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Chapter Nine  
**THE WIZARD OF WINDSOR**

By the time the service was over and the band equipment packed up, it was very early in the morning on January 1, 1972. Using Ron's 1955 Chevy pickup to transport the equipment, Tom "Aquinas" Miller drove and Larry's son Brett, a percussionist with the band, was the only passenger. Tom had been a leader of the Kent chapter of SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] and also a defendant in the trial of the "Kent 25." His picture appeared in Life magazine "waving an anarchist flag and jumping in a pool of black blood," as Michener described it in his book on the subject. As usual, everyone was exhausted and Brett soon slept, leaning against the door of the truck. Since driving is a cure for insomnia to those whose sleep is daily robbed by God's "busy" work, we employed creative solutions for staying awake. Beyond the "stick your head out the window into the winter blast" kind of therapy, some carried cups of coffee in their hands held high enough to create a problem should you start to drift off. Randy held a small, ball-peen hammer in one hand, handle up, directly above his lap. It works. But Tom may have been out of ideas and, with no one to help keep him awake, the 2:00 A.M. drive through the bright, winter snowscape began to strangle his senses, the broken white line of the road fading to blur. Now driven by dreams, the truck drifted off the northbound lane of Route 44, jumped across the shallow ditch and attempted to plow a new furrow into a frozen cornfield. As the truck

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bounced across the rock-hard rows of bent over cornstalks Brett's door popped open and he rolled out, hitting the ground the instant before the truck wheel rolled over his head. Brett died that night just outside Mantua, Ohio, the first of more to come. Entering the intensive care room, I stood beside Larry who was staring at the wall. Speaking softly, his raspy voice was fallen. "I knew the instant he was gone." With extended arm and finger he was tracking something I couldn't see as he broke into sobs, "I felt his spirit get up out of his body and just. . . drift away." He had now lost his wife and *three* children to the work of the Kingdom. We were devastated. Larry was our pastor and friend. Brett had been our band mate and younger brother in Christ and he was gone.

Most of us gradually worked our way back to the farm to make certain the animals were taken care of but the church in Kent was called to prayer. Meeting at the Jaycee's hall they assaulted the Throne of Heaven, petitioning God to raise Brett from the dead. It didn't work. But the moment did begin to peel back a few layers from Larry's veneer. He would later say the Lord had shown him someone would not make it back from the midnight service. If that were the case, why didn't he see that timely warning as a wonderful bit of "good luck" and just stay home? After the fact, anyone can look like a seer. But the first, real peek at his soul came some months later when, in a moment of anger, he turned to Ron, poked him in the chest and spit, "You owe me for the rest of your life. If you had fixed the door of that truck like I told you to my son would still be alive." Bullies don't always beat us up, but they always attempt to steal our dignity. In the first place, if he hadn't sent his son out in the middle of the night after little sleep for weeks, his "son would still be alive." Second, if Ron hadn't been denied the time and money he'd requested for months to fix the problem, his "son would still be alive." Third, and most importantly, the problem was in the driver's-side door, not the passenger's. Larry had a gift for rearranging facts until they became truths while simultaneously removing the wind from any doubtful sails. Those few individuals who witnessed the sheer cruelty of that moment were privy to a bad choice that would come back to irrecoverably bite the "Wizard of Windsor." Fortunately for Ron he neither accepted nor internalized the blame. He didn't, however, remember the acquitting, "driver's-side," information until 30-years later. Some fogs dissipate more slowly than others. While none of us

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appreciated Larry's emerging capacity for cruelty, neither did we know what to do with it. Our pastor, friend, teacher and confidant was now severely damaged and we ached for him more than ourselves.

Had we eyes to see, we would have deciphered the word Ichabod being carved into Larry's heart by an invisible hand. But, youthful band of idealists that we were, his tragedy-wounded spirit served only to bind our hearts closer to him. Wouldn't it do the same for you? Our love for him made us willing to forgive his ugliness. We felt he was a special man. We saw what we believed were miracles of God at his hand and he seemed to know things about people and circumstances beyond natural knowledge. When he began he had a truly, humble heart before God and developed an incomprehensible knowledge of Scripture down to book, chapter and verse. When coupled with his sacrifices for the sake of the Kingdom and the fact that the denominational churches turned against him for his unorthodox methods [the very methods that brought us to Christ] we found sufficiently fertile ground to begin seeing him as unique before God, a prophet. He satisfied the appropriate criteria of weirdness, suffering and abrasiveness found in Biblical and historic prophets. Classified in the Bible as planetary leaders of the Theocracy, God's particular fondness for prophets seemed due to their ability to withstand pain. The great sorrow lies in the fact that Larry eventually believed his own press and lost his way. For good or ill, we locked our fates into his. Street people can have such a destructive capacity for loyalty.

