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NEWS RELEASE

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July 12th Arraignment of Four Christian Missionaries Arrested at the Dearborn, Michigan Arab Festival

ANN ARBOR, MI – The arraignment of four Christian missionaries on criminal charges will take place on Monday, July 12, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. in the 19th Judicial District Court located at 16077 Michigan Avenue in Dearborn, Michigan. This is the next step in what has been described as police enforcement of Sharia law in a city dominated by a large Muslim population.

To the jeers and shouts of “Allah Akbar” by the Muslim crowd, the four Christian missionaries were arrested and thrown in jail on June 18, 2010 by Dearborn Police officers at the Annual Arab International Festival held in Dearborn. One of the arrested missionaries was Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, MD, who was engaged in peaceful dialogue with several Muslim youths. The other three missionaries, who were merely videotaping the conversation, had their cameras and other equipment illegally seized before police arrested them as well.

Police refused requests by the missionaries to view the video at the scene of their arrest, which the missionaries claimed would completely exonerate them of any wrongdoing.

The Thomas More Law Center, a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan is representing all of the Christian missionaries. Because District Judge Mark W. Somers required that all four defendants personally appear before him for the arraignment, the Law Center assisted with the costs of their travel from different parts of the country.

Richard Thompson, President and Chief Counsel of the Thomas More Law Center, commented, “It’s evident that the Dearborn Police department was more interested in placating Muslims than obeying our Constitution. These Christians were exercising their Constitutional rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion, but apparently in a city where the Muslim population seems to dominate the political apparatus, Sharia law trumps our Constitution.”

Thus far, police and prosecutors have refused to return the illegally seized cameras and video tapes. They have also refused to provide the Law Center with the police reports of the incident despite repeated requests.

Arrested on charges of Breach of the Peace are Negeen Mayel, Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, Paul Rezkalla and David Wood. Mayel, an eighteen-year old female whose parents emigrated from Afghanistan and a recent convert from Islam to Christianity, was also charged with failure to obey a police officer's orders. She was at least 100 feet away and videotaping Qureshi's discussion with the Muslim youths when police seized her camera.

Thompson added, "Not all police officers approve of the way their department treated these Christians."

Robert Muise, Senior Trial Counsel with the Law Center, will represent the Christian missionaries at the arraignment on Monday.

The Thomas More Law Center defends and promotes America's Christian heritage and moral values, including the religious freedom of Christians, time-honored family values, and the sanctity of human life. It supports a strong national defense and an independent and sovereign United States of America. The Law Center accomplishes its mission through litigation, education, and related activities. It does not charge for its services. The Law Center is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, and is recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c)(3) organization. You may reach the Thomas More Law Center at (734) 827-2001 or visit our website at www.thomasmore.org.

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