

INTERVIEWER: So, this is the MIT 150th interview with Dr. Robert Randolph. And let me ask, tell me where you were born?

RANDOLPH: I need to be really honest with you. I was born in Burbank, California. A long time ago, it seems. It's getting longer by the day. But Burbank-- and I'd always thought that I had been born in Hollywood. But then, advertently, I checked the records the other day, and find out that the hospital is actually in Burbank. And if you're of a certain age, you remember beautiful downtown Burbank.

INTERVIEWER: From *Laugh In*.

RANDOLPH: That's right. You have it. That's exactly right. It was a stone's throw from there.

INTERVIEWER: And tell me a little bit about your family.

RANDOLPH: Well the family, being in California, was no accident. I'm clearly the child of dust bowl refugees. And I didn't understand that, until I grew up and was able to read Steinbeck's, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and I understood after that where I'd come from. My family always, all of them, were from Texas and Tennessee. And they'd come to California to look for work. My parents had been born probably 30 miles apart in Texas, but they met in California. And married in California. I was born in California. But the roots of the family were in Texas and Tennessee.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any particular influences or events in your childhood which you think kind of helped you chose your career path?

RANDOLPH: Well, I think so. We're shaped by context. And I grew up in a family because we were-- and I use the term advisely, we were migrants, really. We were immigrants to another culture.

I used to say, in my circle, that I was the third male child born into a circle of friends in California, first generation Californian, I'd say. And then I realized, at some point, that there were generations of Californians before me, but they were Mexicans. Mexican Americans, and spoke Spanish, not English. And that recognition shaped me in some way. I was in the second grade. I was put into a school where I was the only Anglo child in the whole school. Everyone else with the exception of one girl, were Mexican Americans, or probably illegal immigrants. And at that time, it was more simple time. And so, I had the sense of being a bit of a stranger in my own land. And I think that shaped me.

I think also I grew up in a religious community. My grandfather was a minister, who'd been educated well in the schools in the southwest, and had not completed his doctorate. But it was assumed, my mother had gone to college, that I would go to college. And he was a larger than life figure of substance. As a child, he would come through on his way to Japan, for example, after World War II. He was the president of a college-- an American church related college in Japan-- so he would spend time there. So I grew up with the sense of a multi cultural world. A bigger world than I would have seen otherwise. And of a family that was shaped by religious traditions that was important to them. And that had profound influence on me.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of things were you interested in school?

RANDOLPH: In school? Well, I was a reader. So I had worlds that were defined by the books I read. So I was interested in lots and lots of things.

But again, you want the truth. So I'll tell you the truth. The thing I was most interested in early on was agronomy; plants, flowers. I was the only 10 year old that I knew who combined playing football with raising roses. It was really an arrangement made in hell if you want to be teased. Can you imagine what that was like? The good news was, I was big enough to take care of myself. But I loved flowers. And early on, I discovered that there was nothing more exciting than growing things. And so from, literally, probably age eight or nine, I went to work in nurseries and green houses in California. There were a plethora of them. I had the opportunity to do that. You could get a job quite young. And I remember the first day going to work at the Green Arrow Nursery in Van Nyes, California, saying to myself, my life would be forever changed, because I was going to be making \$0.75 an hour. It was a wonderful thing. And I worked straight through until I went off to college. And when I went to college, I went to be an agronomy. To study agronomy. So if you want to know about the grasses of the southwest, I can still spin a pretty convincing yarn. Even if the information's not all accurate. I remember what I learned.

INTERVIEWER: So what was it that made you decide to pick Abilene Christian U?

RANDOLPH: Well, there were two choices, I would have gone to Cal Poly, California Polytechnic, San Louis Obispo, and there I would have studied agriculture. Or I would have gone to Abilene Christian where they gave me a scholarship to study agriculture. And it was a private school, and my family had connections, religiously, to the school. It was in the tradition of our churches. And my grandfather had once been head of the religion department there at Abilene Christian. So I knew people there. There were people that I had known since I was a very small child, and who cared about me, and I cared about them. And besides that, it was farther away from home then Cal Poly. You know, in 1958, 2,000 miles was a very long way.

I still remember what it took to call home in 1958. "Sweetwater, two, one, three, plus, two, L plus", was what you said to the operator. That meant they routed the call through Sweetwater, El Paso and on to California. I guess if I get alzheimer's, that'll be the sign. I'll forget that number. That was the number of calling home. You called home maybe once every ten days. And you wrote letters, because that far was a long way.

But that's why I went to school there. And I lasted for two years. I was an agronomy major, and then I realized that agriculture was not an industry that I would ever be able to break into, and that if I wanted to make a life for myself, that it would be in some area of academia probably. That seemed to be where I was slotted. And I was lucky enough to have a professor, who had taken his PHD at Harvard, who took an interest in me because my grandfather had taken an interest in him. And I had mentors that directed me. So that changed my life, really. So I took a degree in history, with a minor in religion.

INTERVIEWER: And what was draw of religion?

RANDOLPH: Well, it's a good question. What is the draw? It's certainly not that's where you're going to make money. It's certainly not that, in certain circles, it's not a conversation that a lot of folk find particular edifying. But it's partly making meaning, making sense out of the world, you know. And church had been important. I needed to make some sense out of that, I think. And so I thought it was important to understand where I came from, first of all. So history was always a good part of it, too. So it was this sense of finding your roots. Finding where it started. That in part, is the attraction. But making sense of the world. Making meaning in the world, I think is the attraction of religion to me. Where do I come from? Where am I going? Does it matter?

These are questions, large, that can occupy a lot of attention. And I had good people who were willing to listen to my efforts to try to answer them, and to challenge me in ways that were very helpful, so I went there. I had professors who'd been trained at the University of Chicago, at Harvard, at Vanderbilt, at Pennsylvania. These were places that were just names to me. And I found them telling me that I should go to Yale, or I should go to Harvard and things of that sort. And they believed in me, and they gave me the strength to believe in myself and do that. So that was the draw.

INTERVIEWER: So tell me how you made the decision to actually become a minister.

RANDOLPH: Again, it's a very interesting thing. I joke. But it's not a joke, it's really true that I believe God has an enormous sense of humor. Because what I have spent my whole life running away from, I really never did intend to become a minister. I really thought I would be an academician. I would be a teacher, I would be anything but a minister. So I've always done something besides be a minister. And that meant I taught in secondary school for a chunk of 13 years. I came here to be a dean. I didn't tell anybody when I came here that I was a minister. And they didn't seem to care or notice.

But here, in my last act at MIT, I find myself the chaplain. I think there's just remarkable irony in that. So I don't really think I ever said I want to become a minister. When I get that little moment when you do your taxes, and it says-- I always put educator, and then I said educator slash minister. But not always. When I get to be chaplain I have to put that.

INTERVIEWER: I think there are more tax advantages to being a minister.

RANDOLPH: Well there may be some. But I never benefited much from them, because I've always taken my income from schools. And most of my income from the church goes back to the churches, or to other causes like that.

INTERVIEWER: So how did you wind up at Dana Hall?

