

by Brother Milad Yacoub, A.A.

(Many Christians, in Europe or elsewhere, are often confused about the Middle East. So it is that many believe that if a person is an Arab, he must also be Muslim by religion, or vice versa, that if someone is Muslim, he must be an Arab. Br. Milad, an Assumptionist of Egyptian background, helps us to see things more clearly.)

Is it possible to be both a Christian and an Arab? Yes. Many Christians throughout the world are surprised to hear this. And yet, there are millions of us Christians who read the Bible in Arabic. What's more, we also address God as "Allah."

Do not forget as well that many of our countries are considered to be Biblical lands. We need only go to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (2:9-11) to read about Arabs named as such as well as countries that became Arab later on, such as Egypt, Libya, and Mesopotamia; the Arabs were among the first to be evangelized.

Coming from the Arabian Peninsula

First of all, let this be pointed out — when one uses the word "Arab," he is not designating an ethnic group or a race. The inhabitants of Arab countries are only in part descendants from the Arabian peninsula. Whether they are Christians or Muslims, they are for the most part descendants of local populations, thousand of years old. In vain would one seek to find a common ancestor that might explain the identity of all the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean. These lands, the crossroads of migrations coming from many different horizons, gave birth to some rather homogeneous societies, in spite of origin or religion.

