

Taking a Christmas Stand

After more than eight years giving national commentaries on Fox News, Todd Starnes is familiar to millions of TV viewers. The longtime journalist has never hidden his Christian beliefs, whether in books, on his radio program or in other venues.

And Starnes is outspoken about Christmas. Last December, that included shout-outs on his website to groups such as Lee University's a cappella ensemble choir and the University of Mobile's *Twelve Days of Christmas* production.

However, the commentator doesn't need a huge audience to take a stand. One time he walked out of a major department store in New York after he greeted a checkout clerk with "Merry Christmas" and she replied, "Season's greetings."

"I said, 'Which season are you talking about?'" Starnes says. "She said they weren't able to say 'Merry Christmas.' I asked them to give me my money back. I just didn't do business with those folks. From my standpoint, [everyone] has those decisions to make."

Even though Starnes uses "Naughty and Nice" lists to guide his Christmas shopping, the host of radio's *Fox News & Commentary* would like to see fellow believers take stronger stands in public venues. Starnes, who devotes a chapter to Christmas controversies in his upcoming book, *God Less America*, thinks too many Christians are content to confine their support for Christmas to home and church.

To emphasize the need for greater activism on the part of Christians, he shares the story of the elementary school in Indiana whose Christmas pageant featured a student singing, "Allah is great; praise be to Allah."

"There was no uniquely Christian moment to the pageant,"

Starnes says. "It went so far as to praise Islam, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, but Christians were left out in the cold."

*A freelance writer in Huntington, W. Va., **Ken Walker** has been writing regularly for Charisma for nearly 20 years.*