RANDOLPH: Well that's another situation where you sort of think that there's a larger purpose. I had a good friend who was at Harvard. I was graduating. I had a Master's degree in history. I'd gone to Yale. Had a Bachelor's in divinity from Yale, and finished my thesis. I did a thesis on religious history of New England. And he said, you know, we have a ministry up here in the city, in Boston, on the streets of Boston-- a camp in the summer, and they need someone to run it. Would you be interested? And at that point, in April, I didn't have a job. And he said, you could come up here and do that, and then, you can talk with them. They need a history teacher at Dana Hall, where he was chaplain.

So we came here and interviewed on Patriots Day in 1967. And we said, it would be interesting to spend a year or two in Boston. Jan was from Texas and she's been teaching English. And we were ready to settle down and think about having a family. And Boston seem like good place. We knew people here. This challenge of this inner city work-- it was called the House of the Carpenter-- was influential in it's time. It brought in about 100 to 150 children from first through sixth grade for after school classes, things of that sort. And then in the summer, they had a summer camp on the streets of Boston, with sports, and classes, and things like that.

I arrived here on the weekend of July 4, 1967, having gotten the job at Dana Hall, they gave us housing. And I'd teach history, which I have done. And we'd live in a dormitory. And the weekend we arrived, the Grove Hall riot occurred which shut down, for white people, everything south of what was then Slade's Restaurant. That whole area. White people weren't welcome. And everywhere that our children came from, we couldn't go. And we began during that period to reshape Boston. And the children were scattered that we had built over the years, up till that point, began to be scattered all over the housing projects of greater Boston. So the notion, I spent the summer reading about ministry in urban areas, and deciding that probably wasn't what I wanted to do. But it was a very interesting thing. So we ended up teaching. Ended up teaching at Dana Hall. And I taught there for three years, and then went back to Brandeis for graduate study in history. But that's how we got to Dana Hall. It was good friends. Again, personal connections.

INTERVIEWER: And then, how did you get to MIT?

RANDOLPH: Well, again, in some ways, through a whole series of circumstances. It became clear that my ticket at Dana Hall was running out. I could tell you that story off camera, sometimes. But the reality was it was time to move on. My wife was the dean of students, and I was the chaplain. I had, by that time, become the chaplain at Dana Hall. And I talked with a friend, and he said, there's an opening at MIT for an assistant dean of counseling. That's a lot of what you do. Why don't you apply for it. I'm sure you'll get an interview.

And I interviewed. No. I applied for it. And I was rejected. I got a rejection note within ten days. And I thought that was a little unusual since he'd been assured I probably would get an interview. And so I said, well I'll call them and see if they'll talk to me, and just tell me why I didn't get the interview. I'd like to know that. And I did. I called. And I had a wonderful conversation with an assistant dean, in the dean for student life office, student affairs office, the counseling area. We talk for an hour and fifteen minutes nonstop. It was really quite exciting. I thought it was pretty clear that I'd be a good fit for the job. And I said at the end, do you think they'd reconsider? And she said, no, I don't.

And during Christmas vacation, I got a phone call that said, why don't you come in and talk with us. We're having trouble making a selection for the dean. And we'd like to talk with you. And I arrived an hour after my interview. Somehow there's been a mix up. I had come at the wrong hour. But the committee hadn't disbanded, and they agreed to talk with me. So I sat down and I talked with them.

And very quickly, the word came back to me that they were either going to hire me or no one. And I thought I was prepared to be passed over for someone better qualified, but the idea of losing out to no one was not something I was prepared to deal with. It was very devastating. And so just sat there for awhile. Then a friend called and said, you know I was in a meeting at MIT and the vice president, Constantine Simonides, came in and said, I've got this real problem. I've got this religious type guy who wants to be a dean here, and I just don't know whether he'll fit. And my friend who was in the meeting said the conversation went on. And it seemed to be a consensus that probably I would fit, could fit. He should give me a chance. But nothing happened.

And then I got a phone call from the dean, the acting dean, and he said, why don't you come in? We're going to have you interview. We're going to have you interview with three different people. Two of them are deceased. One of them is still here. You're going to spend an hour with each of them, and then Constantine Simonides will pull in all the feedback he gets, and make his decision.

And I walked into Lou Smullen's office. And Lou was a wonderful professor of electrical engineering here. And he looked at me, and he said, my God man. I can't imagine why they asked me to interview you. He said, I guess it's because I told them that the last thing we needed was more YMCA types. Great line. What do you do in a situation like that? You just talk. We had a great conversation. The truth was, it turned out he was interested in the same sorts of things I was interested in. Kids that didn't have anybody to talk to. They needed people they could relate to. Could you relate? Would you be interested? Would you be put off by this, that and the other thing? We have a problem, he said, with students experimenting with a variety of things. Can you deal with that?

Well I had been doing that for a long time in secondary school. I had been through Woodstock in the secondary school. I had seen a generation of students already by that time. And I felt I could. And the conversations with the other two people were very much the same thing. Nothing you could ever do today in an interview process, in the way. Because I said to the dean, I said, what are my chances? And he said, well truth is, if you were younger, black, and a woman, you'd have a lot better chance.

INTERVIEWER: Can't say that now.

RANDOLPH: You certainly can't say that. You couldn't say it then. He was being candid, and I appreciated it. But there wasn't anything I could do about it. And Constantine Simonides used to joke with me right up until we lost him, that he had cost me a month's salary by holding me back. Getting up my nerve to ask for the salary when he died. We had a very humorous relationship. He knew, he said that he was fearful, because of my background. Since it was not as an engineer, since it was not as a scientist, that I wouldn't fit. My sense was, from talking to people there, that was precisely the sort of people that were needed at that time. That was my feeling.

And I think 30 years of good work have probably confirmed that that was true. So I came to MIT. And within two years, I was dean in residence. We lived here on campus for four years. It's been a really interesting run.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what your first impressions were of MIT? The students, and the culture, and faculty?

RANDOLPH: You don't know what you don't know. And I found it just a remarkably humane, remarkably open, place, in a variety ways that surprised me. There were all the standard notions about the students being narrowly focused. And certainly that was true to some degree with some students. But I found remarkable young people here that were just absolutely fascinating to be around and to listen to, once I got over the worry that they wouldn't talk to me. And that went away pretty quickly. I found them just a remarkable environment. I found the faculty, the staff, again, it was a very welcoming place. This is not to say that everybody was-- you know, words sometimes fail you-- I said to people starting very early, that the good thing about MIT was that it wasn't heaven. You know, because it wasn't perfect. That gets thrown back at me by people I've hired over the years. You said to me, when I started, MIT is not heaven. And you were right. And I think I was right. But it really was close. And occasionally, you begin to feel then something would happen and you'd realize it wasn't. There were narrow people. Foolish people. Students did dumb things. But it was always an engaging, vital, alive environment.

I also found out rather quickly that you could, if you were willing to carry on a conversation and marshal the arguments, you could carry the day or a point, if it was important enough. And, so for example, one of my first challenges when I was here, I got called to the dean's office on one occasion, and they said they had noticed that I had training at seminary, and they said, the Jews for Jesus are on campus, and the Rabbi of Hillel is incensed. And there's two students that want to be baptized. And they are going to baptize them. And you need to go stop that.

