

**Mid-week Meditation**  
**September 23, 2020**  
**Rev. Mark McLennan**  
**New St. James Presbyterian Church**

Stan Rushworth is a Native American veteran, teacher, author, and scholar from California.

Someone posted this quote:

The indigenous Cherokee elder, Stan Rushworth, once said

“the difference between a Western settler mindset of, ***I have rights*** and an indigenous mindset of ***I have an obligation.***”

Instead of thinking that I am born with rights, I choose to think that I was born with obligations to serve past, present, and future generations, and the planet herself.” – **Stan Rushworth**

To me, this is a most timely thought for today.

There seem to be a lot of people speaking, protesting, and advocating [loudly] about their rights - about mask-wearing, bearing arms, language, lobster fishing, and even seatbelts [still].

The focus is usually on the rights of the one talking, or shouting, or protesting.

The perceived violation of one's rights, expressed by people of privilege, is often quickly followed by accusations of tyranny, oppression, and the destruction of freedom

Mr. Rushworth is right that, in North America, there has been much more emphasis on rights and freedoms, than on obligations and responsibilities.

Our culture, in Canada is more and more focused on the individual, rather than the good of society.

This will eventually become problematic, because, if it is always all about you, sooner or later there will be conflict with some other person who thinks it is all about them.

Let me drag religion in to the discussion.

The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes were only concerned about their rules, their position, and their authority.

On the other hand, Jesus was not - his focus was on the good of "*the other*" - what was just and right for all concerned.

The apostle Paul also emphasized the importance of "*the body*" - the community, the gathered.

People of faith know this -

We - the Church, the body of Christ - exist for others.

Our mission and ministry is for others.

That often means that what we want must take a "*back seat*" - and that's OK.