In all honesty we, in our turn, felt ourselves unique by association with him. Imagine: the Spirit of God purposely searching the hearts of innumerable thousands, plucking a diverse handful from the cultural soup to be part of an end-time mystery. The closer they get to the prophet, the closer they get to that inside track. God reveals things to them, deep things, hidden things unknown to the rest of the Church for one, simple reason: because they are faithful to lay aside all and follow. Such devotees accompany every great movement. We became Esoterrati: people of the inside track, wink wink. There are few more annoying types of Christians.

We began to view our church as something the Old Testament calls, "a school of the prophets." Not that everyone is referred to as such but it

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was a training ground for those wanting to go deeper. As in the Old Testament institutions, humble obedience to The Prophet was a given. A brief conversation between Jesus and His disciples is very instructive here. When Jesus was confronted with the fact that people were turning away from Him because of the difficulty of embracing His teachings, he asked his disciples, "Will you leave me also?" Their response, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life," was what we felt in relationship to Larry. He wasn't God but if it came out of his mouth it should be, at least, considered. Though we gave lip service to the notion that there were probably many others like him, down in our hearts, I don't think many really believed it. This guy was it, and the whole thing was so seductive.

Excerpts from an old Freedom Bell allow long silenced voices to speak to this issue. Asked to publish their personal observations of the "Ministry," in the Thanksgiving issue the article began, "The following statements are written by persons who have heard these prophecies and have signed affidavits in the presence of a notary."

"I, Ronald T\_\_\_\_\_, do hereby affirm the following. I had known Larry \_\_\_\_\_ less than two months when in September of 1971 he told me in a Church meeting that the Lord had shown him that I had an uncle on the west coast. He further stated that this uncle was my father's sister's husband and that he was an alcoholic. At that time no one to my knowledge outside our family knew that my uncle was an alcoholic and none of them ever came in contact with Larry."

"I, Pat M\_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear that I heard Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ speak and prophesy the following as led by the Holy Spirit and have seen them come to pass. On several different occasions Rev. \_\_\_\_\_, said how there would be animals strange to this area that would come here and that animals would be in league with the church in different and odd ways. Several weeks afterwards a Trumpeter Swan was seen and a Golden Eagle. One person had a sparrow light on his finger and he walked around for 10-15 minutes with the bird on his finger. We have pictures and several people saw all these things."

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"I, Pam M\_\_\_\_\_, do hereby affirm with my word and honor that I heard Rev.\_\_\_\_\_ say in May of 1976 that 'the earth shall quake and shake, the earth will tremble.' Just three days after he said the land would change an earthquake struck Guatemala with major quakes also happening in Italy, Russia and China during the early part of the year. Most recently, August 17, earthquakes rocked the southern Philippines killing 1,000 persons, at least. In the fall of 1975 and again in February 1976 I heard Rev\_\_\_\_\_ say that we would be going into a dry cycle. An article in the Erie Daily Times appeared on May 3, 1976 titled, 'Britain fears its worst drought in nearly 200 years.'"

"I, Nancy U\_\_\_\_\_, do certify that in the four years that I have been in the Kent New Generation Church, the following prophecies have been spoken by [Larry] and I have seen them come to pass. The Lord has confirmed His word by signs and wonders. Before I came to the Church the Lord spoke to Larry that I would go to the Olympics in Munich Germany in 1972 with my friend (now my husband) and his family. They had been planning the trip for years and tickets, plane reservations, etc. were impossible to get as it was just a few weeks before the trip. Although it seemed impossible there were four tickets left in the entire United States I was able to go by the power of God. The Lord has confirmed His word and this ministry of Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ time and again by signs and wonders."

There was more. Like any self-respecting prophet Larry had been receiving visions since the late 1950's. After fifteen years he codified them, seeing them all as pieces of one, disconcerting message: God was reeeeeally angry and on His way to our house. In a nutshell, the overall message of his visions went something like this:

"As it was in the seedtime so it would be in the time of harvest. The Church must return to its original state." The Church in America had become so thoroughly apostatized, so thoroughly devoid of the true reflection of Jesus that she would become part of the one-world church destined to give power to the anti-Christ. It would be so pervasive that even the Assemblies of God [whom Larry deemed at least doctrinally sound because of their

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Pentecostal distinctives] would “run to the in-sign of the anti-Christ and turn around to say, ‘Come on you poor, ignorant fools before it’s too late.’”

