

Resistance to the National Anthem at Goshen College

A letter of resistance organized by Jesus Radicals—www.jesusradicals.com

To President Brenneman and fellow administrators at Goshen College,

We the undersigned are writing to voice our frustration and disappointment with Goshen College's decision to break an 114 year-old practice and rebuff a 500 year old Anabaptist heritage of nonconformity by playing the national anthem at the college's sporting events.

At the heart of the national anthem is a message that glorifies war and violence for one nation's benefit. These themes are inherent in the words themselves—"the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air"—and they are inherent to the ways in which the anthem is used to inspire patriotic fervor. The very habit of playing the song before sporting events arises out of the World War II era, when baseball became a stage for nationalistic displays. The fact that the anthem has since become a pre-game ritual for most sports should not distract Christians—especially those who are committed to Christ's way of peace—from the anthem's meaning or its history.

The national anthem also promotes the United States over and against other nations, violating Christian internationalism and worldwide fellowship. In an attempt to be "hospitable" to American patriots, we believe Goshen College's decision rejects a higher call to be a transnational body that resists the boundaries set by nations. Furthermore, the institution is compromising its witness to the world by intentionally aligning itself with an entity that has engaged in militarism, oppression and imperialism since its inception.

Finally, we believe that playing the national anthem before sporting events is a formative ritual that will be detrimental to its community. Although you say that you are forming young adults to be Christ-centered, they will be formed into a practice that gives allegiance to America first. Instead of teaching them the cost of discipleship, this decision teaches them to cave into social pressures at the expense of faithful witness to the way of Christ and the path of peace.

Goshen College prides itself on being a place that can heal the world "peace by peace." We pray and hope that you will take the first step in this vision by resisting the war song that looms in your own backyard and encourage you to reverse your decision to make the national anthem a part of your life together.

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Please do not re-sign the petition if you have already done so on the Jesus Radicals Web site

NAME	E-MAIL	DENOMINATION/INSTIUTIONAL AFFILIFATIONS	CITY, STATE
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- Jesus Radicals is collecting e-mail addresses for use in conjunction with this petition. **We will not use it to solicit you otherwise.**
- Please feel free to attach personal comments or congregational/institutional statements on separate sheets when mailing.
- Send to **Andy A-B, Jesus Radicals, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517 by March 20, 2010.**