



Todd Chapman: ([00:02](#))

Being an ambassador means that you're representing someone else that you're not coming in your own name, but you're coming in the name of someone else in representation. And when you do that, you're assuming a great responsibility.

Joanna Meyer: ([00:20](#))

You're listening to The Faith & Work Podcast, where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor, and society, through our daily work.

Joanna Meyer: ([00:29](#))

Hello and welcome to The Faith & Work Podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, Denver Institute's Director of Public Engagement, and I'm joined today by Abby Worland, our new VP of Operations and Finance. This is her first time as a co-host to the podcast and it is such a pleasure to welcome her. Hi, Abby.

Abby Worland: ([00:45](#))

Hi, Joanna. Thanks for having me today.

Joanna Meyer: ([00:48](#))

We are going to have a blast together. So, I'm going to put you on the spot and ask you to tell us a little bit about your professional background before you came to Denver Institute, because some of our listeners may not have met you yet.

Abby Worland: ([00:58](#))

Yeah, I'd be happy to. I came to Denver Institute in January of 2022, but before that I spent a little over a decade in public education. I started as a teacher and then I helped train new teachers. And then, I worked in administration with talent and HR. So, spent a lot of time in public education and still care a lot about public education and excited to be at Denver Institute.

Joanna Meyer: ([01:22](#))

Yeah, Abby's whipping us into shape in the best possible way.

Abby Worland: ([01:26](#))

You didn't need much. You are already in a good spot.

Joanna Meyer: ([01:31](#))

Well, today our attention is shifting to global affairs, as we have an opportunity to speak to Ambassador Todd Chapman about almost 30 years of a career in foreign service, which is just amazing. I'll never forget the first and the only time that I have met an ambassador, I was living in Costa Rica. I was down



there to learn Spanish in preparation for serving on college campuses in Spain. And I had the opportunity to attend a reception at the Spanish Embassy.

Joanna Meyer: ([01:55](#))

So, I went with a couple of my friends. We grabbed chairs in the back and it was amazing. I just sat there in awe as the ambassador spoke. I was so in awe of the power and the dignity of his role. And at the time, I only had a vague idea of what an ambassador did. I knew that he threw receptions, like the one that I attended, but not much beyond that. And so, our conversation today will explore a number of themes, including what does an ambassador actually do? But also, what are the spiritual implications of being an ambassador? So, those principles of diplomacy in any type of work.

Joanna Meyer: ([02:27](#))

We'll also talk about leadership development and spiritual disciplines that have fueled ambassador Chapman's career. It's amazing. And I think my favorite part of the conversation was when we talk about geopolitical issues from a Christian perspective. It's going to be a fascinating conversation. So, Abby, please take a moment and introduce us to our guest.

Abby Worland: ([02:44](#))

Our guest today is Ambassador Todd Chapman, who spent 30 years as a career diplomat in the US Foreign Service. As the US Ambassador to Brazil, he advanced a broad economic, security, and environmental agenda at the sixth largest US embassy in the world. He was the first US ambassador to be decorated with the Order of the Southern Cross, which is Brazil's highest civilian honor for non-citizens.

Abby Worland: ([03:08](#))

Previously, he served as the US Ambassador to Ecuador. And his international postings in both the foreign service and the private sector have included Afghanistan, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan. He currently serves on a number of corporate boards as well as as an advisor to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Welcome, Mr. Ambassador. We're glad to have you here.

Todd Chapman: ([03:35](#))

Well, thank you so much, Abby. It's a real honor for me and I greatly appreciate the opportunity.

Abby Worland: ([03:41](#))

Yeah. Well, as we get started, we'd like to know what led you to work in the Foreign Service?

Todd Chapman: ([03:47](#))



Well, Abby, that's a very good question because at times you'll talk to some career diplomats and they'll say, this was always what they wanted to do. They studied for it. They went to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. That was not my case at all. I actually grew up overseas in Brazil from age 11 to 18, and that got me on an international track, but I really thought that I was going to go into missionary work.

