

## Her father's legacy

REBECCA TONN CARRIES ON THE WORK OF HER LATE FATHER, J.H. TONN.



Rebecca and her dad in front of the computer, June, 2006.

Before she watched him die of leukemia in December, 2008, she watched him live as never before. Rebecca Tonn's father, the late Joachim Harry Tonn, was born in Obernigk, Germany, in 1933. Raised a strict Baptist, he believed most of his early life in a God Who could watch with relative dispassion as He doomed most of His creation to eternal torment. The supposed attributes of his Deity clashed with his own quiet and gentle spirit, but Joachim nevertheless gave his life to Christ.

In the early '60's, countryman Gerhard Rutsch introduced Joachim to a God Who had not only set out to save the world, but actually succeeded. Later, Joachim discovered, *The Gospel of God's Reconciliation of All in Christ*, published in German in 1915 by Ernst Ferdinand Stroeter.

Infused now with truth and a book exhaustively explaining it, Joachim's greatest joy in his last years was translating this work for the English reader. Working hand-in-hand, and rejoicing side-by-side, with his daughter Rebecca, who edited the translation, Joachim's four-year labor has brought us an enduring work testifying to the love of God for His creation—as well as to the love of a father and daughter. ■

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# Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

## ... and then *she* walked into the room.

In September of 2009, Dan Sheridan and I hosted a weekend conference in Chicago. In attendance was a four-person contingent from Colorado, consisting of Jerry and Illa Visser, Linda White, and Sherrie Duncan. They told us that there were several more of them in an ecclesia that met once a week at the home of Jerry and Illa in Monument, between Denver and Colorado Springs. Dan was so excited to hear this that he told Sherrie: "You need to organize a conference for Colorado next June."

Sherrie did just that, and Dan and I were invited to join Sean Marting—one of the ecclesia's main teachers—as guest speakers.

That is how I ended up at the meeting room of the Senior Center in Monument, Colorado, on June 26, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. I was the first scheduled speaker, following announcements and an introduction by Sean Marting. There were already maybe 25 people gathered.

Sean was about to speak when I became aware of another person entering the room. Naturally, I turned to look. That moment is still seared into my mind. I beheld a woman in a grey shirt, black and crème skirt, and heels, hurrying to a table to set down a large load of books. All I could think was, *Something just happened to this room*. I had to return to conference mode, so I settled back to listen to Sean. When my time came to speak, I did what I do. I don't remember my topic; I'm pretty sure it had something to do with God. Immediately following, I hurried to introduce myself to the new person, as I would have done with anyone.

"Hello, I'm Martin Zender."

"I know. I'm Rebecca Tonn."



January 30, 2011; Norwalk, OH.  
**Berry's Restaurant**

What a difference seven months makes.



June 26, 2010; Monument, Colorado

The day we met. At this point, that's still a "fellowship arm" around her right shoulder.

We spoke for several minutes about her dad's book (these were the books she was hauling), and about how she'd first found out about me through her dad, who had copies of my paperbacks in his library. Later on, she mentioned she'd been divorced three years. "I'm sorry to hear that," I said. "My divorce is final in twelve days." She looked a little shocked. *I* was still shocked; my spouse of 26 years had abandoned me 14 months earlier. (Some of you missed this announcement last Nov.): [http://martinzender.com/announcement\\_from\\_martin.pdf](http://martinzender.com/announcement_from_martin.pdf)

Sheridan spoke next, and I'll never forget what happened. I noticed that Rebecca was taking copious notes. But then she got up to go to the kitchen. Just then, Sheridan made some fabulous point. Rebecca stopped in her tracks, turned on her heels, and ran back toward her notebook so quickly that she caught a heel on the rug and tripped a little. Undaunted, she dove for her pen to record Sheridan's immortal words—whatever the heck they were.

Wow, I thought, *this woman is a student*.

She is *all* that. She is also the sweetest, smartest, sexiest, most thoughtful, most energetic, and most loving member of Christ's body inhabiting this cold, hard eon. A group of us went to Subway for lunch, and Rebecca and I found ourselves sitting alone, across from each other.

