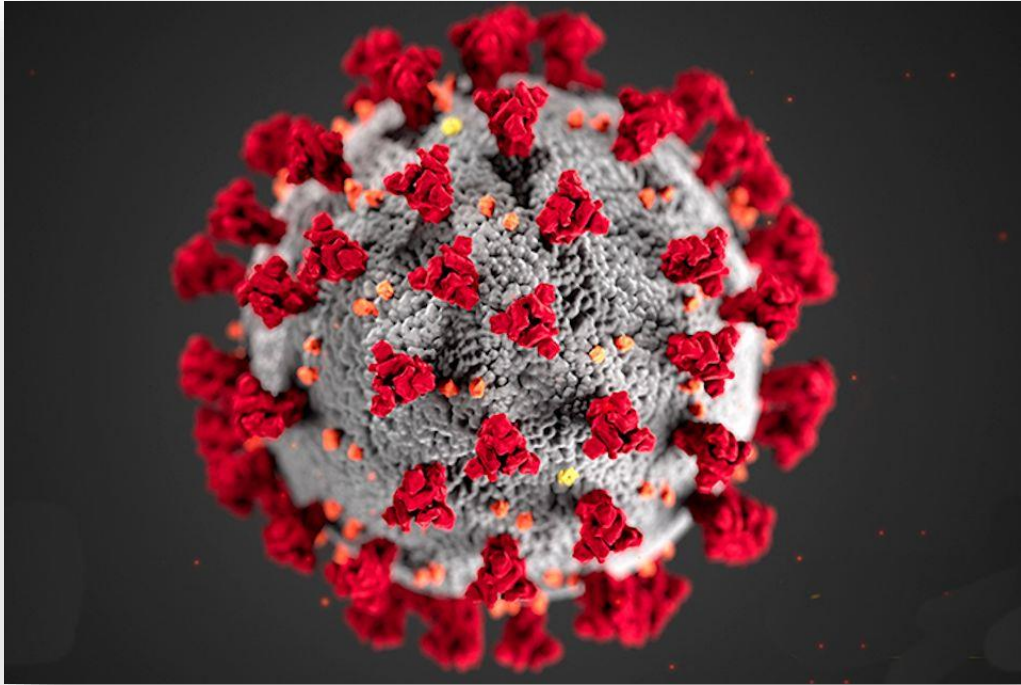


ALL LIFE IS PRECIOUS? WHAT HYPOCRISY!



7/16/2020

By DAVID KLEMENT *published in the Bradenton Herald*

The hypocrisy on both sides of the political spectrum regarding the value of human life during the Covid-19 pandemic doubtless will give ethicists and moralists fodder for debate for years.

On the left, you have people calling for the government to issue mandates that everyone must wear masks when indoors in a public space. Such a law is needed, they say, to keep the mask-averse population from exposing others to the virus, especially the elderly and immune-compromised.

On the right, you have people saying such a government order is an infringement of their right to freely move about in public, and label such orders socialist.

But on the left, those demanding government intervention for mask-wearing are the same people who have argued for years that pro-lifers' opposition to abortion is an infringement of their personal freedom, that the government has no business telling them what they can do with their bodies.

And on the right, the people who object to masks as an infringement on their personal freedom because the government has no business telling them what they can do with their bodies, are the same people who demand that government intervene in a woman's medically-advised decision about her body.

In both cases, lives are in play. On the right, pro-life advocates say a woman's decision to have an abortion, for whatever reason, takes out a human life, regardless of the term of the fetus. Any time after conception, it is a life, they insist.

On the left, pro-choice advocates argue that the mother's life is as valuable as that of the fetus and that she must be allowed to follow sound medical advice if a full-term pregnancy is a threat to her own health. There is no equivalent threat to one's personal safety in being forced to wear a mask, they argue.

So, here is the ethical dilemma of these two opposing perspectives on government's role in making laws that save lives. The right wants government intervention to save one fetus' life at a time by preventing abortion, while the left wants government action to prevent potentially thousands of lives being put at risk by people not wearing masks.

Can you imagine having a conversation about these two opposing value systems right now? Imagine leaders from both sides sitting down to find ways to bring their respective points of view closer together? To say, how can we reduce the number of abortions? And how can we convince folks to wear masks to reduce the spread of coronavirus? Aren't all these lives precious?

No? I can't either. The fact that we can't mutually agree that we should do all in our power to protect and preserve life speaks volumes about the state of political discourse in this country. Our basic values have been too politicized for such a conversation. What would it take, I wonder, to draw us closer together on this issue and end the shameful hypocrisy that we're living under now?

David Klement is former Editorial Page editor of the Bradenton Herald and freelance writer who lives in East Manatee.