CONTRIBUTORS

PAT CARDY
Pat Cardy and her husband, Andrew, live in Northern Ireland. They are parents and grandparents. Pat and Andrew are used to ‘the Troubles’ there, but they went through a troubled time such as most of us cannot begin to imagine. In 1981, when their daughter Jennifer was nine years old, she left home to cycle to a friend’s house to play. Jennifer never came back. A week after her disappearance her body was found. Jennifer had been murdered. The person responsible has never been found. Pat discovered that God’s grace is sufficient for every need – even for the facing of her daughter’s murder.

ELIZABETH AND DONALD MACKAY
Elizabeth and Donald live in Edinburgh. They have three grown-up children. After a lifetime spent making herself available to help and support other people, over the course of just a few years Elizabeth became the one needing help. And Donald, who began his retirement by going back to studying, now finds himself as her full-time caregiver. In 1990 Elizabeth was diagnosed as suffering from degeneration of the cerebellum. She is now confined to a wheelchair; her sight, hearing, touch and ability to move have all been adversely affected. Their story is one of great weakness, and even greater strength.

JOHN MEIKLEJOHN
John is a retired prison governor. He and his wife, Irene, are happily settled in rural Scotland, with a garden that occupies much of their time. Living in one house for long is something of a novelty for them as John’s job involved many moves. Such mobility makes for problems, some of which he shares with us. As a prison officer John met many and varied situations, from requests for both prayer meetings and pantomimes, to assisting in arranging some final visits for one of the last men to be executed in Scotland. John’s account of life in the Prison Service is both challenging and heart-warming.

KAY REID
Kay and her husband had four children and fostered others. As far as she was concerned, hers was the ideal marriage. Sadly, Kay’s husband betrayed the sanctity of their marriage, leaving to live with another woman. The children were teenagers at the time. Kay had to cope with their shock, anger and hurt, while trying to survive on her own. Faced with what seemed an impossible task, she set about providing for her family and bringing them up in the faith. Life is still a struggle, but Kay has had the immense pleasure of seeing God work forgiveness in the lives of her children despite all that life threw at them.

KENNETH STEVEN
Kenneth is a young Scottish writer of undoubted ability. The hundreds of poems and several books he has had published bear witness to this. But making a living is not easy. Ken’s Christian integrity refuses to allow him to compete with other writers on
their terms. He writes of what is human and wholesome and true, refusing to conform to the nihilistic writing which is the norm for his generation today. This does not make him popular with either publishers or other writers. But there is a desire for wholesome writing, as Kenneth discovered when a national newspaper printed an article of his on the subject.

LENA COWIE
Lena and her husband, Alex, live and work in Glasgow. Alex is engaged in Christian ministry there. All of their children are special, but Lena’s account is of their son David, who is thirteen years old. David has some remarkable gifts. He has a zany sense of humour and a memory which never forgets a name or a face. However, David also has cerebral palsy, and is quadriplegic as a result. Lena describes her son’s struggle from his earliest days to the present time. David cannot walk but he can get around. He has watched the birds fly off Orcadian cliffs and fed cows on a croft in Migdale. He’s quite a boy.

RACHEL AND KATE
Rachel and Kate are sisters. When they were aged just three and five, their father left home. They are adults now and look back over the years seeing how their parents’ separation, and eventual divorce, affected them. Having found the loss of their father to be akin to bereavement, the sisters, while still young, had to face their mother’s illness and death. The break-up of their parents’ marriage left scars. But, far from indulging in self-pity, Rachel and Kate have grown into caring and compassionate women, who hope the sharing of their experience will help readers better understand children who have lost a parent for whatever reason.

VERNON HIGHAM
Vernon and his wife, Morwen, live in Cardiff and are parents and grandparents. Vernon is pastor of Heath Evangelical Church and is a well-known preacher on both sides of the Atlantic. Over twenty years ago, sudden serious ill health struck and it looked for a time as if Vernon’s ministry was over and his life short. For fifteen years his life centered round coping with status asthmaticus. Preaching was a challenge, and holidays a nightmare. Despite Vernon’s restrictions God has greatly blessed his ministry in Cardiff. After a particularly bad time, God graciously removed Vernon’s affliction. Now he and Morwen are enjoying their ‘bonus years’.

ESMÉ DUNCAN
Esmé lives in Aberdeenshire. For much of her life she has seen singleness as an asset. It allowed her to give up a career in teaching and become a Scripture Union staff worker, with all the travelling that involved. Esmé’s father had died when she was a student, and it was when her mother died that singleness became a problem. Being alone suddenly meant being lonely. It is with great honesty that Esmé takes us through her experiences: sharing the down times, the long climb up, and her eventual restoration to a point where, once again, singleness brings positive contentment. We also meet Mungo, her canine companion.
Jonathan, who was brought up in London, now lives with his wife, Margaret, and their three daughters in Oxford. He serves as regional secretary for Europe and the former USSR for the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Currently he is also chairman of the Keswick Convention. Jonathan suffered from polio as a child and has been left with a degree of restriction in his mobility. While his walking is limited, Jonathan’s flying is not! His job involves travelling for about twenty weeks of each year. He has written several books. Jonathan shares some challenging thoughts on coping with problems.

Katie, who died soon after completing her contribution to this book, was English but adopted Scotland as her own. After studying at Bible college she worked in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. It was there Katie met the man she married. They had problems right from the start. Her husband, who was a recovering alcoholic, committed a serious offence and was imprisoned for life. Katie retrained, then worked as a probation officer, cared for her elderly and disabled mother, and regularly travelled hundreds of miles to visit her husband. She died following surgery for a heart condition that had dogged her life.

Jenny and Alastair are living in Kintore in Aberdeenshire – for the second time. When they first stayed there Alastair was a draughtsman. God then called him into the ministry and, after studying in Aberdeen, he moved with his wife and two sons, Andrew and Colin, to Ballater where he became minister of Glenmuick Church. Just sixteen months after his ordination Alastair developed ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis). Three and a half years later, when still in his forties, he resigned from the ministry because of ill health. Jenny became the breadwinner, and Alastair uses his very limited energy in looking after their home.

Finding God in the Darkness: Twelve Accounts of God’s Care through Difficult Times by Irene Howat is available as a paperback and e-book, wherever Christian books are sold. Learn more about this and other great books by Irene Howat at ChristianFocus.com.