That turned out to be the beginning of the rest of our lives. ■

## The Saturday night “Shagah” talk

Having no idea I would meet a goddess, I had already planned that Saturday night to speak on the topic of human sexuality. For those readers unaware of it, I have written a book called, *Shagah*, based on a Hebrew word of the same name, found in Proverbs 5:19-20, and translated, “intoxicated.” The book addresses the source of sexual intoxication, which, of course, I trace to the inaugural humans of Eden. Using additional evidence from the book of Genesis, and from science, I made the case that night—as I do in the book—that the female is the superior gender, and that this is part of the reason God tells *him* to cling, not her (Gen. 2:24). In the arena of sex, women hold sway; men, for all intents and purposes, worship them. Man moving toward woman is in fact a parable of humanity moving toward God. Therefore, in the sexual power alignment, women represent God. As the saying goes:

**The weaker sex is the stronger sex because of the weakness of the stronger sex for the weaker sex.**

These truths, divulged, tapped an inner wisdom lying latent in Rebecca. In subsequent e-mails, she shared details of a sexual and emotional catharsis. To say that she and I have an intelligent, spiritual grasp of sexual power and what it means not only to terrestrial, but to celestial



creatures—is an understatement. I know now why God delayed for six years the publication of *Shagah*. Everything waited for Rebecca. It is apparent to her and to me that God will use us to take these spiritual/sexual truths to the world and heal marriages. This, in turn, will bring people to Christ.

God turns out to be a genius, yes, but we have both been through the fire to get here. ■

## Christmas in Seattle

I “pop” a different question

December 24 was not only Christmas Eve, it was Rebecca’s birthday. What better time, I thought, to ask her to spend the rest of her life with me? And why not do it in the shadow of the Space Needle?

My middle son Luke (the guy on my “Smoking” cover) had moved to Seattle five months before, after stints in New York City and India. I had not seen him in over a year. He was working at the City Hostel, downtown, moonlighting at a coffee shop. I e-mailed him and said, “Do you mind if Rebecca and I come out for the holidays?”



**Seattle**  
December 24, 2010

“Come on out!” he said.

Twenty minutes after midnight; it is now Christmas morning. Downtown Seattle is dark and rainy. Room 301 at the City Hostel is the subject of celestial gaze. I am on my knees, shaking. Now the tears course down my cheeks. She looks at me with those deep, unfathomable eyes. In my back pocket is a ring; she does not know that, yet.

“Rebecca, will you grant me the privilege of being the one who serves you for the rest of your life?”

Her answer will cause Luke to say, later that morning: “Cool.” ■

## The perfect complement

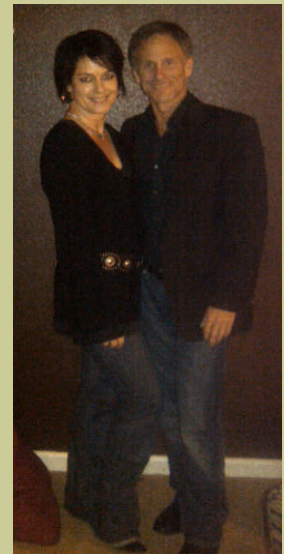
If woman is a man’s “helpmeet,” who needs the help? Rebecca is already an utter champion and the biggest fan of my work. Thankfully, it is quickly becoming *our* work. Rebecca is very practical, and a brilliant organizer—just what I need. She also has a heart for people. When the e-mails stack up and

I get discouraged, she keeps me on task. “Do fifty e-mails by the end of the day, babe,” she will write, “and report back.” Just when I think I’m giving everything, she writes: “And don’t forget to pray for each person you respond to.”

Rebecca is not only my champion, but yours as well.

## Wrecking Tokyo

Our bodies are temples of the spirit of God. Even before she met me, one of the first things that impressed Rebecca, besides my dedication to God, was my dedication to my body. She had read Volume 1, Issue 36 of this newsletter (“Loving my neighbor as myself; sorry neighbor”) about how I ground flaxseed, avoided desserts, exercised on a Bowflex, and did sprints. She liked how my physicality meshed with my spirituality. This was her lifestyle, as well. When she wasn’t studying God’s Word, she was hiking 14,000-ft. mountains.



When I first saw her, it was not her brains nor her spirit I was immediately attracted to. I told a friend, via telephone: “Rebecca has a body that could wreck Tokyo!”