Well, I thought it was recipe for disaster from the beginning. You know, to be told to go stop something. I said, I'm not going to go do that. I can't do that. I will go talk to them, and see what's going on. And I did. I talked to the students. And it looked to me, pretty clearly, like what was going on, was that one of the young men had a real religious experience of sorts. He was in the process of doing what a lot of young people do when they go away to college. He was changing some of his views about some things. The other fellow had fallen in love with a Welsley girl. It's pretty clear. But if I said don't do this, that would be just like his father saying don't do it. He would have done it.

He's the leader of his synagogue in Philadelphia today. So we got through that. We navigated that. The other young man became a deacon in the Episcopal church, and then sought ordination, and studied, and became a priest in the orthodox church, and is married, and has a family. They kept their MIT connections, both of them.

I thought they were pretty reasonable outcomes. But the fact was, when I laid out what I'd found, I had people said well, that makes sense. I was able to mollify the rabbi that the last thing he needed was a monk and Hillel, and that wouldn't have worked. And we got through that.

But again, my experience was that here was a place that valued ideas, was willing to have engagement, and if you differed, it could be negotiated and worked out. And I saw that in a variety ways.

INTERVIEWER: What were your principle responsibilities as the assistant dean for student affairs?

RANDOLPH: Mostly, at the beginning, my responsibilities as an assistant dean at the start, were to take on the tasks no one else wanted to do. Like the situation with the students who were engaged in this religious search, but also to listen to students. To counsel them. To help them. I suspect, the truth was, I was learning more from the students about MIT than they were learning from me.

But again, early on, my experience was that I needed to do the listening, and not the telling. One of the things about MIT students that I found very quickly was they very often know exactly what they need to do. They just need someone to listen to them and to help them find the courage to do what they've already determined they probably need to do.

And that would take the form of the young person who'd come here because the parents had said you'll never make life as a classical musician, so you need to go get an engineering degree. And then if you want to study piano, or if you're silly enough to do that, you can do it. And piano was what they loved, and engineering wasn't. So they needed to make that decision, and have a sit down conversation with the parents about whether music was their future or engineering. Because the reality was, you discovered students controlled the outcome. If they didn't want to do it, they wouldn't do it. If they didn't do it, they'd flunk out. And you didn't want that. They didn't want that. But if their parents left them no option in order to take control, they might. So you listened, and you engage parents.

So that was often the work that I did. It was just simply listening to students and helping them shape their response to this place, and to what they were being asked to do.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any particular accomplishments or stories from that position that you want to share?

RANDOLPH: Well, again, good question. What does one remember about one's early career?

I certainly remember the story I told you about the students in Hillel, but what's interesting to me is that, we're, some ways, still dealing with the same problems I was dealing with the first week I came here. Diversity.

We got involved with a number of students, particularly Mexican American students, who were having a difficult time at MIT. Having a difficult time adjusting. Found themselves lonesome. Hungry. Under performing. And so very early on, thanks to some people in admissions, I had a chance to begin to be involved with that. And we made some changes and the numbers of Latino students moved upward. And success rate improved.

But we had issues with regard to African American students. We were dealing in '79, '80, '81 still with these issues. I had been dealing with them in secondary school. I came here. We were dealing with them again. We made some progress. I was able, in the dean's office, to hire minority deans at a pretty reasonable rate so that the students had people to look like them when they wanted to talk with somebody. But the fact is, we're still grappling with diversity.

So there's an accomplishment. We made short term gains. I think we made progress. Certainly students' numbers increased. And they found it easier to navigate through MIT, but we didn't solve the problem.

One of the things about education is its a process. So consequently, you don't always come to the end of the story in any single career. I feel like, of late, that I'm looking at a a lot of stories that I had hoped had been finished, but really weren't, and we're still working on. And still pushing back on some things that are difficult, difficult problems.

And in some ways, you see, it goes back to almost when I was telling you about a growing up in California and realizing that I was in the community that had been grafted on another community, then overlaid on another community. And these things seem to be constants in my career, and in my life.

INTERVIEWER: And in human nature.

RANDOLPH: I think so. You know, it's presumptuous in some ways, but that's what we are. We are humans. And it's our nature. And the course of our lives reveals the constancy of certain issues we deal with. I think the sin, as it were, is not to recognize that, and not to be candid about it. And not to say, look it. We did the best we could in 1985, and we're going to continue to do the best we can in 2010.

INTERVIEWER: Have you, in the time you've been here, have you seen changes in MIT's attitude towards these problems?

RANDOLPH: The most important thing that happened here, since I've been here, has been the increase in the number of women. It's changed this place dramatically. Roughly, between 1989 and 1990, 1991, the numbers of women began to go up until we reached the point we are today. In the '40s, I think it goes roughly from the '80s, 26 percent women to 38 percent in a couple of years there, and the numbers then continue to creep up to where we are today. Roughly what? 44 percent? 46 percent?

And the fact is women have changed the place dramatically. The students have changed the place. And they've changed the place because, in point of fact, a lot of women just simply aren't willing to put up with what some of the previous MIT students were willing to put up.

I don't want to fall into stereotyping, but values matter. And I think women tend to have more interest in people, and in caring for one another. And the Darwinian evolution is not as obvious among my women friends as it is among some of the males I used to see here. So it's rounded off the place in a way that's healthy and creative. And the fact is, women are as good or better students.

And our job now, it seems to me, is to remind them that they don't have to be as rude, crude, and obnoxious, as the men they're replacing. That's my current great irritation, is that, for some, it seems that the freedom to be as crass as young men, is the preeminent thing. And I just don't think it is. I think there's better stuff for us to all be involved in. And the truth is, most of the young people here get it. We're going to be a better place for the process that we're going through.

This is a remarkable place. It looks like the world. It's going to shape the world. The reality and the potential is absolutely enormous if we pay attention, and if we shape the values of this generation in ways that education should shape the values of the generation.

INTERVIEWER: How about the attitude of MIT's administration and faculty? Have you seen that change in terms of dealing with the diversity or increase in women?

RANDOLPH: Well. Yes. I've seen it. The attitude has changed. We have a lot of folk who are educated at MIT as it was, who think it should be as it was, their attitudes tend to change more slowly than I would like to see. I think this is still a hard place, in certain areas, to be a woman. In certain places, it's hard to be a person of color. I mean you can look at where the numbers tend to congregate in the departments to find the departments that are more welcoming. It's not an issue of ability. It's an issue of environment. Are you comfortable? Are you able to do your best work? Are you able to take chances? Are you able to risk? Do you feel always on the spot?

I've talked with enough young people, enough women, and minority students, to know that that's not always true in every place. And educational institutions are remarkably conservative. They change very slow. We're very smart, but it's very hard for us to think and walk at the same time sometimes. So change comes slowly. We've made some changes. It's a wonderful thing that Susan is our president, because that reminds the whole community of what's possible. Puts an enormous pressure on her and her family.

