

THOUGHTS & IDEAS



*Touching heaven, changing earth
with head, heart and hands*

February 23, 2014
There Is One God: Islam
Pastor Mark

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 21:8-21

Summary: Abraham has two sons, Isaac by Sarah, his wife, and a boy by Hagar, his slave. Isaac will inherit and lead the Jewish faith. God intercedes on behalf of Hagar's boy and says, "Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

Discussion: One of the three major monotheistic faiths based on the story of Abraham, Islam is practiced by 1.2 billion people today, second only to Christianity in adherents. Islam has as many if not more denominations, sects, and schisms as Christianity, yet we in North America think of Islam as one monolith of religious belief.

HEAD

1. The five pillars of Islam are profession of faith, prayer, fasting, alms, and pilgrimage. What specifically do you know about each of these? How can you learn more?
2. If you search for "the difference between Sunni and Shia Islam," you will find a wealth of information that describes the two main sects. It



appears there is a great deal of intolerance between them. When in the history of the Christian religion have there been differences? How have they been handled? What has been the result for Christians?



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HEART

1. Which of the five practices (pillars) mentioned above have you experienced in your Christian faith journey? How have they been meaningful to you? How have they put you in closer contact with God?
2. If we as Christians share the same story of origin (Abraham) with Muslims, how is it that we understand so little about each other?
3. Muslims pray facing Mecca to symbolize unity. Prayer is a part of Christian ritual. What prayer do we say at LAUMC in unison? How does that make you feel during worship?
4. There are two commonly accepted meanings of jihad: an inner spiritual struggle and an outer physical struggle. How do you struggle with your Christian beliefs?
5. Jesus provided his followers with the Great Commission. How does this compare to Islam, where there are many references in the Qur'an that would indicate forceful conversion is appropriate? How can these be compared or reconciled?

HANDS

1. Christian religious history includes the Crusades, military campaigns conducted under the sanction of the Latin Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. How can our service today reflect greater acceptance of Muslims?
2. Have you worked with or served in the community with Muslims? How have they acted toward you as a Christian?

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