Rebecca and I love each other by first loving ourselves. Marriage is about sex. God created this dynamic. And sex centers around the body. These bodies are temporary, yes, but unless we care for them, the dwelling place of God’s spirit might face early foreclosure.

The spirit of God is free, folks, but the rent isn’t. ■

# From Rebecca



Although he may not, I know exactly what Martin spoke about on Saturday, June 26, 2010. Well, to be honest, my notes help me recall.

(Allow me to interrupt myself with a brief confession. The moment I laid eyes on him, up at the front of the room, I thought, *He's sexy. And he's wearing black.* My favorite color. Then, I mentally shook off those thoughts and picked up my pen to write and be spiritually blessed. Little did I know I'd be blessed on multiple levels after meeting Martin Zender.)

My first notes were, "We are rewarded for our efforts—not our successes." Talk about ditching works and bathing in grace. That was just what I needed to hear, after decades of legalism and institutionalized religion.

**"That impressed me. Or, rather, his tears touched me deeply—spiritually and emotionally."**

Somewhere during that talk, when he spoke about the love of God toward believers, he choked up and had tears in his eyes. *That* impressed me. Or, rather, his tears touched me deeply—spiritually and emotionally.

Throughout the conference, I noticed how much he cared about people, focusing intently on them whenever they spoke.

## Mini-history, 101

I have two fantastic adult children, along with one terrific son-in-law, and one darling grandson, born two years after my dad died. In God's sovereignty, He gave me a grandson and a fi-

ancé in December, so I can't completely dread that month, anymore.

*I miss you so much, daddy.*

I'm also blessed with my mom, my sister and her daughter, and my brother, his wife and their eight children, not to mention many amazing and thoughtful friends.

## Through the fire

Martin's told you a little bit of the agony he felt when his spouse left him after 26 years of marriage. My story's different, but we look back and realize God brought both of us through trials, not only to teach us patience and compassion, but to prepare us for each other.

I will never take Martin for granted, nor his tender, gentle way of treating me. Here's the shorter-than-Reader's-Digest version why.

For 10.5 years, I dated/was married to a man who physically beat me and psychologically abused me. That's not to mention many things done to me during childhood that seem too awful to write in a newsletter. ...

(Meanwhile, God's shown me He will use my past experiences to allow me to help women, marriages, and families.)

To that end, I am looking forward to meeting as many of you dear believers as I can. I hope to share more of my life, and get to know you better, as well. I firmly believe the message of God's grace--and His awe-inspiring plan for marriages that Martin and I will be writing and speaking about--will bring peace and healing to those who hear it.

After I left the spouse who was abusing me, on June 1, 2007, I told God I was willing to

be alone for the rest of my life—unless He placed a perfect-for-me, kind, thoughtful man *directly* in my path.

Then, I spent the next three years of my life slowly healing from the abuse, and, deliberately, *not* dating.

When I woke up on June 26, I had no idea what God was up to.

## Finally, tears of joy

Six months and hundreds of e-mails later, Martin knelt, on both knees, in front of me, handing me birthday gifts as I sat in an overstuffed chair. Slowly, I opened a delicately wrapped present. Inside was a black and silver pendant, hanging from thin black cords. *He knows my style, already.*

As usual, we were chatting away. "I feel such peace and joy with you, so safe and comfortable," I said.

"I want you to always feel that way," Martin said.

Then, he started shaking from head to toe. *Oh, my God, he's going to propose.* My heart pounded. Tears streamed down our faces.

"Will you grant me the honor and privilege of being the one who serves you for the rest of your life?"

"I will." ■



## Bound for the Springs

What an "accident" that God introduced me to a professional writer and editor, eh? Rebecca is a writer/reporter for *The Colorado Springs Business Journal*, and lives in the beautiful city she writes about. I can work any-

where from a laptop computer, and have frankly had my fill of Ohio weather. So, I will be moving to Colorado Springs in June. Our wedding date is **Sunday, June 26, 2011**, one year to the day from the day we met. We will marry out-

doors, overlooking Garden of the Gods, which is a stunning setting (Google it, and you will see). We will give you more details in an upcoming edition of the CGN.

God has arranged all of this, folks. From the ashes of trial, He has brought great joy. ■