

Texas A&M Debate Society Presents:

Parliamentary Debate

"Should 'THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST' be shown on the Texas A&M campus?"

- Pro and Con Speakers
- Open Forum Debate
- Free Admission and Refreshments

Wednesday Oct. 5, 1988
MSC Rm. 206
7:00 p.m.

Dept. of Speech Communications and Theatre Arts

World and Nation

Board OKs viral gene injection for use in human experiments

WASHINGTON (AP) — A National Institutes of Health advisory board on Monday recommended for the first time that researchers be allowed to inject cells altered with viral genes into human patients, a major step toward future gene therapy.

Dr. William J. Gartland, the executive secretary of the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee, said the panel voted 16-5 in favor of the proposal to inject the altered cells into patients to determine how well a certain form a cancer therapy is working.

He called the decision a fairly split vote for that committee.

The NIH director and the Food and Drug Administration still must approve the proposal before it is carried out, and Gartland said that because of the split in the vote, "The NIH director will probably want to know why those five people voted against it."

"The people who submitted the protocol feel it is not dangerous and that they've completed enough of the safety testing to say that," Gartland said. "There are some people on the committee who have some reservations about it, but these are very terminally ill patients with cancer, so it's probably a safe procedure in these circumstances."

The protocol recommended by the advisory committee called for

the experiment to be limited to 10 patients, and those patients would have life expectations of only about 90 days due to the advancement of their cancer, he said.

Gartland said the proposal, if given the go-ahead by the NIH director and the FDA, would be a major step toward eventual gene therapy, a much more controversial matter which would be used to treat genetic diseases.

"If this protocol were to work, I'd expect that within six to 12 months there could be a proposal to do a gene therapy experiment," he said.

The proposal involves a so-called marker gene that would be put into patients' cells and placed back inside the patient.

Under an already established procedure, researchers can remove tumor cells from a cancer patient and grow them in the laboratory, he said.

"Then when they put them back in the patient, they tend to go back in and attack the tumor that they used to be a part of," he said. "This has been done and they've labeled these cells with a radioactive isotope, so when they go back into the patient, they can follow it."

"The problem is the radioisotope is a short-lived isotope and they would like to be able to follow these cells that they put back into the pa-

tient for a longer period of time," he said.

In place of the radioisotope, which has a half-life of 11 days, they have proposed the use of an antibiotic resistant gene that would track for months, he said.

In order to determine whether the cell went back to the tumor to fight the cancer, researchers would look for the cell marked with the gene, he said.

"They're trying to find out how well the tumor-fighting cells go back to the tumor they were taken from and how long they persist," he said. "With this technique, they could

monitor them for longer periods of time."

The main concern for those who voted against the proposal, he said, was "what they're using is a virus 'infect' the patients' cells and put a marker in the patients' cells. The concern is that the virus' itself could make the patients sick, even though the virus' ability to be infectious would be removed before it is put in the cell."

Although the notion of gene therapy has triggered controversy, Gartland said the proposal at NIH is less controversial because the gene

PTL secures sale of ministry property to Canadian man

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — PTL announced Tuesday it had negotiated a sale of its assets for \$115 million to a Canadian businessman, a month after PTL founder Jim Bakker failed in his efforts to return to the helm of his television ministry.

Stephen R. Mernick, 34, of Toronto, will pay \$50 million at closing under terms of the deal and pay the balance over five years, according to a statement handed out prior to a news conference by a Mernick spokesman.

Mernick has interests in real estate, clothing, garbage collection and landfills, the statement said.

PTL has been under the supervision of U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Rufus Reynolds, who told PTL trustee M.L. "Red" Benton that a buyer must be found by Oct. 14 or he would order the assets sold to pay creditors.

The ministry is estimated to owe more than \$130 million.

Mernick was not at Tuesday's news conference. An Orthodox Jew, he was in Toronto and didn't travel to Charlotte because Tuesday was the Jewish holiday of Simhas Torah.

"His primary interest as a businessman is to get the maximum return on his investment," Charlotte attorney Joseph Klutz said at a news conference.

PTL's property, mostly in Fort Mill, S.C., includes a television studio, a hotel and shopping center, a campground, amusement park and a church.

Private housing also has been developed on the property.

The religious functions of PTL have been separated from its other operations, and Heritage USA Church is leasing back its facilities from PTL to continue open worship and Christian TV show production.

Bakker was not available for comment on the sale, a spokesman for PTL and Tammy Ministries in Fort Mill said. Bakker, who resigned as head of PTL last year after admitting adultery, tried to make a \$172 million offer last month to buy back the ministry, but he wasn't able to raise the money.

Klutz said the contract was signed with Benton on Monday after three weeks of negotiations.

Benton also did not attend the news conference.

But Klutz distributed a statement from Benton saying he would recommend approval of the bid to Reynolds later this week.

Reynolds' assistant, Susanne Bicske, said the judge had no comment on the offer.

PTL filed for protection from creditors under Chapter 11 of bankruptcy court rules in June 1987.

Three months earlier, Bakker left the ministry after admitting he had a sexual encounter with Long Island, N.Y., church secretary Jessica Hahn.

Charges of mismanagement and grossly inflated salaries for the Bakkers and top aides resulted in an Internal Revenue Service investigation of PTL and a lawsuit by the ministry's present management to cover \$52 million from the Bakkers and their chief assistant.

House overrides veto of textile import curbs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House on Tuesday overrode President Reagan's veto of tightened textile and apparel import curbs.

It was a move that gave in to claims that the legislation would mean price increases amounting to a fresh tax on consumers.

"Stand up for consumers, stand up for America, support your president's veto," Rep. William Frenzel, R-Minn., said minutes before the House voted on the controversial piece of legislation.

The final vote was 272-152 in favor of overriding President Reagan's veto.

The total in favor was 11 votes short of the support from two-thirds of the lawmakers present and voting that textile industry supporters had needed.

Textile and apparel workers bused in from various points along the East Coast watched grim-faced from the galleries as the House, with at most two weeks before congressional adjournment, voted.

They appeared to end the battle

for textile import legislation for the rest of the year.

The bill was designed to protect American industry against foreign competition.

It would have frozen 1988 textile and apparel imports at last year's level.

A limit on growth of imports to 1 percent annually beginning in January was another point of contention in the bill.

It also would clamp a similar cap on nonrubber footwear imports, with no provision for future increases.

Countries that increased purchases of American farm goods would get larger shares of the U.S. textile and apparel market.

The bill also would establish a pilot program under which the government would auction off import licenses.

Textile and apparel workers rallied on the windswept steps of the Capitol at noon, chanting, "Save our jobs, save our jobs."

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