Todd Chapman: [\(04:13\)](#)

That was my professional intent going into college, and then later into seminary for a while, but God had other plans and I ended up becoming a banker in Saudi Arabia, a business owner in Brazil, and a friend dared me to take the Foreign Service Exam, which is the first step towards becoming a diplomat. And when I passed, I thought, "This might be interesting." And as I looked into it, it seemed to be a great professional track. And for almost 31 years, that's what I had the privilege of doing, is serving our country mostly overseas as a career diplomat.

Abby Worland: [\(04:48\)](#)

That's amazing. You owe that friend. That's a good dare.

Todd Chapman: [\(04:53\)](#)

Absolutely. And Abby, I'll tell you a little bit more. My friend said to me, he said, "I dare you to take it because you're really good at that game Trivial Pursuit. So, I bet you could pass it because you know all this trivia." Well, he was right. I passed the test and the rest is history.

Abby Worland: [\(05:07\)](#)

That's great.

Joanna Meyer: [\(05:09\)](#)

I'm great at trivia, ambassador, I bet I'd be good in the Foreign Service too, and I've lived and worked overseas. So, maybe that's my next career.

Abby Worland: [\(05:16\)](#)

No, Joanna, we need you here.

Todd Chapman: [\(05:21\)](#)

Good.

Abby Worland: [\(05:21\)](#)

Mr. Ambassador, it's interesting you were talking about how you had originally thought about going into mission work and then you ended up in the Foreign Service, but how did you see your work in the Foreign Service become part of your broader call to follow Christ?



Todd Chapman: [\(05:36\)](#)

Well, Abby, when I get to share my full testimony, I share with people how in college and even in high school, when I became a Christian, I felt a real missionary calling on my life, and that's all religious language, but what I mean by it is that I really believed that I wanted to serve the Lord internationally. And I had made the jump to thinking that was through seminary training and becoming a seminary professor and serving overseas. That was my design and God had other plans and took me in a different direction.

Todd Chapman: [\(06:10\)](#)

And what I learned over time is that we can have the basic calling, right? We can generally understand the sense of where God wishes to take us, but we might have the vehicle wrong. We might have the plan all wrong. And that was certainly my case. And I saw over my diplomatic career, how God did maintain this missionary calling on my life, but it was to be done through a different vehicle. And I'm really grateful for that, because it fit my personality. It gave me many opportunities that I would not have had in traditional religious missionary work. And so, I really believe that the diplomatic career was a fulfillment of a Christian calling in my life.

Abby Worland: [\(06:53\)](#)

Thank you.

Joanna Meyer: [\(06:55\)](#)

I love that perspective. I'm wondering what an ambassador actually does. I'm picturing you host a few receptions, but I'm guessing it goes way deeper than that.

Todd Chapman: [\(07:05\)](#)

It does, Joanna, go a little bit beyond that. Let me tell you. So, what an embassy and an ambassador does is represents the interests of the United States Government to the country in which you were assigned. So, I served, I think it was in nine different embassies. And the idea is that both the embassy and the ambassadors, the personal representative of the President of the United States, is you are always looking for opportunities to build relationships with the host country, to identify opportunities for mutual benefit. And then coming up with a plan to execute, that will realize some good between the two countries, whether it's in law enforcement, whether it's in trade, investment, human rights, education, military, security, the whole range of US Government interests.

Todd Chapman: [\(07:57\)](#)

So, when you're a more junior officer, you usually start off issuing visas for people that want to travel to the US or immigrant visas, helping Americans in distress. And then you graduate to a number of different opportunities, whether it's administrative, whether it's in public diplomacy, or in my chosen field, which was economic affairs, promoting the economic partnership with another country. So, that's what you're



always looking to do. The ambassador is like the CEO of the operation at an embassy. So, the ambassador being the personal representative of the president, you have to look after all interests, military, Pentagon, Department of State, Department of Agriculture, all of the departments. And again, represent the president in your dealings with that country.

