**Tonya Jewel Blessing**

**National/International Speaker, Published Author, Co-Founder/Director Strong Cross Ministries**

Tonya grew up in rural Ohio. She currently lives in South Africa with her husband of 34 years. Tonya decided to trust Jesus for the destination of her young soul at the age of four. As a young adult, she worked for a well known television evangelist, and traveled with a Christian drama group throughout the Midwest.

Tonya attended Arapahoe Community College and Akron University, and has enjoyed a trusted position in formal and informal ministry settings and training opportunities. Tonya also worked as a children’s pastor, youth pastor, and women’s pastor. She served on staff at Praise Church in Littleton, Colorado for a number of years, and also worked as the Director of Women’s Ministries for Journey Church in Strasburg, Colorado. She has served on a number of ministry boards that support concerns for women.

Tonya and her husband operated Strong Cross Ranch Colorado for over eleven years, a place of respite for missionaries and ministers. They had the honor of hosting over 2,000 guests during that time frame. The Blessings relocated their ministry to South Africa in June of 2012. The ministry continues to serve and partner with local pastors and missionaries through a variety of creative and responsible means. The Blessings oversee building projects, feeding programs, educational services, interventions and church planting.

Tonya is a well-known national and international speaker, often serving women in areas of the world which cannot be publicized. She writes articles and devotionals for missions’ magazines and women’s groups and is also a published author with her first novel, The Whispering of the Willows, written to give moms and daughters intentional opportunities for having distinct discussions about young women coming-of-age. This endearing Appalachian saga also shines a light on the importance of a community helping at-risk girls. Tonya enjoys speaking and sharing her life with women at retreats and events. She thinks that women are amazing, and appreciates that the female gender is multifaceted yet fragile creations of God. In her personal life and as a speaker, Tonya believes that God’s Word is powerful, and needs to be read and written on her heart and on the hearts of women everywhere. For additional information, please review her author and ministry webpage: [www.TonyaJewelBlessing.com](http://www.TonyaJewelBlessing.com)

She was ordained in 2011 and is currently pursuing further pastoral and biblical studies through The Sure Foundation. For additional information regarding Strong Cross Ministries South Africa, please visit the ministry web page – [www.strongcrossministries.org](http://www.strongcrossministries.org).

 To contact Tonya – please e-mail her at christonyablessing@gmail.com