I would not want to be the first of anything of that sort. I say that then, and then I realize I'm the first chaplain to Institute. Maybe I'm projecting anxieties that don't really exist there. But I think it's a tough role for her. And lots depending on her. And she's carrying it off very well. But don't mistake the cost for her and her family. I think it's large. And that's a concern I have, and a concern I have in a variety of ways around here. I think we're moving into another period, a better period, a lot of the progress that we've seen over the last few years is going to become real in the next decade. But this transition is a challenge. And attitudes are changing. Not fast enough, in some ways. But they are changing.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had this conversations with Lotte Bailyn?

RANDOLPH: I haven't. I haven't seen Lotte as much as I used to. I used to see her on a weekly basis in a meeting that I attend.

INTERVIEWER: I think you could talk some great conversations together about how the workplace needs to change.

RANDOLPH: Well. I would like to. And in fact, that's a good reminder. One of the things that I'm working on right now is-- I woke up the other day and realized that, as I said earlier, we don't know what we don't know. And one of the worries that I have about us in these transition times, that we'll forget the voices of the previous generation that were so wise and effective in their leadership. And I want to make sure that doesn't happen, because as we transition to a new generation of younger folk taking roles in leadership, you can't expect them to know what they don't know.

But we have to make this accessible as possible. And Lotte is a good illustration of that. And also because she's extremely vocal. And she's not afraid to use her elbows. We need to make sure there are others that aren't as vocal. And we need to make sure they're her.

INTERVIEWER: So how did your experience as dean in residence-- how is that living with students that's different than counseling them?

RANDOLPH: I was dean in residence for four years in the '80s. And that was really just sort of, I was dean in residence, which meant I was on call after hours every day. And that's a very challenging experience. You never know what's going to happen. And the truth is it will happen. So you get calls day and night. After hours. My kids grew up with the telephone ringing they knew something was going on for dad. But then, as we moved off campus, and our kids went through high school, and the dog died, we had the opportunity to come back and live in residence and be housemaster. So we're in our 11th, 12th year for that now.

Being a housemaster, it's like having children at home, except you have 125 instead of two, three. It's a remarkable experience. And again, I have a bit of a maybe an odd take on it, but I always feel blessed that in some ways, young people allow us to share their lives in this situation. It seems to me the payoff is mine. I stay younger, I think, by being engaged in this way with young adults. This is not to say it's easy. And it's not to say it's always fun. Sometimes it's just down right irritating. But you need to see the world through the eyes of young people to know what's really going on, and where the tensions and the pressures are. So I find it's a very invigorating experience, frankly.

Again, there are moments when you'd probably strangle the first person you saw if you had that possibility. Because the wonderful thing about young people is they know how to punch your buttons, dramatically. They do. They can.

INTERVIEWER: So give me an idea of the sort of range of issues you dealt with when you were dean in residence.

RANDOLPH: Range of issues that I dealt with as dean in residence ran the gamut from life and death to-- let me think if I can just come up with specific stories. I'm about ready to get on the airplane, and I forgot my passport back in my-- goes from the sublime to the ridiculous-- in my classroom. I need to have a visa document signed, and nobody's answering the phone at the international students office. And I'd say, well do you realize it's midnight here, and that's why they're not answering the phone. They hadn't thought of that. So, young adults tend to be very gifted and able, and adventuresome, and often very blind to the trivia of life and what goes on.

But the experiences of having a young man and his girlfriend die in a plane crash in the middle of afternoon, on Sunday afternoon, and know you're going to have to call his father, and tell him what happened, and not getting any answer on the telephone. And finally, making a phone call to an ex-wife, and discovering the father was the pilot of the plane that crashed. So that sort of thing, there's just no way in the world that there's anything that prepares you for that.

But this, in a community, we have, when you add everybody together, there are 20,000, 30,000 people here. We have life and death issues all the time. And so, as dean in residence, that would happen three or four times every semester. You'd have something like that happen. And my sense is that it was important for the person in that role to make sure that our initial responses were as humane and caring as possible. And that the community understood that this was part of what it means to be a community.

Again my image is that MIT often thinks of itself as just sort of like a machine that goes forward. That's our model. And there are moments when machines need to stop and pause. So that on the one extreme.

On the other, as I say, that call from the office. But then the call from the guy in New Hampshire who just watched a group of fraternity boys cut down his Christmas tree in the front yard. And this guy wants somebody to know at MIT to know that he's just had them arrested and thrown into the jail in Epping or something of that sort for taking down his tree. And wondering if they really thought no one would notice. It was the only tree in the front yard. Would they just ignore it?

On the other hand, the remarkable. You would have these remarkable experiences with young people from all over the world. And getting acquainted with them, and having them invite you into their homes. You having them in your home, but then, they invite you to come visit them in Saudi Arabia, or places that existed only on paper. What a wonderful thing that is. What a wonderful opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: You must have quite a network.

RANDOLPH: Well, yah. But again, not a network as largest as some. I had a conversation yesterday about a friend of mine who I worked with my earlier years. His name is Gene Chamberlain. Gene's 90 years old. Lives down in Hingham now. He's been retired for 15 years or more. And Gene was one of the first generation of international student advisors. There are people that know and love Gene across the world because of what he did for them in those years after World War II, when MIT was not only flooded by soldiers returning, but by the wave of international students that came. And Gene was part of that generation that created the international student advising as a career. Gene, for me, was always a larger than life model you could inspire to, but never live up to.

I was grateful yesterday to hear from him that he's doing well in retirement. But at 90, is still as sharp as he can be, and still can pull back the stories that I used to listen to him tell when he was here. That's the wonderful opportunity if you can open yourself to it.

INTERVIEWER: When you were the senior associate dean for undergraduate education, student affairs, what would you say about that brief time? Your responsibilities? Your accomplishment, if you felt any?

RANDOLPH: MIT has had a pattern of, up until recently, of putting faculty members in as deans for student life and dean for undergraduate education. It makes a lot of sense with regard to undergraduate education. And the blending together of those two roles, in some respects, was a good idea that just simply was better on paper than it was in reality. But the difficulty for faculty is understanding the student life side of things. The classroom side of things, they have that down pretty well, and they understand that pretty well. But what happens, I think those of us who were in that situation, and in my role with Arthur Smith-- with Shirley McBay, I was head of the counseling programs. With Art Smith, I was moving into a broader area of responsibility that included a range of community outreach and working with Art in a variety of other things. And then with Roz Williams, during that period, the emphasis was upon trying to get us to pay attention to the out-of-classroom. And while Roz was sympathetic to that, that wasn't her experience, and there were things that surprised her. And so, in my role, part of my job was just to make sure that she wasn't surprised. And that we had ways for her to understand what was going on outside the classroom, and what students were doing, and needed to be doing.

That included a range of things. The office included athletics. There just were a whole lot of learning opportunities for faculty who hadn't had this experience with students after 5:00. So that was part of my responsibility.

But during that period, we also went through the Scott Krueger situation. And I found myself being, in some ways, the face of the Institute during that period. Because I was engaged in student life. So I found myself sitting in Needham in a dark room with a television camera on me, on I think, *Good Morning America*, and having to talk about what had happened. So in some ways, the accomplishments of the period are dominated by that. Not because we couldn't undo what had happened, but we could respond appropriately. And we could bring our fraternity and sorority system-- fraternity system primarily at that point-- where we wanted it to be so that, that kind of thing didn't happen again. And so I think in some ways, navigating that is the dominant accomplishment. But that wasn't mine alone. There were a set of people that were doing it, and were responding a variety of ways.