Joanna Meyer: ([08:50](#))

It's amazing to think that you served in nine embassies. What was it like raising a family overseas? Because it wasn't just like you were in one part of the world, you had a global career.

Todd Chapman: ([08:58](#))

Yes. It was a real dynamic experience. My wife and I, we were married in '85. We had our first child in '89. And so, we raised our two sons completely overseas with periodic times when we'd live in the United States. And we made the choice for most of that time to homeschool, back when homeschooling was much less common than it is today. And it worked very well for our family, but it was an education, not the homeschooling, but living overseas, was an education unto itself. To have your children growing up with Nigerian kids, to playing soccer with kids in Bolivia to Mozambique. It's just a unique way to grow up.

Todd Chapman: ([09:46](#))

I remember my son's high school class, senior class in Mozambique. I think they had 30 people in the class and there was something like 20 different nationalities. And so, it requires your kids to learn how to relate cross-culturally. For my wife and I, it was a tremendous ministry opportunity to serve in mostly international churches for the expatriate crowd, and my wife and I were given a ministry of praise and worship leading, early in our marriage. And we had the opportunity to share that with many churches all around the world.

Abby Worland: ([10:24](#))

That's incredible. Something that we were thinking about before coming on today was the idea that being an ambassador or a foreign servant has some real spiritual overtones. We were thinking of verses like second Corinthians 5:20, or Ephesians 6:20, in which the Apostle Paul describes himself as Christ's ambassador or an ambassador of the gospel. And I'm just curious, how has being a Christian shaped the way you approach your work?

Todd Chapman: ([10:57](#))

Well, it has certainly shaped the way that I carried out my professional duties. And I'm often asked, "What is it like to be an ambassador?" And I have a response that surprised some at the time, was that this is not my first time being an ambassador, because in my Christian faith, I've been an ambassador for Christ. And so, now I'm an ambassador for the United States. And being an ambassador means that you're representing someone else, that you're not coming in your own name, but you're coming in the



name of someone else in representation. And when you do that, you're assuming a great responsibility, because how people see you will not just impact the way they see you as an individual, but as well as the one you represent.

Todd Chapman: [\(11:50\)](#)

So, I'll give you a quick story. When I first went as acting ambassador for three years to Mozambique and I was in a restaurant and was getting poor service. And I was thinking of being very grumpy and like, "Where the heck is my food?" Or something like that, just be nasty, which isn't a good trait. But it struck me that if I did that, it wouldn't be that Todd Chapman was being snooty or rude. It would be that the leader of the US Embassy representing the United States is the one who's rude. And it would bring ill repute, not just to me as an individual, but also to the one I represent.

Todd Chapman: [\(12:30\)](#)

Well, I think this also applies to us as Christians, that wherever we are going, we're not just representing ourselves, we're also representing Jesus Christ. And people who know us to be Christians are going to say, "Well, that guy was rude and if that's the way Christians are, I'm sure not interested." And so, it's really thinking about, what does it mean to represent Jesus Christ in the world? To be salt and light, to make sure that people are seeing our lives and thinking, "That's someone that I would like to get to know better, emulate, find out what he or she is all about, to find out what is the source of that joy and that positive way of looking at life." And so being an ambassador for Christ, being an ambassador for the United States, again, is all about who you represent and the fidelity with which you represent the one you hope to bring honor to, whether it's your country or it's your Lord.

Abby Worland: [\(13:30\)](#)

I like that idea that we're not coming in our own name, that we're representing the name of someone else. I really appreciate that. You just talked a little bit about how your Christian faith impacted your work as an ambassador. I'd love to hear the flip side of that. How did your work as an ambassador shape the way you thought about your faith and your walk with the Lord?

