

Bioethicist Welcomes Closing of Stem Cell Firm

Investors Might Have "Succumbed to Hype"

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania, JULY 29, 2007 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- A prominent bioethicist says he hopes that the closure of ES Cell International, a leading embryonic stem cell research facility, is a sign of growing realism.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk commented on the closure of the biotechnology firm in Singapore, telling ZENIT, "We can only hope that a certain realism may finally be sinking in, as Wall Street types recognize that the timeline for clinical therapies is likely to be quite long."

The firm closed when investors concluded that "the likelihood of having products in the clinic in the short term was vanishingly small," Alan Colman, former chief executive of ES Cell International, told Science magazine.

"The comments of Alan Colman remind us that some investors may have succumbed to the fever-pitch hype that has been a defining characteristic of this area of science for many years," Father Pacholczyk affirmed.

He added: "Progress in human embryonic stem cell research has been slow over the past few years, and the proposal to treat sick patients remains largely a speculative endeavor at this moment in time.

"Beyond the technical impediments and the need for much more basic research, there remain grave moral impediments affecting this entire area of research as well, and it is clear that some investors are exercising caution about stepping into the midst of what has certainly become an ethical minefield."

"On the other hand," Father Pacholczyk explained, "there are a number of companies that are pursuing and rapidly developing treatments for patients based on adult stem cell applications, and the timeline for these therapies suggest that investors may actually see returns in just a few years, with the added advantage that no fundamental moral lines will have to be crossed to garner a profit."