

Blast From the Past: Compton's 1970 Encyclopedia on Islam

Michael Sean Winters | Aug. 16, 2010 | Distinctly Catholic

Last week, I was back home in Connecticut and, as mentioned, enjoyed curling up with my old 1970 Compton's Encyclopedias. As a child I used to fall asleep reading them, and I reverted to this practice again. It seems to ensure a sound sleep. Among the entries that caught my attention was five paragraph entry for "Islam," an amount of consideration that now seems woefully inadequate. (Curiously, John Calvin also merits a mere five paragraphs.) The entry for Islam begins thus:

"Islam. The religion begun by Mohammed is called Islam. This is also the name given to the group of countries where Islam predominates. Islam is an Arabic word for "submission" that is, to God's will. The creed of Islam is, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet." A believer in Islam is called a Mohammedan or a Moslem (Muslim), "one who submits." The Islamic religion began in Arabia, the homeland of Mohammed, in the 7th century A.D. Within a hundred years the Arabs had spread it westward across northern Africa, north to the Caspian Sea, and eastward into India. In the early Middle Ages Arab traders carried it to the Far East. Today Islam has more than 400 million believers (see Religions of the World)."

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