Todd Chapman: [\(13:54\)](#)

Being ambassador is wonderful, it's like being the senior pastor at a church or a CEO of a company. You get to direct, you get to lead, you get to set the priorities, and that is a wonderful privilege, but the old adage about it being lonely at the top, is certainly true in whatever field you're in, in the leadership field. And it's so important that you find a support structure that is going to help you lead with integrity. And I think by being an ambassador, it did cause me to have even greater empathy with leaders of whether it's the President of the United States himself, or the CEO of a company, or other ambassadors, because the weight of leadership is truly great.

Todd Chapman: [\(14:45\)](#)



And it probably drove me to my knees more frequently than before, because I couldn't go into the ambassador's office and say, "What should we do, ambassador?" Because, oh, wait, that's me. And so, having that role of leadership, until you have it, you don't fully understand it. So, I think what it did for me was create greater empathy for those who are in Christian leadership, my pastors, heads of Christian colleges and organizations, even like the Denver Institute for Faith & Work, is that we need to lead with integrity and we need to find the support structure that will encourage us to do our best in our leadership roles.

Abby Worland: ([15:29](#))

Thank you.

Joanna Meyer: ([15:30](#))

Ambassador, as I think about what you do, there's the joy and relationship that happens at something like a public gathering where you're meeting the folks in the country you're serving, but I'm guessing that there are also moments of deep disagreement or where you're having to leverage your influence to get things to work in the favor of the United States. And I'm just wondering how you navigated that as a Christian?

Todd Chapman: ([15:57](#))

Well, there are a couple of ways to look at it. Sometimes people say, Joanna, they'll say, "You're just out there trying to get the best for America, which is already the richest and most powerful nation in the world. How can you be doing that in poor countries like Mozambique or Nigeria?" And my response to that is, "I'm not there just to get what is best for the United States. It's also to do what's best for our partner." And so, I would frequently say that when our partners and friends are stronger, we are stronger. If your neighbors are doing well, that's good for you.

Todd Chapman: ([16:36](#))

And so, I would explain to foreign audiences that it's my obligation and my duty to be a friend and help your nation because we are friends. And when you are stronger, we are stronger together. And that is the way that you make promoting the national interests of another country also serve your national interest. Now, as a Christian, I was obviously motivated by my faith as well, to serve my fellow human being. It's the reason why I wanted to go to the developing countries of the world, not the developed ones. That was a sense of calling. It's a sense of mission.

Todd Chapman: ([17:15](#))

When we went to Mozambique in 1993, it was immediately after the end of a 17-year civil war that caused a million people to die. And it was the poorest country in the world. And we were the first ones to go to our embassy that had children, in 17 years, but it's where we wanted to go because it was the place of greatest need. But for us, it was a privilege. And the US Embassy and the US Government has a



tremendous force, a tremendous ability to bring good to the world. And so for me, it was just a privilege to be one of the servants able to do that.

Joanna Meyer: ([17:53](#))

Ambassador, I'd love to ask you a few questions about Christians thinking geopolitically, and it has a broad range of applications. The first thing that came to mind was just think the conflict in Ukraine, when Russia first invaded, I saw a lot of my Christian friends responding with great enthusiasm. We were wearing blue and yellow ribbons and up in arms about the invasion of a sovereign nation. But over time, it's gotten very painful to side with Ukraine. We can see how it's impacted the global economy.

Joanna Meyer: ([18:24](#))

And I wouldn't say our enthusiasm has faded, but it's certainly gotten more costly and it's affected our life to a degree that we maybe didn't consider early on. And I'm wondering if we could just talk a little bit about how to think Christianly about geopolitics? And let's just start broadly, like as we respond to the situation in Ukraine, how should we think about a situation like that as a Christian?

Todd Chapman: ([18:49](#))

The challenge globally is that there's a lot of evil in the world that's being perpetrated by rogue regimes. You can talk about North Korea, you can talk about Russia. There are many examples of governments that are inflicting pain and hardship on their people. And that is exactly what's happening now between Russia and Ukraine. And it's important that as Christians, we be in the world, but not of the world. And unfortunately, sometimes Christians choose to take themselves out of the world.

