

# **Steven Curtis Chapman and family view adoption as the 'visible gospel'\_20705**

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Singer  
Steven  
Curtis  
Chapman  
kisses one  
of his  
adopted  
daughters.  
Chapman  
and his  
wife, Mary  
Beth, have  
adopted  
three girls  
from  
China in  
recent  
years,  
doubling  
the  
number of  
children  
in the  
family.

## **Steven Curtis Chapman and family view adoption as the 'visible gospel'**

**By Shannon Baker**

*Baptist Press*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Award-winning Christian songwriter and recording artist Steven Curtis Chapman remembers his “aha moment,” when the gospel of Jesus Christ became amazingly clear to him.

“I have spent most of my life wrestling with the depth of Scripture—which is endless and eternal—with how I am to grab a hold of it with just the vapor of my life,” said Chapman, a celebrated Christian artist with 47 Dove Awards, four Grammy Awards, an American Music Award and 41 No. 1 radio hits.

Despite all his success in the music industry, for him, the “aha moment” came when he and his wife, Mary Beth, adopted their daughter Shaohannah from China.

“Until we adopted Shaohannah, I didn't fully understand the depth of what Jesus has done for us,” Chapman said. Without Christ “I was hopeless, without a future, without a name. ... Then Jesus came into my life, gave me hope and a future. He gave me a new name.”

Calling adoption the “visible gospel,” a term he borrows from Christian author John Piper, Chapman said, “Adoption is the perfect picture of what God has done for each of us in making us his children through Christ.”

Pausing to let it all sink in, Chapman added: “God's done amazing things in our family. Without a doubt, adoption has been the most profound experience in God.”

The Chapmans experienced the miracle of adoption through the prompting of their oldest daughter, Emily. Already with three children of their own—Emily, Caleb and Will—the Chapmans adopted Shaohannah, who is now 5, in March 2000. Three years later, they brought home Stevey Joy Ru, now 2, and in the summer of 2004, they adopted Maria Sue, age 1. All three adopted daughters came from China.

In addition, the Chapmans began “Shaohannah's Hope” a nonprofit

organization based in McLean, Va., that provides information and assistance to people who want to adopt but lack the financial resources.



The children of singer Steven Curtis Chapman pose for a group photo.

Pictured are (top row) Will (12), Emily (18) and Caleb (13). They are holding (left to right) Stevey Joy Ru (2), Shaohannah (5) and Maria Sue (1).

“There are a lot of people who have room at their table but not room in their wallet for another family member,” Chapman acknowledged. “Yet there are roughly 34 million orphans around the world.”

“If God can adopt us into his family and call us his own, it is our hope that others consider following his example by adopting a 'fatherless' child into their families.”

To raise awareness about adoption, the Chapmans co-wrote their first children's picture book, *Shaoey & Dot: Bug Meets Bundle*. This first installment in a series about adoption retells Shaohannah's adoption adventure in a whimsical way. A portion of the proceeds of the book, distributed through Thomas Nelson, will go to support Shaohannah's Hope.

Chapman concedes the adoptions also have inspired his newest project, *All Things New*, his 14th record with Sparrow Records. The CD debuted in September.

The Chapmans' efforts have been noticed. They were honored in the Angels in Adoption Program, sponsored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization is dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of foster children in the United States and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe and loving homes.

Angels in Adoption award winners are selected by members of Congress to represent their states at a Washington-based gala given in their honor.

The congressional institute also is a founding partner of National Adoption Day, a collective national effort to raise awareness about children in foster care who are waiting to find permanent families.

Now in its fifth year, National Adoption Day has celebrated adoption and has made the dreams of thousands of children come true by finalizing their adoptions.

National Adoption Day was held Nov. 20, when courts, judges, attorneys, child welfare agencies and advocates nationwide finalized the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care and celebrated and honored all families who adopt.

Since its inception in 2000, National Adoption Day has grown from events in eight jurisdictions to 50 states. That year, the Alliance for Children's Rights created and organized the first National Adoption Day with the support of the Freddie Mac Foundation and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

National Adoption Day now is sponsored by a coalition of national

partners-the Alliance for Children's Rights, Casey Family Services, Children's Action Network, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, the Freddie Mac Foundation and Target Corporation.

The growing support is necessary because about 542,000 U.S. children live in foster care. More than 126,000 of those are available for adoption-waiting for someone to discover the “visible gospel.”

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