

October 16, 2022

## **7. The Way We See —** **John 9:1–7, 35–38, NRSV**

Several years ago, I met a pastor from a country composed of several islands. One of the islands had been devastated by a natural disaster, and the people who attended his church felt that it was God's judgment, because most of the residents on that island were not Christians. However, a few years later, a natural disaster hit the island where the church was located. This gave the congregants pause. Did this mean that natural disasters are not God's judgments after all? They assumed there was a cause (not being Christian) and effect (God's judgment through a natural disaster).

Recent hurricanes and storms slammed into Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Florida, North Carolina, and Puerto Rico, among other places. Buildings were destroyed, people lost their lives, and mud and water covered parts of the earth that had been dry. As I write this, search and rescue efforts are underway even as death tolls rise.

The cause and effect of the recent storms do exist. As the climate changes and ocean waters warm, the storms strengthen. Scientists tell us this is a trend that will continue. See "[Hurricanes and Climate Change](#)" for more details.

In John 9, the disciples assumed a cause and effect: a personal or generational sin was the cause of the blindness. The disciples quizzed Jesus about this. Jesus, however, did not directly address the disciples' questions but had a different view—that through the situation God would be revealed.

Jesus didn't focus on sin; he focused on healing. Using mud and water, Jesus performed a miracle and gave the blind man his sense of sight. Through his actions, Jesus' light was able to shine both in the act of healing and in the man himself, who could now physically see light, and who could share the light of Jesus with those around him. Someone who had been physically and spiritually blind was now able to see physical and spiritual light.

Sometimes we understand the causes and effects of situations, and sometimes we don't. Either way, as we try to make sense of difficult and troubling situations, let's think about how God can be revealed and how Jesus' light can shine.

—Mary Ann Weber  
[maweber815@yahoo.com](mailto:maweber815@yahoo.com)



**Mary Ann Weber** enjoys reading, drinking tea, and spending time with old and new friends. She lives in Goshen, Indiana, with her husband and two cats. A former editor at MennoMedia, Mary Ann now works at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, in Elkhart, Indiana, and serves on the pastoral leadership team at Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen.

## **Resources for this session**

***Salt & Light Videos*** are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **Brian Quan**, pastor of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, is the presenter for unit 1. The videos are closed captioned, free, and available on [\*\*MennoMedia's YouTube channel.\*\*](#)