Todd Chapman: ([19:24](#))

And I think it's really crucial for Christians to have a vision for how they can serve the world, whether going there, that's one option, the great commission, but the other option is we can go there with our prayers and we can go there with our funds, and we can go there with our consciousness raising, whether it's wearing a blue and yellow ribbon or talking about the starving people in Somalia. There are so many conflicts in the world that are so great, that it's incumbent on us as Christians to love this world, to go to these people.

Todd Chapman: ([19:59](#))

And so, there's no way that an individual can be involved in every conflict that's going on in the world. You can't be looking at the Rohingya in Burma, and then be thinking also about Chinese Uyghurs, and all the people that are being persecuted. But I think it's important that we try and stay aware so that we can pray effectively, that we don't forget, especially our Christian brothers and sisters who are being persecuted around the world, and then figure out some way that we could help. You don't have to help in all these situations, but you do want to keep helping in some of them.





Todd Chapman: [\(20:34\)](#)

One of the challenges, Joanna, is that as conflicts get prolonged, our attention to it fades. Ukraine is no longer the first item that is mentioned in the news. We had the horrible shootings in Highland Park, with I think now seven people have been killed. Well, certainly more than that were killed in Somalia, due to hunger, and probably in Ukraine on that day, but it's just that that's the next crisis that we're facing and it's closer to home.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: [\(21:06\)](#)

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Jeff Hoffmeyer: [\(21:31\)](#)

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Joanna Meyer: [\(21:56\)](#)

Yeah. And I'm going to make a bold speculation here, so please forgive me for this, but I'm guessing there are moments where you sit in an American congregation and think, "Gosh, we are so myopic, the things that we're concerned about don't even reflect an awareness of how God is at work around the world or a real awareness of the conflicts that exist." And you've described a number that aren't front of mind for me, and yet are very real and active in the world today. Do you have any suggestions for Christians who might want to increase their global awareness?

Todd Chapman: [\(22:29\)](#)

Joanna, there are a couple of different ways to respond to this. Sometimes, those of us that have spent a lot of time overseas come back and try and lay a guilt trip on the wealthy Western church. I don't think that's helpful. I don't think it's useful. We're all called to be in the places where we are and to live faithfully as we understand the truth, but it's just being aware, being aware and taking action somewhere, I think that's what's important.

Todd Chapman: [\(22:58\)](#)

You might say, "Okay, Todd, you're very active in Latin America." That is absolutely true. I am almost nonexistent working in Asia. It's not my area of focus. So, somebody's going to come and talk about the



latest plight of the Rohingya and I mean, yeah, I'm concerned, but I'm not going to be actively involved in that one. I'm going to be more involved in what's going on with Haitian refugees or whatever it is.

Todd Chapman: [\(23:22\)](#)

The whole concept of think globally, act locally. I think that applies to the church as well. I've been a part of churches that, I had one in Northern Virginia once that had a relationship with a church in Chile, that went for 20, 30 years. And they were ministering in that place in a wonderful way. It meant they weren't working in the Philippines, but that's okay, because there's another church in California that's worried about or caring for a church in the Philippines.

Todd Chapman: [\(23:50\)](#)

So, I think it's figuring out where to engage and then to engage on a sustaining basis. I would love to see more of these kinds of church partnerships develop over time, but we can do it individually too. We can sponsor a child. We can do a number of things to connect ourselves with the hurting world and understand that we as Christians in the United States, have a tremendous opportunity to be a tremendous blessing to many places in the world. And you don't have to go far to search for it. You really don't.

Abby Worland: [\(24:26\)](#)

You've said a little bit, Mr. Ambassador, about connecting the church with the hurting world, and I think part of that connecting is around seeking justice for others. Can you talk a little bit about how you define justice and think about it through your work?

