the start of 1955 the Brigade was still small. Some Saturdays only a handful came. Ken counted the ones who never missed.

Brigade with faithful 3: Rudy, Reny & Doming.

Ken, Saturday 8 January 1955

Rudy and Reny were in everything together. The next afternoon the San Juan Gospel Hall held its elections.

Election in afternoon. Mr. Mercado got Chairmanship. Noel Ison Sunday School Superintendent; Rudy & Reny other SS offices.

Ken, 9 January 1955

A few weeks later the young people elected Rudy again.

Elected Rudy for Publicity and Gospel Activities Chair.

Ken, 27 February 1955

On the last day of March Ken went to town and bought presents.

Got gifts for Rudy and Lety. Went to office worked, then to Rudy's graduation with Reny. Secretary of Education Hernandez spoke.

Ken, 31 March 1955

A Boy Who Showed Up

Through 1955 Rudy's name runs all through Ken's diary. He went where Ken went. In June Ken "*arranged for Luis and Rudy to go to jail service,*" to the meetings at Bilibid Prison. The next Sunday:

At Light Bringers, Reny and Rudy gave chalk talk. Went to Bilibid. Mercado and I spoke. Brigadiers sang.

Ken, 19 June 1955

The Light Bringers were the San Juan young people. A chalk talk is a gospel message drawn on a board as it is preached, and it was Rudy and Reny drawing.

He worked, too. The Bible School of the Air was flooded with enrollments that year, more than a thousand a week, and the boys came on Saturdays to help stamp and mail the lessons.

Only Rudy to work at BSA. Rudy cut his hand. Brigade boys helped in the afternoon.

Ken, 25 June 1955



Rudy Baptized

That summer the Brigade boys began to make up their own minds about following Christ. On the last Sunday of July a gospel team from Taylor University was in Manila, and Ken heard them at Grace.

Rudy and Doming dedicated their lives to the Lord.

Ken, Sunday 31 July 1955

The day before, Ken wrote that he "*Gave some instruction to Rudy on Baptism.*" In August Rudy came to the house for the baptism class. Ken and Mary Lou were getting ready to go home on furlough, selling the car and the furniture. On the first Sunday of September, ten days before they flew:

Taught. Rudy baptized. Farewell for us.

Ken, Sunday 4 September 1955

The next Saturday was Ken's last Brigade meeting for a year: "*Last Brigade, farewell to boys.*" On Sunday the young people said goodbye.

Farewell at Light Bringers Surely brought tears.
Thank Him for all these young people. Sang "Blest
Be The Ties".

Ken, 11 September 1955

He had come to the Philippines four and a half years before, a single man with a scooter and a mimeograph. He went home on furlough a husband and father, leaving behind a boy of about sixteen, newly baptized, who would one day lead the work.

In the Hands of the Nationals

Year after year the work grew. The boys who had passed tests began to give them. In June 1967, writing to the elders at Woodside Bible Chapel just before the family moved to Baguio, Ken could report:

The Brigade program was almost wholly in the hands of the nationals.

Ken, letter to the Woodside elders, 3 June 1967

Rudy was one of those hands. Around 1968 or 1969 he became the first in the Philippines to earn the **Herald of Christ**, the highest honor in the Christian Service Brigade. It crowns years of Bible study, Scripture memory and service, and in America it is often compared to the Eagle Scout.

The move to Baguio meant Ken saw less of Rudy, but Rudy still came up the mountain. He is in one of the photographs of the little church's earliest days at 55 Malvar, sitting by the door.



A singspiration at 55 Malvar, Baguio. Evelyn Balanag is in the center. Rudy is sitting next to the door.

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

Led by One of the Original Members

On 31 January 1973, at John Hay in Baguio, Ken's testimony was recorded. Near the end he spoke of the boys' club he had started in 1951. By then it had grown to twenty-two clubs across the Philippines, and it was led, he said, by one of the original members.

Kevin has no doubt who that was: Rudy. In time the Brigade grew to about forty chapters around the country, and Rudy was the man who managed them.

Rudy also spent several years at a seminary in New Zealand, and came home to serve the assemblies.

A Boys' Class, Turned Club

Forty years after Ken started the club, the letters were going the other way. Among Ken's papers are prayer letters from the **San Juan Gospel Chapel**, signed by Rudy I. Ponce de Leon for the elders and deacons. The boy from the 1951 club was now writing to the missionaries' supporters himself.

In December 1995 he reported a recognition service for Stimson "Tatang" Alviar, the most senior Filipino worker among the assemblies, for thirty-five years as a worker commended from San Juan, most of them in Pampanga. He reported medical missions that had treated more than seventeen thousand people since 1986, always with the medicine given free, and gospel work among families driven from their homes by lahar after the typhoons.

In June 1996 came camp news: five summer camps, four of them breaking attendance records, and a Holy Week camp with sixty assemblies represented. And there was a small thing at home. At San Juan, he wrote, the *"Sunday School boys' class (turned club)"* had been meeting for three months, and its membership had grown from five to fifteen. The boys had done so much of their Bible work and other requirements that many of them earned free passage to youth camp. It was a boys' class turned club, in San Juan, with tests to pass and a camp to win, and no cost.

He signed it *"Yours At HIS Throne."*

The Rest of Rudy's Story

A boy asked whether there was a cost. A young missionary said there wasn't. Seventy-five years later the club, the camps, the churches and the men they trained are still the answer to that question.

The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

Ken and Uncle Kevin Dyer built the Teach Others Program on that verse in 1959. Rudy is what it looks like in a life. There are more stories in Ken's diaries, where Rudy's name appears again and again, and Kevin hopes one day to gather them into a book of Rudy's own.

From Ken's diaries for 1951 and 1955, Rudy's prayer letters of 1995–96, the Philippine Brigade brochure, Ken's 1967 letter and 1973 testimony tape, and Kevin's memories (9 Oct 2026).

Sources

This book draws on Ken's diaries for 1951 and 1955, Rudy's San Juan Gospel Chapel prayer letters of December 1995 and June 1996, the Christian Service Brigade of the Philippines brochure, Ken's 1967 letter to the Woodside elders, his 1973 testimony tape, and Kevin's recollections (9 October 2026). It was first published as Part Four of Volume Two.

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

["Mary Lou, Mary Lou": The Story of Evelyn and Fred Balanag](#)

Baguio City · 1968–2010

[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