

Fox News Radio Reporter Tells of Faith, New Book During Florida Visit



March 20, 2009 – Fox News Radio reporter Todd Starnes is an unabashed Christian who takes his faith to work. But he says being a born-again journalist isn't about lacing every news story with a gospel message.

"I believe that I become a legitimate presenter of the gospel by doing the very best job I can do as a journalist—by asking tough questions, asking fair questions, being kind to people," Starnes told *Charisma* today during a stop in Orlando, Fla.

"We [journalists] are basically conveyors of the truth, and we [Christians] know the standard for truth, which is located in Scripture. So I have that standard of truth that I use and I apply when I'm out covering a story whether it be [President] Barack Obama or covering this fiasco that's going on in Wall Street."

During the 2008 presidential election, Starnes traveled with Obama, covering his campaign. "Here it was, a moment in American history, where men and women could set aside whatever prejudices they may have based on race, and they were able to select the person they felt was most qualified," he said. "Whether you agreed with [his] politics or not, that was a historic moment in this nation's history."

He said he found Obama to be pleasant and kind. During a campaign event in Boulder, Colo., Starnes said he was struck by the way Obama interacted with his family. "[Obama's] youngest daughter, Sasha, came barreling up and leaped up and

grabbed on to her dad and gave him a big hug,” Starnes recalled. “Those are the moments when you realize this is a person. It’s not just a candidate; this is a human being.”

In St. Louis, when Obama spoke before his largest crowd to date—some 100,000 people—Starnes said Obama surprised most of the reporters with his opening words. “He had these prepared remarks, which we all had copies of,” Starnes said.

“And the first thing he does, he looks out at just a striking bright blue day and he says: ‘This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.’ And everybody’s scrambling around looking in the speech and saying, ‘Where in the world is that? That’s not in the speech.’”

Starnes later became known as “the guy with the Bible” because of the bulky copy of Scriptures he had purchased in a rush when his own Bible went missing. “I actually left the Bible on board the plane at the end of the campaign, and I marked some passages of Scripture so perhaps someone who might find that Bible could perhaps see the plan of salvation,” he said.

He says his Christian faith influences his reporting, but it’s not the trait that makes him a good journalist. “I think being a follower of Christ makes me a more unique reporter,” he said. “I wouldn’t say a better reporter, but it certainly makes me a more unique reporter because I’m looking at people’s personalities, their character traits, to kind of find out what makes them tick.”

Lately, Starnes has found himself on the opposite end of the microphone, doing interviews about his new book, *They Popped My Hood and Found Gravy on the Dipstick*, which released from Pathway Press on March 3.

The book is a memoir of sorts, telling how Starnes underwent open-heart surgery in 2005 to replace a failing aortic valve, lost 150 pounds and dealt with the death of both his parents—all within a span of three years. Laced with humor,

the collection of essays is drawn from an audio journal he kept during his surgery and recovery. In 2006, the broadcasts won the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award and the Associated Press Mark Twain Award for storytelling.

Starnes said he wants readers to laugh “and know that some average Joe can make it through an obstacle and difficulty in life.”

It’s a message that takes on new relevance in the midst of a historic economic recession that has cost thousands of jobs. “We are going to go through difficult times in our lives,” he said. “But the message I have in this book is, I’ve discovered that God’s grace is sufficient to get us through those difficult times. Not only can He get us through those times, and He will sustain us, but we’re going to be able to look back and we’re going to be able to laugh and smile and understand why we had to go through what we had to go through.”

He points to his favorite verse, Habakkuk 3:19, which was written during a time in history when crops were failing and people didn’t have enough to eat. “Something really bad was happening, and yet the prophet Habakkuk was able to say that even still I will rejoice,” Starnes said. “The sovereign Lord is my strength He makes my feet like the feet of the deer. And He enables me to go into the high places.

“Just like that deer is able to leap over all the stuff that would cause him to stumble, God will do the same thing for us, and He will lift us up over all that stuff that Satan means for us to stumble on, and He will take us to a high place. That doesn’t mean we’re always going to stay at that high place, but He’s going to take us there. ... That’s where God has taken me, and I’m eternally grateful for it.”

Starnes says he’s in great health today. He ran in the New York City Marathon in 2007, and expects to participate in

three others this year. In 2010, he plans to compete in the Iron Man competition in Hawaii.

He said he wants to live life to the fullest. Waiting in a hospital room prepped for surgery and unsure what the outcome would be, Starnes said he decided that he wasn't finished living. "And I wasn't finished doing nearly all the things I wanted to do," he said. "And I hope [readers] don't have to reach the point that I was at to understand that you go out there and you need to live your life."

Starnes will be signing copies of his book at Lifeway Christian Stores in Orlando on Saturday, March 21, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Editor's note: For more information on Starnes' new book, *They Popped My Hood and Found Gravy on the Dipstick*, or to buy it, [click here](#).