Todd Chapman: [\(24:45\)](#)

Abby, this is something that I have tracked within younger people, and I will say, younger Christians, is the whole concept of social justice has jumped in terms of the consciousness of younger Christians. My two sons happened to go to Wheaton College, a Christian college outside of Chicago, Illinois. And the first time I went there to speak in a political science class, the first question I was asked about being a diplomat is, "What are you doing to promote social justice?" And it's an interesting question because everybody has a different definition of what that is. Are we talking about economic equality? Are we talking about freedom of expression? Are we talking about equal access to the law? Are we talking about equal treatment of men and women? The treatment of minority?

Todd Chapman: [\(25:40\)](#)

There are so many factors that go into social justice that it's difficult to respond, but I can tell you that as a matter of US Government policy, we are all about promoting human rights overseas. We're all about democracies. We're all about gender equality, and all these things. And as a diplomat, we were able to implement programs and policies to promote those things. And I was proud of that in my career as a



diplomat. Did I agree with every policy the US Government ever had? No, I didn't. And sometimes I was placed in some difficult situations.

Todd Chapman: [\(26:21\)](#)

Fortunately, the US Government allows us to, for our own personal religious convictions, we can step away from a policy if we don't support that particular policy. But in our professional functions, we had the opportunity to promote social justice, however defined, in many countries. And I'm proud of being able to do that. As Christians, we have the same opportunity, whether it's serving through a humanitarian mission or helping a church implement a program for unwed mothers. I mean, this is part of the missionary calling of the church, and the more we put ourselves out there and take some risks doing so, that blessing will re-down back to us in a very strong way.

Abby Worland: [\(27:08\)](#)

You were talking a little bit about difficult situations and thinking about the difficult situations you were in as an ambassador are very different than the difficult situations I'm in, in my job. But anyone that goes to work every day is going to be in some sort of difficult situation and really, work can be a real driver of our own individual spiritual formation. Can you talk a little bit about some of the spiritual disciplines or spiritual practices that you had, that helped sustain you through those difficult situations and helped sustain your leadership over time?

Todd Chapman: [\(27:43\)](#)

Yeah. Abby, a trite answer would be, make sure you're praying and all of that. And that's all very true and I don't want to downplay that in any way. We do more work on our knees than we do with our hands. And so, it's very important to just be in supplication with the Father to say, "God, give me wisdom." I walked into meetings with presidents and prime ministers and I would just, before going in, or in the car, I'd just say, "God, just help me say the right thing. Help me be a voice of positivity. Help me be encouraging." Whatever it is, just a simple little prayer and then go with it and just go with it and trust the God and the Holy Spirit who lives in you, to speak through you.

Todd Chapman: [\(28:30\)](#)

And I can tell you so many times when I went in with certain talking points that I had prepared for me, but God gave me some wisdom to go in another direction. And so, it's about always trying to be in touch with the Father and the Holy Spirit as you're going into a situation. I think that's point number one.

Todd Chapman: [\(28:51\)](#)

Point number two is, it's very, I'm going to say tempting, and I mean that word literally, to think that you've got to get it 100% right. If 100% right was the only measurement of success, we would all be failing all the time. And so you can go into a meeting and say, "Well, I'm not exactly sure what I'm



supposed to do." It's like, go with it. Trust in your experience, in your intuition, in your council that you've received, and be a voice, be a light in that situation.

Todd Chapman: [\(29:26\)](#)

And then third I would say is, don't be too timid, take some risks. I mean, Jesus took great risks by inviting unsavory people to the dinner table. He took risks in challenging religious leaders. I mean, in the Book of Acts is our founding fathers who are taking great risks for the faith. We need to do this as well in our own lives and trust that God is going to protect us.

Todd Chapman: [\(29:57\)](#)

So, those are some of the things that I tried to keep in mind as I went into some difficult situations, whether it was living for a year in Afghanistan or negotiating with a president who I knew was a killer, literally, but it's like, what am I doing here? It's like, well, I'm trying to advance something that's good, even through someone who is not good. God give me wisdom. There are all sorts of examples of that in the Old Testament. So, that's how I would respond to that very interesting question.

