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Blast From the Past: Compton's Encyclopedia, 1970 Edition

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Distinctly Catholic

As many of you know, I am working on a biography of the Rev. Jerry Falwell. One of the themes of his sermons, before, during and after the Moral Majority period of his career, was that America was losing its soul, changing in ways that were inimical to the Christian faith. To give you an idea of how much things have, in fact, changed, all this week I am taking advantage of my sojourn in Connecticut to peruse the encyclopedias I was given as a boy. They are the Compton's Encyclopedia, 1970 edition, and they were designed for students so they are a little undemanding, but they clearly show how different the world looked back then, and it was that world which Rev. Falwell wanted to hang on to. By way of example, the following entry for "Christmas" might not survive in later, more politically correct editions.

"Christmas. The most joyous and blessed day of the year is Christmas, December 25, when Christians all over the world celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. Their thoughts go back to that first Christmas morning, nearly 2,000 years ago, when the newborn Christ Child lay in a manger in the Holy Land. From that humble birthplace, the Child brought new faith and new hope to the world. Simple shepherds and Wise Men alike knelt before the Holy Child in devoted thanks for His birth."

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