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Hikers' Sentencing Should Remind Americans of Threat from Iran's Apocalyptic 'Twelvers'

***Tehran's Leaders Insist on Israel's Destruction
to Spur Messianic Figure's Appearance, 'Radical Islam' Author Explains,
as America Approaches 10th Anniversary of 9/11***

DALLAS, Texas – The weekend sentencing of two American hikers to eight years in an Iranian prison on espionage charges should give Americans pause as Tehran's regime – spurred by a radical, apocalyptic theology that insists on Israel's destruction – continues to target the West and America approaches the 10th anniversary of 9/11, says cultural apologist Dr. Jim Denison.

In his essay published Monday on the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture website at <http://dftc.co/i>, the author of the new book "Radical Islam: What You Need to Know," explains that Iran's top leaders, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, are "Twelvers," adherents of Shiite Islam's largest branch. Twelvers believe a Messiah-like figure, the Mahdi ("guided one"), will arise at history's end to rule the world for Islam. Among the beliefs of many Twelvers: Israel and America – the "little Satan" and "Great Satan," respectively – must be attacked to bring about the Mahdi's arrival. This figure would then show up, believers contend, to protect the Muslim world from Western reprisal.

Such beliefs, Denison reminds readers, explain Ahmadinejad's declaration in 2005 that Israel must be "wiped off the map."

"Are Iran's leaders using the two American hikers and other foreign detainees to incite their people against the West?" Denison asks. "Did they charge our citizens with espionage so they could claim the West is attacking Islam? Since the Qur'an requires Muslims to defend Islam (Qur'an 2:190), this accusation would legitimize an attack against Israel and the West out of obedience to Islam's holy book."

The Twelvers are just one part of the extremist movement that Denison describes in his book, a primer on radical Islam, which he calls "the greatest threat our children have ever faced."

"Radical Islam" is the first in the "Unlocking the Truth" series of books offering a spiritual perspective on key cultural issues facing America. A free, sample chapter is available at www.denisonforum.org.

Denison is the author of six other books, including "Wrestling with God: How Can I Love a God I'm Not Sure I Can Trust?" by Tyndale House Publishers.

Denison's daily cultural commentary is made available worldwide to thousands of subscribers at www.denisonforum.org/cultural-commentary. His faith perspective sheds light on topics ranging from same-sex marriage, to bioethics, to the recent turmoil in the financial markets.

The Denison Forum on Truth and Culture (www.denisonforum.org) was founded in 2009. The Forum responds to issues through a variety of communications and channels, including a column in "The Dallas Morning News," books, articles and speaking engagements. Denison currently serves on the board of the Baylor Health Care System. He is chairman of the advisory board for Dallas Baptist University and former senior pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, a 10,000-member congregation in Dallas.

A complete bio and photo, table of contents for "Radical Islam," endorsements and more on the Denison Forum can be found at www.denisonforum.org/newsroom. For a free copy of the book or a sample Q&A, please contact Ty Mays at 770-256-8710 or tmays@inchristcommunications.com.

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