But I found myself in the odd position of being the spokesman for a period of time. It was a very, very difficult time. In part because a number of us who'd been involved in student life felt like these were issues we had to deal with. We had been talking about it for a long time. We should have responded to them earlier. And what happened should not have happened. You're caught in a terrible, terrible bind. Because you need to be supportive of the institution, and your value of the institutions, but institutions aren't heaven. They're not perfect. They make mistakes. And we had to make some very important changes. And we've done that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel like, in the time that you've been here, you've seen a change in how important student support is seen by the administration? Could you talk to that a little?

RANDOLPH: There's no question. I think, in some ways, my being hired as I was, and then pushed rather quickly into leading the counseling offices, my job there was really to rationalize that system, and put together the system that's now S-Cubed, is what it's called today, but the counseling and support services. And that was the recognition at the time. That students needed places to go where they would be safe, and where they could talk about things that were concerning them. And it was difficult to talk to faculty. It was difficult to talk to housemasters. You didn't want everybody knowing what was going on. So you needed a safe environment. So that was a beginning. And I think we have continued. I think MIT understands that students are not simply cups that you pour water into, or pitchers that you fill up with learning. That they're human beings navigating the most difficult time of life.

Now I say that, and then I think, well that's really stupid. Because it's really tough when you're 65. It's tough at different generational points. But the fact is, we're given young adults at four of the toughest years of their lives. Four or five of the toughest years their lives. We're telling them come here from a variety of cultures and environments. Take on what we know to be a task that's almost undoable. To master this body of material that some of us think should be six years, not four years, you know that kind of thing. And learn who you are. Learn about your make up. Yourself. Define yourself into relations to others, become a social being. Understand yourself in terms of everything from sexual identity to religious commitments, to political ideology. And we're here, and we're engaged in all of that, and we're not prepared to give you the kind of support that you need to do that hard work.

Now you can stand around and ring your hands, and say, well they used to do it better. Or someday, we'll do it better. But the bottom line is we're here in student life. We have to do it. We have to do it. We're prepared to help be supportive. Can we guarantee the outcome? Can we promise that it will always be as clean cut as we'd like it to be? Or as clear, or that like I said earlier, that task is to listen. And MIT students, as smart as they are, very often see their way out of the muddles better than we do, but we have to be there for them.

I think MIT has really begun to put much more emphasis on being supportive, because it's educationally wise. Because it's the right thing to do. And universities that continue to turn out the kind of excellent students that we've turned out traditionally are going to be responsive in that way. We just have to do it. And I think our leadership understands that.

From the very beginning, I found people here who understood it, and got it. People like Paul Grey, Priscilla Grey. People like Art Smith. They were people who led in doing the right thing. Howard Johnson before Paul. Jerome Wiesner. These were folks who understood, but it took time. And we benefit now from the leadership of that generation. And we are doing better.

INTERVIEWER: So why don't you tell me about becoming the first chaplain to the Institute?

RANDOLPH: Well. The opportunity presented itself because some things had happened in student life that were difficult. And we needed a transition into some other leadership. I'd been doing the dean on call, dean in residence-- call is the later iteration of that-- for a long time. Had managed what happened here after hours for a long time. And it was time to make a change. I had been through some unfortunate situations. The Krueger case was one. We've had another case or two, tragedies that occurred while I was in that role. And the resolution of those were painful for the Institute. So it's time to have another level of leadership. Others doing some of these things. So the dean said what would you like to be doing?

Larry Benedict was the dean. I said, Larry, I've been here now 30 years, and I've always been involved with religious life out of my hip pocket. It's never been part my job description. In fact, you may have noticed, I added it to my job description a couple of years ago. He hadn't noticed. But the fact was, I was doing it side to side. I out to include it. MIT had a tradition, very interestingly, of having clergy on staff without acknowledging necessarily that they were clergy. Jim Killian had Ev Baker as his dean of students. Ev Baker was Jim Killian's minister out in Wellesley when Killian became president. And Baker-- for whom Baker Dormitory is named, was killed in a plane crash coming back from the world conference of Christian youth in India.

In the '50's, Robert Holden was hired. Bob Holden was another minister, graduate of Harvard Divinity School, who was here when I came. And he'd been the dean in residence for a period of time. So you'd had these clergymen operating in the dean's office handling religious affairs.

Jim Killian, who'd been the president of MIT was very concerned in the post war period that the values that shaped the education of what he called the next generation of MIT men should carry with it values that drew on the great religious traditions of the world. That's why he builds Kresge auditorium and calls it the meeting house of MIT. Because the meeting house is where, in Puritan New England, things that matter were talked about. And as they're building it, they conclude that they need to build a chapel. And they need to build a chapel for smaller ceremonies-- christenings, baptisms, weddings, memorial services, and private meditation. And Killian's very clear about that.

And so Bob Holden, who is the assistant dean for student life is given the responsibility of managing all of that. And those spaces are iconic spaces at MIT. They're larger than life. They're larger than MIT.

I take people in the chapel all the time. They say, well I've seen pictures of this building. And they have. Because they're everywhere. If you look at religious space at colleges and universities. When I came on board, Dean Holden was drawing to the end of his career. And I had, sort of picked up, as I indicated with a little vignette about the students wanting to be baptized, I sort of picked up his mantle with regards to religious life. And when he retired, I followed him as dean in residence. So I was in residence and living in Tang Hall four years in the early '80's.

And I continued to deal with religious issues. And so one of the things that come up, for example, was we recognized, the administration didn't pay any attention particularly to the religious make up of the community. And I thought that was probably a mistake because we were changing. And you could see the demographic changes in the numbers, for example, of Muslims on campus. And so we had students who were coming forward in the '80's saying that they want to a place to pray. And we made that available for them in what was then Ashdown house.

There's always been a vital religious life in this community. And I knew that, again, from my history from talking with Bob Holden, but when you talk with alumni, often I would talk with people who would talk about some of the very important Chaplains that had led technology and culture forum for example. Something that goes back 40 plus years here at MIT. And the technology and culture forum was but one expression. Tech Catholic community had been here since the latter part of the 19th century. The Stein Club, which was the predecessor to Hillel, has been a club and a networking environment for the Jewish community here at MIT. So religion had been a part of this place for a long time.

During the time I followed Holden, we began to articulate that and talk about it. And in 1995, we built a religious life center, religious activities center it's called. And that building, it was a bit of a coo in the sense that I don't think if anybody had said, what is our first priority? They would have said a religious activity center. But the fact was we needed some space for dormitories. We officed chaplains there. We weren't prepared to boot them off campus. The argument was we want them together. And so several of us put together an argument that said, for educational advantages, we want to put our religious communities together so that the kinds of conflict that we see rising in the world can be dealt with within the context of our community, and that our students, therefore, will be trained to deal with this when they graduate from MIT. And my argument was that I'd much rather have our students learn to grapple with conflict knowing something about the religious communities that their friends were part of. And not acting out of the ignorance. And having a chance to have real dialogue where adults actually involved, engaged with them.