Abby Worland: [\(30:31\)](#)

Yeah. That's helpful.

Joanna Meyer: [\(30:33\)](#)

Yeah. Let's dig into that a little bit more because I think it has great relevance for Christians today. The idea that you could be sitting across the table from someone who had very different interests than you, who you may not agree with on some deeply moral issues, for example, the situation you're describing in Afghanistan, and yet you had to find a way to work collaboratively or move forward.

Joanna Meyer: [\(30:56\)](#)

I think any Christian today needs to be asking those questions as they engage in their public life or in the workplace. What wisdom could you offer for situations that we might encounter when we're working and needing to collaborate with someone that's deeply different than we are?

Todd Chapman: [\(31:11\)](#)

Well, I would first point to Matthew 5, when Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall see the face of God." So, we are called to be peacemakers. So, it's very easy to go into a meeting, find out, Joanna, where you and I disagree and we just go at it, right? "Joanna, you see that as yellow, I see it as green, you're wrong, I'm right. I can prove it to you." I mean, you're just never going to win that argument and we're not going to be able to work together.

Todd Chapman: [\(31:41\)](#)



So, what I always tried to do in diplomatic situations, and this applies across all workplaces, is I'm looking for the points of agreement. I'm looking where you and I agree on three out of the six things, then it's like, say, "Okay, Joanna, let's work on those three and not let our disagreements over here, hinder us from working over here."

Todd Chapman: [\(32:04\)](#)

But let's say you have to talk about those three issues. You want to transmit respect and care for the person you're debating. If you try and demean them, you're never going to get ahead. Whoever changed your mind by making you feel stupid, right? That just doesn't work. But it's amazing how that is sometimes used, this brow beating approach to trying to win an argument. So, I always tried to find with whoever I was working with, to find a point of agreement.

Todd Chapman: [\(32:34\)](#)

Now, I'll give you an example. When I was an Ecuador as ambassador, I started an interfaith council with the religious leaders of Ecuador, in my dining room. And so, I had the Bahai, I had the Buddhist, I had the Muslim, I had the Greek Orthodox, I had the Protestant Catholic, Jewish representatives. And I said, "We need to find out in an interfaith way, what can we work on together? What do we find out that we agree on?" And we found two issues. We found that we agreed on wanting to help Venezuelan refugees coming into the country. And number two, they agreed that there was some amendments needed to the religious education law, because all of these religious groups had religious schools.

Todd Chapman: [\(33:20\)](#)

And so I said, "Great, let's work on these two issues." And we did. We did not talk about theology. We did not talk about even the fine points of Christian theology. That wasn't the point there. There, we were trying to find points of agreement. You do that, you build bridges, and then you're going to get further on the areas where you disagree, at least on understanding each other's point of view. I really think, blessed are the peacemakers, is what we should be bringing into our workplace, to think about how can I be a bridge builder, a peace builder? And then we'll work on these other problematic areas as we build trust, a friendship, some confidence that we're going to treat each other respectfully.

Joanna Meyer: [\(34:09\)](#)

Yeah, I think of John Inazu's book, *Confident Pluralism*, just is such a reflection of what you're describing as Christians really developing a skill of learning, how to be uniquely godly in a pluralistic environment, it doesn't come naturally to a lot of people. So, I love hearing how it played out in your life and work. Thanks for your insight on that. Okay. We have two last questions for you, ambassador.

Todd Chapman: [\(34:31\)](#)

Great.



Joanna Meyer: ([34:32](#))

One is, I'm just wondering what influences or practices have been instrumental in your own growth as a leader?

Todd Chapman: ([34:37](#))

In my growth as a leader, first of all, I learned from others and I had the great fortune of working for some great leaders, and I would ask them questions. And just by watching, I learned a lot, and sometimes it was a direct boss and sometimes it was my leader in terms of Secretary of State, Colin Powell, or Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, I learned wonderful leadership principles from them. But perhaps the best question I always asked others, I would ask others, "Tell me who was your greatest boss and why?" And very clearly they would say things like, "They made me feel important." Or, "They said, thank you, a lot. They showed appreciation." Or, "They listened to my ideas."

