

Civil Rights

Role of the Clergy in the Civil Rights Movement **Reverend Doug Tanner, Founder and Chief Advisor, Faith & Politics** **Institute**

Reverend Tanner discusses the relationship between religion and politics in the civil rights movement.

Interview recorded May 15, 2013.

I don't think it's the only thing in which to be involved faithfully and authentically by a long shot. But I think it is a high water mark in our American history of appropriate religious involvement in the political realm, because it was ever more inclusive, and ever more breaking down barriers, and it was—what's the term in the Constitution? Oh, it's—yeah, toward a more—it's carrying us toward a more perfect union. Yes, I think race is going to continue to—race and class are going to continue to be major issues for us. They aren't what they once were, thank God. You know, but they're there. They're there, and the legacy is there, and I think it's a very right laboratory for us to be working with, in the political realm out of our religious values. And some of us are called to be more fully engaged in it, as others are simply, perhaps, called to be supportive. But it was formative for many of us who came along when I did. And it has always been the reference point for me. It's been, you know, the vision and the challenge, and the beauty of it, have stayed with me as an authentic—yes, it's just what I was called to do, what I have done, and it doesn't feel like it's just teaching history, and being, you know, in a museum. It's something that's alive. And I'm grateful for having been—having come along when I did.