

**Malcolm Muggeridge: A Life, Ian Hunter,  
Thomas Nelson/ Lawson and Falle, 1980; hc., 270 pp.**

Can anything meaningful and dynamic be added to Muggeridge's *own Jesus Rediscovered* and *Chronicles of Wasted Time*? How can anyone do justice to an artisan of words; a media personality, who dares to speak the truth as he sees it?

Ian Hunter, Professor of Law at the University of Western Ontario, London, and friend of Muggeridge, has produced a masterful biography of this controversial figure in which he carefully traces Muggeridge's restless quest for truth. He reviews the influence the theologian Alex Vidler had on Muggeridge, his experiences in India which soured him on imperialism, and for years to come, on Christianity. Communism appealed to Muggeridge. He even went to Russia to discover utopia. How ironic, writes Hunter, that Muggeridge went as a believer to India "one of the most religious countries on earth, and returned with his faith in tatters; as a hopeful communist he went to Russia, an avowedly atheist state, and returned with his religious beliefs revived."

Evangelical Christians who think that Muggeridge had a Damascus Road experience are plainly mistaken. There is no obvious answer. Many factors led to his conversion. And over the years, Muggeridge's views have developed along orthodox theological lines. But so far, he has refused to align himself with any particular denomination. Muggeridge has been amazingly accurate as a prophet. For example, as early as 1934 he wrote about the inevitability of World War II. In 1946, as he visited New York, he felt, under the glittering surface of postwar America, a sense of doom. "This country is in the process of going up in smoke or I'm much mistaken. I felt it in my prophetic soul from the moment I landed here. In the end I think the mess here will be even worse than the mess in Europe."

Was Muggeridge wrong? He certainly doesn't have a high regard for American culture. He decided about the Americans that they were "...the only case of a people who'd-become decadent without ever going through the stage of being civilized." His estimate of the United Nations doesn't fare much better. He called this 20th century hope of the world "a loony bin in a world gone mad." He sees civilization nearing expiry.

Muggeridge is not only a powerful and prolific writer, but as Hunter rightly says, "the most influential lay exponent of Christianity since C.S. Lewis, and an authentic prophet of our confused time." For all who desire to know more about this fascinating "disturber" of the spirits of our age, Hunter's exciting book is essential.

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