



## In This Issue

- ❑ **The Place to Be** Pg. 1  
**FOCUS ON INDIA: Harnessing the Power of the New Frontier**
- ❑ **Leading by Example** Pg. 3  
**Pursuing Excellence in Corporate Citizenship: Mr. Ajay Kanoria**
- ❑ **Something to Consider** Pg. 5  
**Part II - RESULTS**  
**Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolas'**  
**5-parts series on "Achieving Robust Negotiations"**
- ❑ **Company of Note** Pg. 10  
**The Tata Group**
- ❑ **Focus on Members** Pg. 12  
**Members Selected to Positions on IABL Board of Advisors for 2004**  
  
**Mr. Mohammad A. M. Al-Mahmood**  
**Mr. Genival F. da Silva**  
**Mr. Mohamed Babiker Hamad, Ph.D.**  
**Mr. Habib M. Merghelani**
- ❑ **Opportunities of Interest** Pg. 16  
**Importance of the "UNIVERSITY OF THE MYSTIC" Project**
- ❑ **Call for Papers and Articles**
- ❑ **2004 Annual Leadership Conference**

## Opportunities of Interest

The following opportunities have been provided as advertisement by active members of the Association. IABL members are encouraged to examine all the opportunities presented and determine their interest in them and their applicability to their personal and professional goals.

### **Importance of the "UNIVERSITY OF THE MYSTIC" PROJECT**

provided by IABL Member Ms. Maria Luisa Rodriguez Assemat

#### **Introduction**

In the following pages and in the attached report, we introduce the importance, the implications, and the contributions this proposal we call "University of the Mystic" tries to offer. The project was initiated within the CITEs (International Teresiano and Sanjuanista Center of Avila), a center that has been working continuously since 1986. As a result, the initiative corresponds to a reality that has been proved to exist along these years of existence and which has received a special urge in the last few years.

The main confirmation that has been carried out from the activities done by the CITEs is that of a growing general interest in that important part of our culture represented by two great authors of our language and philosophy: Teresa de Jesus and Juan de la Cruz. This is an aspect we will attempt to document in these pages.

Together with this linguistic/cultural interest goes the interest in knowing more about the mystic that, not surprisingly, has its best representatives within western culture in this two authors, because they show a common ground for dialogue with different oriental cultures. Our two mystic writers are an open door to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, which will strengthen peace and the ecumenical dialogue among different peoples and cultures. In this sense, Spain has a great

historic tradition in the coexistence of the three main monotheistic religions of the world.

The wish to give a serious answer, capable of including all the expectations, has made us envision the University of the Mystic. We do not think of it as another simple cultural initiative, but as the answer to a need that emerges stronger and stronger from within the human being, who is in need of strong cultural and existentialist values.

#### **Importance of the Mystics and Mysticism**

In order to document the importance of our mystics of the Golden Age, many pages would be necessary, if we want to be accurate to the centralism that, in spite of the centuries that have passed by, they keep having in many circles, cultural as well as linguistic, humanitarian as well as religious.

For us to have an approximate idea, but at the same time a true and real one, of the importance and the interest that they keep arousing, it would be enough to have a look at the Internet. For instance, if we search links to Santa Teresa de Jesus, only in her Spanish meaning, we can find over 200,000 in the web (searching also by Teresa de Avila). If

*Continued on page 17*



## Importance of the “UNIVERSITY OF THE MYSTIC” PROJECT – cont’d

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### In This Issue

- The Place to Be** Pg. 1  
FOCUS ON INDIA: Harnessing the Power of the New Frontier
- Leading by Example** Pg. 3  
Pursuing Excellence in Corporate Citizenship: Mr. Ajay Kanoria
- Something to Consider** Pg. 5  
Part II - RESULTS  
Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolas' 5-parts series on "Achieving Robust Negotiations"
- Company of Note** Pg. 10  
The Tata Group
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- Opportunities of Interest** Pg. 16  
Importance of the "UNIVERSITY OF THE MYSTIC" Project
- Call for Papers and Articles**
- 2004 Annual Leadership Conference**

we do the same with Juan de la Cruz, we can find over 192, 000 of the Spanish term; searching by his English meaning (John of the Cross) over 3,500,000 links appear. The same happens with the term “mystic,” which in Spanish offers more than 90,000 links. This data would be more than enough to state the importance and the general interest in these two authors and in the topic of the mysticism.

