

Faith Digest

June 30, 2011

Goshen College silences national anthem. [Goshen College](#) no longer will play *The Star-Spangled Banner* at sporting events, school leaders announced, reversing last year's decision to allow the use of the national anthem for the first time in the Mennonite college's history. Some Mennonites criticized the anthem's lyrics as glorifying war and offensive to the school's pacifist traditions. Goshen's board of directors said many felt the school's "allegiance should be to Christ rather than to country." The switch by the Indiana college, affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA, upends a February 2010 decision to permit an instrumental version of the song at athletic gatherings after decades of shunning the patriotic anthem. Supporters of the anthem, who mostly were non-Mennonites, argued it "honors our country and improves community relations by welcoming and respecting the views of non-Mennonite students."

Faithful but not in agreement. A detailed survey by [Public Religion Research Institute](#) revealed 72 percent of Americans say it's permissible to disagree with church teaching on abortion, and 63 percent say the same for homosexuality. Catholics closely mirror the general population's position on abortion and church teaching, but are more open than the general population on the issue of homosexuality and church teaching. Two-thirds of evangelicals (67 percent) said they could differ with church teaching on abortion, and slightly less than half (47 percent) said the same about homosexuality. The report focused on the views of millennials (people ages 18-29) and found they are more supportive than their parents of gay marriage. Their views on abortion closely mirror their parents', however, with six in 10 saying abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Most millennials—68 percent—think at least some health care professionals in their community should provide legal abortions.

Young Jewish volunteerism not tied to religion. Young Jewish Americans volunteer enthusiastically for a multitude of causes, but the vast majority do not connect their service to their Jewish identity, Jewish institutions or Israel. Seventy percent of the 951 young adults surveyed said they had volunteered at least once in the past year, though much of that service was episodic, with 40 percent of respondents serving less than once a month. Only 27 percent of respondents said they volunteered based on their Jewish values, and only 10 percent indicated their primary volunteer commitment was organized by a Jewish group. Just 3 percent said the primary focus of their volunteer efforts was a cause related to Israel. The survey also showed service was linked closely to gender and religious observance, with Orthodox Jews showing the highest levels of volunteerism, at 83 percent. Of those surveyed, 78 percent of women said they had volunteered in the past year, compared to 63 percent of men. The respondents ranged in age from 18 to 35. The survey was conducted as a joint effort between the [Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies](#) at Brandeis University and Gerstein-Agne Strategic Communications.