The hot topic at that moment, happened be the situation on Cyprus. I spent so long evenings with Turks and Cypriots, Muslims and Christians, talking about Cyprus. But we also had the growing number of Muslims. And we built a prayer room that reverberated throughout Ashdown, so I'd got these calls about these morning prayers.

Anyway so we built religious life center in 1995. I remember the conversations. People would say to me, but you're going to put all these religious groups together, and there's going to be conflict. And my response was I thought that was a good thing, because that would then teach them how to deal with it.

And you know, it was about 30 minutes after we opened the building that we had our first indication of what it was going to be like, because the Evangelical Christians put up a psychedelic picture of Jesus on their space. And the only people that could see it were the staff of Hillel. They came to me just outraged. We can't have our space dominated by psychedelic Jesus. And I said, well, what are you going to do about it? And they said, well what are you going to do about? And I said, no, you're going to do about it. You go down and talk to them. And the Baptist minister, who was a young woman at that time said, well, she'd take care of it. She'd go talk with them about it. As Christians, she could do that. And she mediated a peace. So very quickly, we'd proven what I thought was true could happen.

And as result of that, the religious activity center-- again I used to make the point that Benjamin Netanyahu had two degrees from MIT. And I didn't know what difference we had made in his world view. Because I know that when he was here, he didn't know any Muslims at MIT. Now today, he couldn't do that. He wouldn't be able to, I think. We've set up the arrangements so that the Muslims, the Christians, and Jews have to deal with each other. The Buddhists, Hindus, as well. They have to work things out together. And consequently, doing that, they have to learn about each other.

So this is a long way around your question but it gives you an idea of how the chaplain to the Institute came into being. I said to Larry maybe it's time somebody was given formal responsibility of dealing with this. I don't have to do it out of my hip pocket. He said, that's a good idea. And it turns out that he had done this at Johns Hopkins. He'd appointed the first chaplain at Johns Hopkins. If I'd known that, I'd forgotten it. But the fact was, he was comfortable doing that. He proposed it. And the next thing I knew, Susan was telling me that my responsibility was to be concerned about the core values of MIT.

INTERVIEWER: So the quote I have from Larry Benedict is, "We need a chaplain to be a voice for justice, integrity, and ethical conduct on campus", which looks like a pretty tall order.

RANDOLPH: Yes. That's exactly right. That's what I said about there is a cosmic sense of humor. I've been doing this out of my hip pocket, and always kind of interested, and wanting to see it done, and thinking it was important. But now all of a sudden, here I am given the responsibility. And that is tall order. How can you do that?

Well the way you do it, frankly, is you get allies. People that are interested in the same kinds of things, and you've got people that are talking about the same sorts of things. I've been really blessed. People, the technology and culture forum. You know this remarkable endeavor that comes out of the Lutheran Episcopal ministry, has 40 plus years. I've got people in the Tech Catholic community. I would tell the administration-- we would have these diversity conversations in the '80's, '90's. I'd say to them, you want to see diversity at MIT. Where do you go? I'd say go to mass on Saturday or Sunday. You'll see people from the 15, 20 countries. You'll see men and women at a college campus involved in this program.

I said you go to prayers on Friday at the mosque. You will see people from all over the world who are Muslim. Go to Shabbat services. In the religious communities, diversity-- we've got other problems. You know, I've got issues with gender. I had to sit down with the Muslim community, and say, you know, folks don't say women only on your back door. That has certain resonance in America. You need to understand that, even though gender segregation goes on in the conservative Jewish community as well as in the Muslim community, you don't put it on your door, please. So now they compromised, and they have a door that just says, "sisters", which something I live with.

But the sisters don't have to go to prayers either. So they choose often to worship at home, or to pray at home.

INTERVIEWER: At least, the sign's not on the water fountain.

RANDOLPH: That's right. Exactly. It was just amazing. I had to sit down. I said, look it. You can't do that. Why can't we do that? Well, because, in America, with our history, it says something that is we're not going to approve that.

But anyway so I said that to Larry. And this was the outcome, and so we had investiture service.

INTERVIEWER: I watched the video.

RANDOLPH: Did you? Well, what do you think of that?

INTERVIEWER: I thought it was very interesting. I thought it was an interesting idea.

RANDOLPH: So did I. I was really humbled by it. It was really remarkable. But again, we do have a chance to deal with those topics. And in ways that are complimentary to some of the other ways, things that will go on in the classrooms.

So for example, three weeks ago, we had a session here, a Friday night, Saturday all day session on communal violence in India, with the people and came out of the Ivory Khan Center and the people in urban studies, and talking about the politics of India. And religious life can support that kind of thing. And I'm delighted to do it because the conversation is important. And it takes people's minds off the fact of conflict being simply between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Suddenly they recognize it's also between Hindus and Muslims and sometimes Buddhists, and others. And that politics often takes advantage of these religious divisions to foment political trouble. So it's contributing to the educational process here by asking questions that maybe others wouldn't ask.

INTERVIEWER: So what have you determined as your priorities as insitute chaplain? What do you want to accomplish?

RANDOLPH: When I retire, when I leave, what will have happened? I will have contributed, in some degree to the stability and sensitivity of the community, that we'll recognize that we value everyone. And we recognize and value transitions in human life that occur during the university and college years, because I think there's a real important role for chaplain to the Institute, and if you were setting it up in the church situation, you'd talk about pastoral responsibilities, being concerned with matters of life, death, in transition, marriage, divorce, the birth of children, serious illnesses, things of that sort that we value and acknowledge and support people as they are dealing with these parts of human existence, human experience. Don't think we've always done that very well.

That's not why MIT exists, however. But it's part of what it means to be a community. And so we need to understand that. I also hope, when you look back, you'll say at MIT people were given the opportunity to learn about other religious communities and that learning can broaden. It's far more than just simply Protestant, Catholic and Jew, which was the style that I was educated in seminary in the 1960's.

The world is much bigger. And we need to be much more aware, much more sensitive. So programs like the Addir Fellows, for instance, a year long program that brings 30 students from different faith communities together in an organized fashion over the year, extracurricularly, to learn about one another. I want to see those programs expanded, and made more solid.

I want MIT to question the values and ethics. Why do we do what we do? One of the things that worries me about MIT is that very often, we were problem solvers without asking why we want to solve the problem.

There was a lovely little vignette on, I forgot the program, but *Science Today*, or something, on NPR, where they interviewed some MIT students who had created a new life form because they had been working with some bacteria that smelled bad, and they decided they could play with it's make up and have it smell like peppermint. And when asked, you've created a new life form-- you've created a new living entity, have you pondered that? Have you thought about the implications of that? The students were speechless for a period of time on tape. And then, a young man observed, well that's what we do at MIT. We solve problems.

And I don't think that's enough. I don't think we can just solve problems. I think we have to be talking about why. What are the problems we're solving? Why are we doing what we're doing? What are the implications of what we're doing? So things like the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Values is important to me. I want that to be on a firm footing. I want the work that's done there from the Buddhist perspective to inform and shape other conversations and another religious communities. So I want us to care about each other. I want us to know about each other, and I want us to think about the work that we do. And I think the chaplain to the Institute's in a unique position to help that to happen in ways that cut across boundaries so that the we're not siloed.