The fall of America via an amalgamated army of Chinese, Russian and Cuban troops was the method by which God would judge and thus refine His Church. Citing statements by such notables as Billy Graham [“if God doesn’t judge America He’s going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah”] and the visions of George Washington at Valley Forge [in which America was overrun by an enemy but rose up to drive them out,] he suggested God had been trying to warn His Church for a long time.

But, God always had “a remnant,” a group of people who survived from which He would rebuild, properly. And God would always have a prophet through whom He would speak, guiding His people. Larry was one of those prophets and those with him would be part of that remnant. God was going to do this with small groups all over America. Living off the land, they would run when necessary and fight when necessary forming pockets of resistance all over America that would, with God’s miraculous interventions, eventually drive out the enemy. Did anybody see Red Dawn?

This remnant of warrior-poet, philosopher-kings would then rebuild America’s government, each of the groups being responsible to administer godly government in specific geographic areas. The Church, now restored to a thoroughly God-dependent state would thus become “the head and not the tail,” awaiting the momentary return of Christ in a unified bliss.

I don’t know if all of us believed all of that but we did believe revolution in America was a possibility. Having been indoctrinated in the street, most of us shared the political and personal notions that the powers that be “needed” purging. Committing ourselves to such remote and abstract possibilities it was inevitable that our emphasis turn from evangelism to preparation. Aside from personal witnessing, The All Saved Freak Band

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became the exclusive outreach tool for the Church. It also provided a public persona that masked what was going on at the farm.

Publicly, we were an energetic group of young adults attempting to win our generation for Christ. The band played, testimonies were given, Larry preached, altar calls were made, people responded and lives were touched. Aside from a very rock and roll sound to the music and a somewhat denunciatory tone to the preaching there was really nothing out of the ordinary in the mechanics of our public presentations. Dedicated Christians saw our dedication and liked us. That's why churches invited us to minister. We were a dedicated group of people who knew how to break through. Young people, whether in Churches, universities, mental institutions or prisons responded to the straightforward message of the gospel. Powerful messages coupled with powerful personalities brought about some powerful results.

But, behind the scenes, we were preparing for survival in a time of war and devastation. A typical day would begin at 4:30 AM with not-so-typical calisthenics and martial arts training. The martial arts discipline we followed was a combination of Judo, Karate, and Akeido formulated by Master Bruce Tegner and referred to as Ju-Kei-Do. Our morning exercises included a two-mile jog up Fortney Road and back. Lying in the basin of the Grand River Valley, Fortney Road carried the nickname "Frog Alley" because it was low laying land generally underwater in the spring. Locals tended to avoid the road as it went nowhere and was populated with lower income to sub-poverty level black families. It didn't make for a Sunday afternoon destination drive. What a sight we must have been on those pre-dawn jogs; a line of 20 to 25 adults running in total silence, each carrying a staff or walking stick that might double as a weapon.

Farm chores followed with breakfast and "devotions" prior to the men hitchhiking to work. The vehicles remained at the farm for daily business and transport of the women to the house cleaning business they started. After a full day at work people hitchhiked home to chores, dinner, martial arts training and bible studies seldom completed before 11 or 12 PM. We committed ourselves to a program of Bible memorization in case the books were not conveniently available in a time of war. Larry believed the writings of Stalin specified the physical liquidation of every Bible.

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Each person was therefore assigned several books of each testament that the entire Bible might be resident in our collective memory. I was given Galatians and Ephesians from the New Testament and the Old Testament books of First and Second Chronicles. After worship and sermon every Sunday night we each, in turn, recited the verses we'd memorized that week. One chapter from each testament was expected from everyone. Each succeeding week, we rehearsed *everything* memorized to date. It made for some very long nights.

The band practiced once or twice a week, more if recording sessions or concert tours were scheduled. As band members we shared a unique camaraderie, supporting one another's efforts as "brethren," living communally. Teaching and caring for one another's children while sharing common cause and burdens was a reflection of the core values underlying many "hippie," communes scattered throughout the nation. We cared about one another, deeply and genuinely. But, more than that, we were all caught in the same boat in the same terrible storm and we owed one another a fierce loyalty. Part of our collective emotional tension came from the fact that, while living in such intimate circumstances, friendships were only allowed to go so far. There was no time for personal issues because there was no such thing as a personal life. "Cliques," which in Larry's world meant any two of us agreeing on anything he didn't, were not tolerated. Finally discarding the Biblical notion that, "in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," opportunities for dissent evaporated in the name of humility and obedience. Toughen up or leave, those were our options. "God's tryin' to do somethin' here," Larry wanted us to know. The only question seemed to be, "...are you ready to pay the price to go deeper? Because, baby, knowing God like this don't come cheap. He's tryin' to get a people ready dummy, toughen up."