



## ▶ How Seven Dwarfs became Seven Samurai

Kevin Condon and I met in Nashville, Tennessee about six years ago. It was clear that we both shared a desire and heart to build men. Before long Kevin moved to Denver and has been committed to Building Brothers since that time. At first he was an advocate carrying our message

as he searched for a Church, but then was a participant and facilitator as he journeyed through the Building Brothers Process. He is now a trustee on the Building Brothers Board. I have asked him to share the impact of Building Brothers in his Church.

By Kevin Condon

I was born with the soul of a romantic idealist. It was God's doing. Cowboys were my heroes. I had twin pearl handled revolvers like Hoppy. I had chaps like Cisco. I had a rope like Roy. I intended to grow up to be a great man, saving damsels in distress and killing the bad guys. My brother and I and the kids in our neighborhood practiced a lot. We had a gang.

But, when I grew up, romantic idealism went out of style. Anti-heroes were all the rage: Popeye Doyle in French Connection, Dustin Hoffman in The Graduate. I found myself settling into a small, sad story. I was a breadwinner and hapless husband. I was a goofy Dad. ("What will he do next?") So when I met for the first time with the twelve men at Epiphany Church, seven of who were to stay the course and build into my brothers, I was a dwarf. We were all dwarfs: stunted versions of what we had aspired to be as boys.

Through John Eldredge, and his book, Wild at Heart, we suspected that a different level of life might be possible in Christ. We read his book together and were awakened, but we didn't know the next step. Dan Schaffer came to our Church and introduced us to ... baseball diamonds, showing us that we needed to get "home" one base at a time, as a team.

We started meeting weekly. At first base we became acquaintances, at second friends, at third brothers and at home, "spiritual fathers", capable of reproducing our faith. But what we didn't know as we took our tentative first steps is that we would also arrive "home" as warriors for Christ, firm in our faith and experience, brothers who could be servant leaders, certain in the rightness of our path. A few men had dropped out of the original group, so we actually began Building Brothers as seven spiritual dwarfs. A little over a year later we crossed home plate as seven samurai.

To commemorate the occasion, we got swords. We use them to fight "The Bad Guy". We now wield them, symbolically, in the company of so great a cloud of witnesses, stretching across the globe to include millions of 20th Century martyrs in Africa and China, and going back to the first twelve brothers who became spiritual fathers under the tutelage of

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our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our swords are the symbol of what we have attained, together, in the active presence of the Holy Spirit. No longer church wimps, we are men of God.

What began as a band of boys has steadily progressed. The Spirit awakened in us a powerful men's community at Epiphany Church. Our men, all "elders" in our Church, with

the enthusiastic participation of our Priest, have come awake to who we are to be in Christ. Without becoming passionate men of God, none of us could influence other men to follow Him. Our men's ministry has evolved from perfunctory, small Sunday courtesies and nodding acquaintances to men who love and support each other and meet, every week at 6:30 AM in the Commons for coffee, scripture study, prayer and "check-in". We have formed prayer partnerships in twos to help each other keep our commitments as growing, biblical disciples of prayer. We now reach out to find other men for our fellowship through golf tournaments and bowling and pool, waking the other dwarfs up to the glorious life that we all were born to live in Christ. We look at each other differently now. We know that something great has happened to us. The little boys who long ago lost their pearl handled revolvers, or in some cases, light sabers, are now assembled as a team on the battlefield that is American culture. Our intent is to live, not as dwarfs anymore, but as fierce warriors...standing firm, Christian champions for righteousness and truth.

If you were ever a boy in a cape, join us. Our boy hearts, which were God's creation, weren't a mistake. We can all



grow up to reproduce the Christian faith in others. We just need to stop doing it alone. We need to join together, not in weak imitation of men, but in strong action, coming more courageously from our gut. But, and this is key, it's no fun to do this alone. The fun comes from challenging each other to even bolder acts for God's kingdom. At Epiphany we call our new selves The Fellowship of the King. We don't wear our swords around or anything. We just walk and act like strong Christian men in our lives, because of the support we give to each other. "Church-ing" by "play-acting" is way behind us.

We are created to be the true men of God, followers of a Risen Lord, all of us! That includes you too!! So why don't you and your potential brothers quit acting like such weenies and become the strong men you were created to be. Life with Christ in brotherhood with other men is incomparably better than any other way of living. Start your own gang.

# BUILDING BROTHERS™

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## Ministry Update

### ▶ Rick Is Moving On!

We are sorry to announce that God is moving Rick Ellsmore on to a new challenge. Rick has played a key part in developing our communication resources and moving us forward to where we are today. We are losing a valued team member. He is leaving with our blessing, best wishes and prayers. Rick's last day with Building Brothers is February 28, 2007. You may keep in touch with his ongoing journey by contacting him at [ellexpress@hotmail.com](mailto:ellexpress@hotmail.com).

### ▶ German Leadership Training

April of 2007, we will have 50 German Leaders traveling here to Colorado to experience Leadership Training. Pray for this amazing opportunity as we hammer down deep into their lives and equip them to take this life-changing experience back to Germany and beyond!

### ▶ United Methodist Men/Wesleyan Building Brothers

The partnership with the United Methodist Denomination continues to move forward! We continue to see God on the move within this denomination and we feel privileged to play a part in this movement!

Partnership Opportunities:

- Building Brothers Phase I-IV Trainings in 2007
- Wesleyan Building Brothers Leadership Trainings in 2007

### ▶ Church of God (7th Day)

We continue to see spiritual momentum within this denomination. Pray with us for the ongoing Transformation that is currently taking place, and all the "upcoming" opportunities that are before us!

### ▶ Current Ministry:

- Spanish-Speaking Men—Pray for our Spanish brothers who are moving forward into the Process over this next year. Also, pray for the translation of Phases III & IV.

### March:

- New York City, NY, Ken will be teaching Building Brothers Phase III.
- Spokane, Toppenish, WA, Ken will be teaching Building Brothers Phase III.

### Opening Areas:

- England—Growing interest from the Churches in this country!
- Southern California
- Central California

### ▶ Building Brothers Denver Leadership Training

August 14-16, we will be holding Building Brothers Leadership Training here in Denver, Colorado. Please download the brochure at [www.buildingbrothers.org](http://www.buildingbrothers.org) and share it with Pastors or Ministry Leaders who might be able to attend these three life-changing days. You can now register online at our website! We hope to see you in Denver in August!

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## Spring 2007 Newsletter

Volume 8 • Issue 2

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