

Chatting With Casting Crowns' Mark Hall

Casting Crowns' lead singer Mark Hall and his wife, Melanie, cherish their 3-year-old adopted daughter, Hope, from China. Their adoption story is documented on the band's live concert CD/DVD, *Until the Whole World Hears*. Hall talked to Charisma about his daughter and the band's trip to Rwanda.

How did you and your wife decide to adopt?

Hall: We were on a Steven Curtis Chapman tour and every night Steven would sing "When Love Takes You In," the song of adoption. He would tell the story of adoption and how it's changed his and his family's life. So there I am hearing all this for 84 cities! I realize that God's trying to tell me something. When I told my wife, Melanie, that we're supposed to adopt, she said, "I always knew this. I was just waiting on you to figure this out."

Tell us about your daughter.

Hall: She's beautiful. She was found 8 days old wrapped in a red blanket outside a hospital. It's such an amazing story of this broken little girl being abandoned out in the middle of the night somewhere in China, and how God is allowing us to be the ones to travel the distance and go over there and pick her up and bring her into our home.

What did you learn during the process?

Hall: The biggest spiritual lesson God taught me happened once I got to China. People had warned me that a lot of these little girls have never even seen a man before so they're a little shy about dads. I mentally prepared myself for this. Hope bonded pretty quickly to Melanie. She would let me give her things but if I tried to pick her up she would cry.

That was pretty tough. After six days of not being able to hold her, I said: "God, we've come halfway around the world, we've given of ourselves, we've given of our resources, I'm doing everything I can and she won't let me hold her. All she'll let me do is just give her stuff, but she won't let me hold her."

In that moment, God said to me, "So how does it feel?"

God reminded me that He paid the highest price. He came to me and pulled me out of my abandonment, out of my little pit that I'd dug for myself. He rescued me, and now it's as though it's a hassle for me to find time to spend with Him.

He showed me this is what being a daddy is about; you're going to be there until she wants you. The day we got home was the first day she let me hold her. Now she's running to me with her arms in the air.

Tell us about Casting Crowns' trip to Rwanda (in 2011).

Hall: The moment we stepped foot in that country, I fell in love with Rwanda. It's a beautiful place, beautiful people. They aren't looking for donations; they're looking for people to invest in them and give them a chance.

We were able to see how World Vision sets up people in their own businesses. We went to a bee co-op where 10 families are now supporting themselves with honey. We talked to the beekeeper who is planning to donate to World Vision so he can help other businesses. This is called full circle.

We also saw how child sponsorship works. When one child is sponsored, World Vision helps the entire family. A sponsored child is automatically going to go to school and they're going to have health care when they need it. And then World Vision determines what would best help a family such as owning a cow or chickens. Or if people live in a place where they can farm, World Vision goes in and trains them. It's all about them

being able to sustain themselves.