

„Religion in the United States: History and Current Aspects“

Speaker: Markus Faltermeier, M.A.

From colonial times to the first decade of the second millennium religion has played a significant role in the shaping of American culture and history. At the beginning of the American enterprise stood the so-called 'Pilgrim Fathers' and their puritan spirit. They described the newly discovered continent as the Promised Land, on which they will build a society that stands as an ideal for the rest of the world. This prepared the ground for the paradigm known as "American exceptionalism", the notion that America inherited a special role as leader in the development of the world. During the period of the enlightenment the religious sentiment seemed to have vanished, at least within the political elite. Intellectuals like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson formulated the idea of a 'wall of separation' that should keep religion and politics strictly apart. This idea even found its way into the American Constitution. Still, the influence of religion on politics remained strong up to now: The Bush Administration has repeatedly been accused of being under the influence of lobbyism of the religious right.

This presentation will inform about the history and relevance of religion in the United States.

Registration for students of the "Gymnasiale Oberstufe" and teachers:

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