

Raised in a broken Arkansas home, a sickly girl clings to a childhood vision that one day all will be well, discovering a fierce faith and mercy strong enough to transform suffering into a calling.

One Day, All Will Be Well

By Carol Bartolomucci

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ONE DAY

All Will Be Well



A Biography of Challenge,
Courage, and Change

Carol Bartolomucci

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Carol Bartolomucci

Beginning the Road of Redemption

Imagine a seven-year-old girl, probably taller than her age should allow. She was slim like a tender cattail by the river.

Born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on January 4, 1944, I lived there until I was 13, when my parents divorced. I was very shy growing up and quite introverted. With crossed vision, knock-knees, skin and bones, the kids made fun of me. If these features weren't enough, I had to wear corrective shoes and a black patch over one eye to correct amblyopia. Surely. A pirate wouldn't even look like this!

Ever since I can remember, children have made fun of me. Their descriptions would ring in my ears throughout the day. The kids in school would call me "Crossed-eye baboon" along with many other hurtful words. I was always picked on and not in a good way. I was your typical geek. I didn't attend kindergarten; instead, I started first grade at age four. I didn't speak words until age five, but I was still smart and would write on the chalkboard when asked to answer. The school system wanted me to skip to 4th grade, but my parents didn't allow the move.

With the help of a speech therapist, I was able to pronounce words correctly. The school allowed me to compete in a spelling bee. I succeeded in the competition, beating all the fourth-grade students. I was still smart and would write on the chalkboard when asked to answer. The school system wanted me to skip to 4th grade, but my parents didn't allow it. Mom was encouraged to let me skip the 8th grade. "The 8th grade is a waste of her time," they said. I could have been out of school at age thirteen and could have started college. She did not allow the move this time either. Obviously, the big challenge was not at school. Little did anyone know that my biggest challenges were at home.

My Dad would drink, and the alcohol would change him into a jealous, raging husband who would physically mistreat my mom. One day, I was outside mowing with the old-fashioned push mower. I was crying because I knew what was transpiring inside the house as I could hear my mom pleading for mercy. I continued mowing through my tears, and I felt within my spirit a small voice saying, "One day all will be well!"

After their divorce, my mom always taught my sister, Pat, and me to love our dad. She would always say, "He's the only Dad you have, and you love him. He's really a good man." So, I always loved my dad... not for how he treated my mom...but because he was a giver and always helped people in need, and he was an excellent provider for us. I don't want to badmouth him because deep down, he WAS a good person. I've always admired my mom for teaching us to love our dad. So many mothers instill in their children the hatred caused by divorce. These mothers don't realize that this type of bitterness



handed down to their children brings many ramifications throughout the years. My Dad was a railroad engineer for the Cotton Belt, which later merged with the Missouri Pacific. He was always on call and gone for days at a time. I loved it when he was gone because we had peace. No accusations. No fighting.

I was a timid, introverted child who seemed to carry the burden of the whole world on my shoulders. It was at the age of seven that I dedicated my heart to our Heavenly Father. When I "heard" in my spirit, "One day all will be well," from then on, all the hurtful words poked at me were like water running off a duck's back. "One day all will be well" gave me much comfort..

Riding and Writing

MOTORCYCLES

Going back to wanting to try everything as long as it was morally and legally correct. One night, I dreamed I rode a motorcycle, and in my dream, I was shifting gears and really enjoying the motorcycle experience. The next day, I asked my husband's brother, Reg, if I could ride his Honda 350. He agreed, and we met at the Standard Oil football field at the Rod & Gun Club. He removed the bike's mirrors, stating he didn't want me to get hurt on them. Later, I discovered he removed them so I wouldn't break them in case I took a minor spill. I got on the motorcycle, and he watched me take off. I rode a couple of laps around the field, but that didn't seem like much of a challenge, so I left the field and entered the paved roadway.

I went through all the gears, reaching a speed of 65 mph. I slowed the bike down, turned around, and rode back to where Reg was anxiously awaiting my return. I went the next day and bought a motorcycle, and Reg and I would ride together. He would give me tips on how to be a safe rider. "Now, Carol, we will be going through the Carquinez Bridge Tollway (1-80). As we approach the booth to pay, do not ride in the center of the lane we will be in." He explained that as the thousands of daily vehicles slow down to pay the toll, it creates an oil drop from vehicles. "You can't see it, but it's there, and the road will be slippery to a biker, especially if it is raining." I learned to stay out of the middle of any lane because of oil drippings. That's why you usually see a motorcyclist riding close to the left of that lane or sometimes to the right of it, but usually not in the middle.

One Saturday, Reg led the way to a back road. He pulled over, and I stopped beside him. "Carol, I know this road. Just ahead is some construction work, and the road is filled with thick gravel. If you don't stay alert and you ride over that gravel at speed, it will kill you." I was young and a very inexperienced biker. I was grateful for his advice, and I heeded his warnings.