Todd Chapman: ([35:31](#))

And there aren't that many things that you need to do as a leader to gain the support of your followers. They used to say, "If you look behind you and nobody's following you, guess what? You're not a leader." And so, it's all about developing that followership and providing the vision and the encouragement and the support, so that your team rallies around you and then wants to go in the direction you want ahead.

Todd Chapman: ([35:59](#))

And so, I think it's asking good questions of leaders you respect and then asking the people you're leading, what it is that they most value. You learn a lot about the people that report to you, when you ask them that question, and they respect you for asking that question because the response then is, "Well, I'm going to try and do that for you. I want to be that kind of leader for you." How many of your bosses have had that conversation with you? Those that have, I bet, are more successful than those who haven't.

Todd Chapman: ([36:33](#))

But I would say, if I only had one thing to say for all the leaders out there that are listening to this podcast, it would be, develop your vision and communicate it clearly and often, through repetition. Because if people don't know where you're going, they're not sure where they're supposed to be going. And so, it's the leader's responsibility to prioritize and communicate that. "Well, what about this? But we're not doing that." "That's important too, but I've decided this is the way we are headed."

Abby Worland: ([37:06](#))

As we finish, we always like to give our guests the opportunity to share a final word with all of our listeners. And so, as an ambassador, how would you encourage us to live as ambassadors for Christ through our lives and our work? What charge would you leave us with today?



Todd Chapman: [\(37:22\)](#)

Well, first of all, this has been a wonderful conversation and I thank you both for inviting me in and this very engaging conversation. And I appreciate the work that the Denver Institute for Faith & Work is doing. My final charge, Abby, would be that you are an ambassador, whether you know it or not, you are an ambassador because everywhere you go, people are reacting to you and thinking about who you represent. Just think sometimes, we say to little kids, or I would say to my sons, "When you're going off, remember you're a Chapman. Remember you're a Chapman, because you're not just representing yourself, you're representing our family."

Todd Chapman: [\(38:02\)](#)

Well, I would say to my Christian brothers and sisters, remember in every work setting you go, you're going as an ambassador of Christ and people are going to react either favorably or unfavorably to the way that you're conducting your business. And to prioritize people, always in your work setting, look around, who can I help?

Todd Chapman: [\(38:23\)](#)

People would often ask me, "So, how many people did you lead to Christ in the ambassador's office?" It's like, I was not like handing out tracks at work, but when there was a problem, when there was a difficulty, I would have somebody come into my door, we would close the door in my office, close the door, and they'd be crying and telling me about a lost child, a miscarriage, or a ruptured relationship, or losing their parent, or whatever it was, because they knew they could cry on my shoulder. And they knew that because of my faith and the way that I was interacting with people. So, go and be a light, shine where you are, not just at church, not just at home, but even in the offices where you work, people are watching and yes, you are an ambassador.

Joanna Meyer: [\(39:19\)](#)

What a treat to talk to Ambassador Todd Chapman. To wrap our conversation today, I want to point you to two resources. For those of you that are in the Denver Metro area, I invite you on the morning of August 23rd, we're hosting our next Colorado Conversations. The theme will be culture-making, how we have a positive influence on the culture in our workplaces, which is going to be an amazing conversation, very practically oriented, like what does it look like to have a godly influence in the midst of the workday? This is perfect if you're in leadership or if you're in middle management, or even if you're a new hire, I encourage you to be part of this conversation. We will link to tickets and more information about the event in our show notes.

Joanna Meyer: [\(39:55\)](#)

And also, we will link to an ebook that's free to download called Politics at Twilight, which is a deeper look at Christian public engagement. So, if some of the themes we talked about today, intrigue you, I



encourage you to download that book, too. Thanks for joining us. I look forward to engaging you more on these topics in two weeks.

Joanna Meyer: ([40:14](#))

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