It's very hard. I don't find it easy. But I think it's the work I've been called to do. I think it's the work this role's been called to do. That the role has been called to take up. Does that make--

INTERVIEWER: In some ways, I would imagine that, in this environment, there would be even more resistance than in many others, because of the emphasis on science and technology.

RANDOLPH: I don't feel a great deal of resistance. I've been accused of a variety of things, but mostly on email and after hours. But I don't find the resistance as much of a problem as I do just simply the ignoring it and not thinking it's important to engage it. To engage some of these questions. But I go back to the fact that the conversation is really about how we make meaning.

And I think one of the realities I've found here is that the good science recognizes that doesn't have all the answers. So it's willing to look for answers in places that maybe traditionally wouldn't have looked for the answers. So again, you can get a group of scientists to sit down with the folks in technology and culture, and talk about the cutting edge issues in biology, stem cell research, things of that sort, in ways that draw on the religious traditions we have. But the conversation is fairly free form and free swinging and the conclusions that are reached or not always doctrine there. They are always open to speculation and to growth. I think good science, good engineering has that dimension to it.

And the question of value meaning where are we going? Who are we? Science does not necessarily answer those. And there can be complimentary conversations that go on about that. And I think it's the job of the chaplain and religious communities to help that conversation go on. And to the extent these communities to fall into sectarianism they can be dismissed and challenged.

But I think at the same time religious communities can challenge the doctrine or orthodoxy of science as well. We still have a lot to learn. And we're better when we're in conversation than when we're throwing rocks at each other.

INTERVIEWER: From your experience with students over the years, and from being part of this community for so long, do you feel like there are people here who were hungry for religious, spiritual discussions of values? Some sort of help?

RANDOLPH: Well I can illustrate that. You know there's a student organized program called the Veritas Forum. You talked about the hunger that's out there. There were probably 800 students that gathered on a Friday night to hear Steven Pinker and a professor of medicine from Stanford talk about whether we're hard wired for moral behavior or not. 800 students on a Friday night. There are lots of other things to do, but they were interested in that conversation. And on Saturday, the conversation continued with similar numbers.

The Veritas Forum is in the spring each year. It's been on for three years now. The numbers range from 1,000 to 1,500 on their evening programs during the week, Wednesday night, Thursday night, with more on Friday night, and then similar numbers on Saturday. I think that speaks to the fact that people are asking these questions. The other thing that's very interesting to recognize is that a significant number of those young adults are Asian. Because the communities in Korea, and to some degree, China, the Christian influence, and these often are students who've been shaped by Christian faith, in some fashion, is growing. So we see more of these students coming with their religious traditions, and they're not the traditional religions of Asian. There very often have been shaped by Christian influence. And I feel responsibility as the chaplain at MIT. And it's very interesting. Africa, as well, they very often bring a brand of Christianity that is much more conservative, sometimes even reactionary.

So for instance, when they invite Francis Collins to talk about evolution, and 1,200 students come here Collins, during the week, give a defensive of evolution as compatible with Christian doctrine, I know that those students, probably 40 percent of them being from Asian countries and Christian communities in Asia, that they're being stretched by hearing Collins and having that conversation. And I think that's what education is about.

Again, that's going on outside the classroom. They're going to take it back and try to integrate into what they learn in nuclear engineering, what they learn in electrical engineering, and it'll be a lot of work for them. But my challenge is to make sure that they have a chance to hear those ideas, and to grow those decisions. That's what they're about. And we're blessed to have the opportunity to be part of that conversation with them. And so that's the role of the chaplain to some degree.

The other thing that's just fascinating to me is that, the least told story around here is the significance of the quietly Christian folk at MIT shaping this place. Karl Taylor Compton, Princeton Presbyterian family. I came across a sermon that he preached here at MIT in 1948, 1947. He's the man, really, who brings MIT into the 20th century as a major institution. Very strong Presbyterian roots.

Jim Killian, the president who shapes the MIT we know is the president of a Unitarian church for a period of time, an active Christian layman. By traditional Christian notions, liberal, very liberal. But never the less, wanting a chapel, wanting a place where ideas can be talked about.

These ideas are important. And it continues down to the present. This is not an aberration. This is consistent with the MIT that I think goes right back to the very beginning of the place.

INTERVIEWER: Are you enjoying writing your blog?

RANDOLPH: No. I'm working it, trying to make it more of a pleasure than a burden. You know the notion that I would have something worthwhile to say I find very presumptuous, and so difficult. Because there are things I want to talk about, and they verge on politics, and they verge on some of the religious questions. But I feel like I really need to be a reflection for the conversation that goes on in the community. So I don't have the passion for it. And I've used it to reflect, and to give other people's ideas, and things. But I'm working on it. And I see it as a work in progress. We started this year.

We have a period of meditation every Tuesday morning in the chapel. And I've had from four to 12 people come every Tuesday during the year. And my rationale was two things. I want people to see the space and feel the space. And I would like to create at MIT the notion it's OK to pause and to sort of center, and to think about important things.

And we've done that. We've done it consistently. We'll do it again next year. And I've drawn on that for the blog, so it's not just me, and that took a little of the pressure off. But I'm working on it. I guess the other part of it is, it's difficult to think about putting yourself online and asking questions, drawing conclusions. And maybe I need to get more comfortable with that. But my ego doesn't need the blog, or maybe I have to ask, maybe my ego's too fragile for the blog.

INTERVIEWER: Now that's an interesting perspective, because I've read a good chunk of last year's blog. And I thought it was incredibly valuable to have somebody just raising questions of faith and spirituality, and seems to me that this is a community that would benefit by someone saying it's OK to take a pause.

RANDOLPH: Well, that's my argument. And I'm having to do that. But it's a conversation I have with myself. I think is what I'm saying to you. And so it's a challenge. Frankly, it's nice to always be reminded of what Larry wrote, and said about chaplain. And so one could argue, you know, you jerk, you should be doing this. Because that's what your job is. And I take that as encouragement because I think it's important. I really believe it's important. And I actually don't think anybody else is going to do it if I don't do it, probably. And so I'm going to keep pushing it.

See the difficulty is, is that all of the criteria for judging success that we have are in terms of breakthroughs, numbers, a whole range of things like that. And those criteria I can't quite meet with some of the things I'm doing. So I keep pushing it, because I think it's going to be valuable. It's going to be important. Again, that's part of what I was talking about earlier when I look back and say, what have I accomplished? I want to have put in place the kind of skeletal support that allow these kinds of questions in this community to continue after I'm not here.

MIT is marvelously entrepreneurial. And that's one of our great things. But we have to be able to also institutionalized things that are good, as well, so they last beyond generations. Last beyond personalities. And I have been focused on doing that. And I want to do it. So I'm wary of the cult of personality. I want it to be a shared endeavor, and that takes time and it goes slow. But I think it's absolutely critical.

INTERVIEWER: How about a newsletter to the whole MIT community?