In the years CTieS has been working, we have been able to verify this growing interest. It is proved by statistics and the progressive growth in the number of students, as well as in its internationality, despite the fact that the CITeS has not been known to the public as such yet, in all its capacity, because of the lack of positions that can be offered.

But it has been mainly in the last few years when we have been asked by different national and international organizations to increase the offer of monographic courses. We have received requests from universities (such as the University of Atlanta and the University of Valladolid), academies (such as the Centro Studi Edith Stein in Italy or El Centro de Estudios de los Valores Humanos de Mexico), cultural and religious organizations (as it is the case of France, Belgium and Germany).

Two interests converge in most of the cases mentioned above: the knowledge of the philosophies of Teresa de Jesus and Juan de la Cruz, and an approach to the Spanish language and culture. There is also a great interest, and a field open to research, in the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue as well as within the mystic.

### **Objectives of the “University of the Mystic” Project**

On the report, all the aspects concerning the project in itself and its precedents are mentioned in detail. Here we have to emphasize only the fact that the project is meant to be a valid answer to the request, which has been indicated above:

- The study in depth of Teresa de Jesus y Juan de la Cruz, from different points of view.
- The promotion of the Spanish language and culture.
- To provide specialists and translators in different languages with the works of two of the most important writers of the Spanish "Golden Age." In this sense, a great amount of work has already been done and translations into Arabic, Korean, Letonian, and German, among others, are already in progress.
- To increase the offer concerning the studies about the mystic and the contrasted mystic.
- To create a suitable field of dialogue among different cultures and religions.

### **National and International repercussion**

Even though the project is still in its initial stage and in a discrete manner, the news has reached to some national and international media. This fact has created a huge arrival of letters and e-mails from different radio stations, not only national ones (RNE, COPE, Onda Cero...), but also international ones (Radio Vaticana y Radio Maria). The

*Continued on page 18*



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- ❑ **The Place to Be** Pg. 1  
FOCUS ON INDIA: Harnessing the Power of the New Frontier
- ❑ **Leading by Example** Pg. 3  
Pursuing Excellence in Corporate Citizenship: Mr. Ajay Kanoria
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print media has mentioned it: at a local level (Diario de Avila, Diario de Burgos, Diario de Salamanca, Norte de Castilla,) national level (ABC, La Razon, Alfa y Omega), and we have also learned about its diffusion on the media in other countries, such as Mexico and Argentina; some specialized magazines (Critica, Imagenes de la Fe, Catalunya Cristiana); and on international news agencies of the Internet (as it is the case of Zenit, which has over 200,000 subscriptions in the world and is edited in German, French, English, Italian and Spanish; or SIR, edited in French, English and Italian; or the college magazine "campusnet"). These data confirm even more the existing interest and the need of providing an answer to it.

## **Contributions**

Even though it may seem reiterative of what it has already been mentioned, in order to make it even more evident, these are the main contributions we consider this project offers:

- The promotion of the Spanish language, not only concerning its knowledge but also its translation into different languages.
- The promotion of Spanish philosophy and culture, from the point of view of two of the most internationally recognized authors.
- To favor an international cultural exchange.
- To foster the narrowing of the gap among the different religions of the world, favoring the dialogue and the coexistence among them.
- To collaborate with the establishment of a culture of tolerance, solidarity and peace.

- To enrich a quality specialized cultural and tourist offer.

## **Conclusion**

In our attempt to make this project come true, we have found much support, but also some difficulties. Provided the fact that this project is not meant to be lucrative but has an entirely cultural goal, the difficulty is economic in nature. Not only the feasible studies but also the anticipation of a successful work are beyond doubt. We just need to overcome the initial investment barrier. In order to overcome this barrier, we have the support of the City Council of Avila, which has provided us with the site for the building. Also, the Chamber of Commerce and the CONFAE of Avila, as well as other organizations and individuals, have offered their support and collaboration.

But having in mind the nature of the project and, above all, the fact that we are dealing with a cultural project, we need to request, in addition to the above, the institutional and economic help from as many organizations, businesses and individuals as possible. For more information, visit [www.citesavila.org](http://www.citesavila.org)

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