Learning to ride in the San Francisco Bay Area interstate systems filled with heavy traffic of "stops" and goes" made me an excellent rider. It has also taught me to be a safe driver. I stay focused while keeping my eyes alert to any situation.

Also, I took a driving course at Standard Oil Company. It was called the Smith Theory... PIC...predict, isolate, and communicate. In the thousands of miles I have ridden, I've never had an accident on my bike. But with all honesty, the Good Lord has watched over me as I've had more than my share of very close calls. My last bike was a

Yamaha 1100 Special. It's a heavy bike and will move with power! I like a powerful bike because you can get out of a threatening situation in a hurry, which I've had to do many times.

Upon Bill's dreadful announcement that he had resigned from the oil company and that we were moving back to Ohio, I let him know that I DID NOT want to go back to Ohio. Exclamation mark, exclamation mark!! I considered staying in California and letting him go on to Ohio by himself. Second thoughts made me change my mind. I knew separation would present an unhappy marriage, and I never liked the idea of divorce. (Murder, yes!)

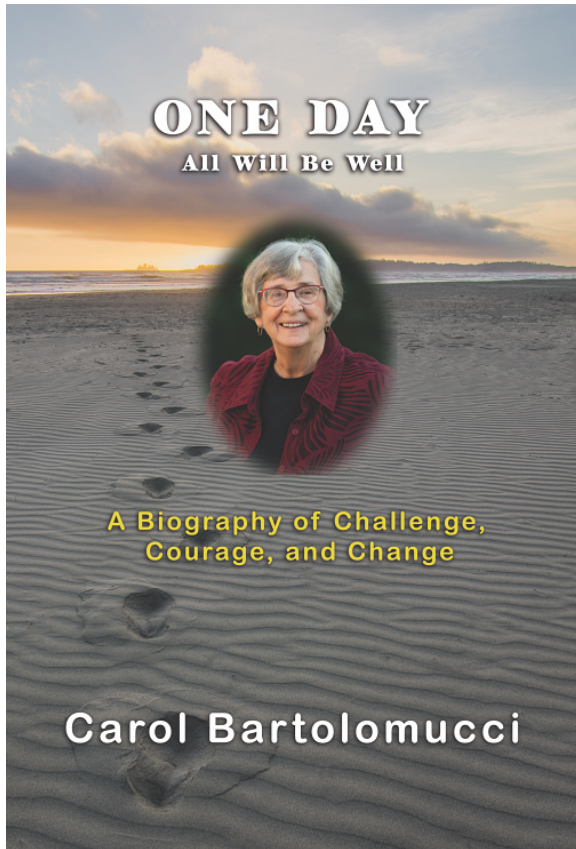
Aside from the possibility of a divorce, I tried reasoning with myself as to why I should return to Ohio and that little, old, puny community of Centerville. The population is approximately 200, if you count all the cows and outlying farmers. It didn't even have a post office or a shopping center. There was a grocery store/slaughterhouse called "Bartolo Bros," owned by my husband's family. Bartolomucci. The only 'decent' place to go shopping was in Wheeling, West Virginia, about 20 miles away. Even at that, the choices of stores were limited. I knew I could go shopping 125 miles west on I -70 to the big metropolis of Columbus, Ohio. I may leave and go with Bill. After all, older kids were passing drugs through the fence to kindergarten kids, and gangs were increasing more abundantly.

My mind wandered to the day I was on my motorcycle, waiting for the light to change from red to green. I was in the proper lane to turn left toward my house. It was a very busy road. San Pablo Avenue, and a lot of vehicles passed by me as they sped through their green light. Included in the traffic was a gang of Hells Angels motorcyclists buzzing past. Without notice, one of the Hells Angels turned around and came to my side. I tried to ignore him, but I knew his intentions were not good.

Thank the Good Lord, the leader saw him get out of line and came to my rescue. He grabbed the rider by his vest and shouted, "Who gave you permission to get out of line? Get back in order!!" The light turned green, and I was grateful to get home safely.

Yes, the gangs were getting to be quite active. One night around 9:30, I drove my sports car to the local grocery store to pick up a few items. As I backed my car to go home, about 20 cars came rumbling in. Instantly, I recognized that two rival gangs were fighting for territory rights. The drivers were hurling bricks and bottles, using my car as their barricade. I could hear debris whizzing over the top of my car, as well as seeing some going past my windshield. It was a very frightening experience and only lasted about 30 seconds.

They drove away, leaving behind a lot filled with broken bricks and shattered glass. I got out of there before the gangs changed their minds. The two gangs didn't want to tangle with the police, and since the grocery store and other businesses were located in this strip mall, they knew that some businessman would call for police protection. I was still shaking when I got home and was as white as a ghost. Bill took a look at me and said, "What happened to you?" I explained, and it took a while to settle all my disturbed feelings back to normalcy. As I dismissed these experiences, my mind came back to reality. I do not want to go back to Ohio, and why did Bill make such a despicable decision!!!



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