RANDOLPH: I have to get access to it. That's hard. But I said to my assistant today, next year, we're going to develop an email list of people who are interested so that every Tuesday, when we have Tuesdays in chapel, they share what we have, even if they're not here. We hadn't done that. So we're going to do that. I think that would be a way to do it. And I judge part of the success by what I've gained from this again. You may notice that's a theme. I seem to feel that if I get something out of it, everybody else ought to.

But there's so much to learn. But you know when I've learned this year? I've learned to appreciate the organ. I discovered that in our chapel, we have an organ that's an instrument that's historically important-- we have two of them, one at Kresge, one in the chapel-- they're built at a particular time in American organ history and construction, so that they're unique, by Holtkamp Organ Company in Cleveland. And the chapel organ matches the space beautifully. So this year, we had 11 organ concerts. And had it played every week on Tuesday. And the fact that I've been there and listened to it has given me a whole new appreciation for an organ that speaks to the space it's in, and plays lovely music. I mean I've heard more Bach this year than in my lifetime, maybe. But I've learned from that.

And the beauty of the quiet, and the reflections of other members the community is that I have a chance to grow from that.

So to find a way-- a newsletter, or something like that, we can't do the music. You know what we did do though? We did a New Year's day concert on the organ, and broadcast it over the web. We did a whole concert. Put it on the web. Streamed it. Because in 1956, E. Power Biggs did a concert from our chapel that was broadcast nationally on the radio. And I thought, what a wonderful thing to do. So we're going to begin that tradition. And every year, we'll do another organ concert and stream it on the web so people can pick it up anytime they want to.

INTERVIEWER: Well maybe your newsletter, or whatever you figure out, maybe you can be remind the community to take a pause once in a while.

RANDOLPH: Well that's something I believe in strongly. That's been a constant for me here. And we're going to try to do that. One of the things that happened during the time troubles in the '60's was that the notion of community gatherings for moments of importance became unfashionable and we need to recapture that. We need to find ways to do that. A moment of pause. You know it's not enough simply to have a talking head come in and talk about important things.

We've done some wonderful things. Susan's been open to that. With the leadership of the Institute, we've tried some things like that this year. And I think we need to continue to try to do that. But it's all part of the same fabric. Pausing is one part.

INTERVIEWER: We have about ten minutes. So I'm wondering, instead of whatever remaining questions I have what other thoughts you'd want to share about MIT or about faith and religion on the campus, or how those things can be important to people in their lives.

RANDOLPH: Well those are certainly ten minutes of conversation there.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to see you try to cover it in ten minutes.

RANDOLPH: You got it. Well one of the things I'm convinced about-- let me just begin with MIT part of it, I think what we're engaged in here has the potential for really making enormous difference in the world we live in. You know the technocrates of the future who value humankind as much as they do their technological powers are going to make an enormous difference in how they're shaped. We're going to be engaged in that. I don't presume that we can grab this next generation of young adults and shake them until they listen. But I do think, if we're creative in a variety of ways, that there are ways we can get their attention that they'll listen to us.

Jim Killian talked about the education of the new MIT student in the early 1950's. I think it's correct that in some respects, his program that he wanted to bring into being, was the first casualty of the cold war. Because when Sputnik went up and Killian went to Washington to be the president's science adviser, this whole thing that was signified by the chapel, and Kresge and the idea of ideas being at the center of the Institute, that really goes on the back burner.

And we pick that up again. And we're beginning to talk about that in a variety of ways that I think are important. Because the students who are coming through here now are going to be in positions of leadership in the 21st century all over the world. I want them to think deeply. I want them to think about humankind and their responsibility. I want them to feel accountable for the decisions they make. Our religious traditions give us some glimpses of that. Some ways of getting at issues like social responsibility, stewardship for our planet. And we have to be intentional about how we integrate that into our educational programs.

It's not enough to simply teach students how to solve problems. But why? What are they about? Is it going to make me rich? Is that the primary goal? The primary good? Or is it going to make this world a better place? And what responsibility do I have for that? And if I have no religious tradition, is it enough for me to hear others raising that question so that I might have to answer it for myself?

If self interest is the only driving force I suspect we're going to be in trouble. But I do think that if we can be in communities of conversation where other issues are raised that we have the potential for broadening the conversation and making a real difference. You see it with the D Lab with Amy Smith and the work that she's doing. I see it with students during IAP and during spring break for a variety of reasons taking responsibility for the world they live in, trying to make a difference for people, for others. People they don't know in cultures that they don't understand.

But the thing I find about these students is that they are so remarkably open to understanding. To wanting to learn. To wanting to grow. That's another thing about living with them. You hear what they're going to do. We have, in our dormitory, a program we call, Travels with Bexley where students talk about what they've done during summer, what they've done during breaks. They've been places already that when I was their age, I hadn't even dreamed of going to. But they're going to make a difference. They're going to make this a better world if we'll give them the tools do that to and to think about.

And I think it's not inappropriate to think that, in my role as chaplain to the Institute, that I can contribute to that conversation. But not in a way-- I'm not going to be preaching at folk, but rather trying to create a community where these are questions that come naturally, and we ask out of who we are, and the experiences that we have.

I could go on. 10 minutes is not long enough.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else you want to say? We've got a few minutes. **RANDOLPH:** Oh. I think, unless there's a question you want to ask me or something, pontificating is not my long suit, I'm afraid.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know. You're pretty good at it.

RANDOLPH: Well good. Maybe I'll rethink it.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know. We've covered a lot of ground. Is there advice you have? Do you have advice for new students arriving or faculty members?

RANDOLPH: Well. Let me tell you what's on my mind right now. You catch me at a unique time, because I sat down this morning and wrote an appreciation of Arthur Smith, who was the dean for student life and undergraduate education 1990, 1995. And Art died last week. So I was reflecting on why he was such an important part of this community. And one of the things that I said in that brief memorial that I was writing to him was that we needed more people like him. Because here was a man who quietly gave to a variety of places. His community, his family, and this institution. And he was chair of every single important committee. Chair of the faculty. He was one of those faculty members who could bring faculty together with the administration in a variety of ways to help solve the problems of the moment, whether it was what was going on in Vietnam or divestment or pornography, or whatever the issues were of the moment, Art was a voice of the people. He didn't talk a lot, but when he talked, everybody listened.

Again, this is a remarkably open place to the activities of the individual. So my hope is that our entrepreneurial spirit can be tapped for the good of the community, the common good. I think, for example, if you take our friends from Microsoft, the Gates family, and you see their evolution as entrepreneurs to benefactors, that's a remarkable evolution. I'd like us to be intentional about trying to promote that among our students and the folks here at MIT. Because that's a remarkable trajectory. And it is what we need. And the Arthur Smith's of this community, who gave to this community so much, are what I hope we'll see a new generation of them. Because we need them desperately. If MIT is to remain relevant and effective, we have to, I think, find a way to join the entrepreneurial spirit that we're so good at with the common good, and our responsibilities for the stewardship of the planet, and for the world we're part of. There's nothing more important than that. And I think, in the long run, for all of us, the kind of experience we have would be enhanced if we can do that at MIT.