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## Reviews

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MATTHEW J. MAROHL

## Reviews

### *Imaging the Journey ... of Contemplation, Meditation, Reflection, and Adventure*

By Mark C. Mattes and Ronald R. Darge. Minneapolis: Lutheran UP, 2006. Pp 120. \$40.00 (Hardbound). ISBN 1-932688-14-5

In the book, *Imaging the Journey ... of Contemplation, Meditation, Reflection, and Adventure*, the meditations of Mark C. Mattes and the photographs of Ronald R. Darge invite their readers to slow down and consider the beauty that is all around them. The large book (11 x 11) is arranged around seven crucial themes: A spirituality of communication, the newness of the new life, fragmentation and wholeness, ministry as service, renewal in the midst of conflict, vocation, and Alpha and Omega. Mattes, professor of religion and philosophy at Grand View College (Des Moines, IA), provides rich meditations built upon a distinctly Lutheran perspective. Darge, an ELCA pastor and instructor in religion and creative photography also at Grand View College, offers striking photographs which perfectly complement the words of Mattes. That is not to say that the photographs are in any way secondary to the written reflections. In fact, the words and pictures work together to create a space for meditation that alone neither element could achieve. The balance between the heard and the seen is brought together with corresponding short prayers by Ronald Taylor, provost of Grand View College.

Also published in 2006, Mattes served on a team of editors to produce *The Grand View College Reader* (see below). In that volume, Mattes offered a number of selected writings by N.F.S. Grundtvig. Grundtvig profoundly influenced the original founders of Grand View College. It is fitting, therefore, that several of the meditations were influenced by Grundtvig. In the October 2007 issue of *Church and Life*, Mattes writes, “While not all the meditations are influenced by Grundtvigian

thinking, several are, and they have been good venues by which to introduce students in introductory religion courses into the thinking of N.F.S. Grundtvig.” Readers of *Imaging the Journey* will certainly also appreciate the introduction (or re-introduction) to the thinking of this powerful Danish theologian.

While each page of this book offers a number of memorable images and quotable lines of devotion and reflection, it is in his writing on vocation that Mattes is at his finest. For example, Mattes observes, “We are far more interdependent on each other than we recognize. The fact that we have never met the farmers who have raised our daily bread does not mean that we have no connection to them. Quite the opposite is true. Even in such anonymity we are dependent on their good graces and sense of responsibility.” It is with such striking and vivid language that readers are invited to consider their own vocation and their own relationship with a community that is much larger and more interdependent than we can even imagine.

A review of *Imaging the Journey* will, by necessity, focus of the written portion of the text. It is impossible to describe through words the photographs which grace each meditation. It is possible, however, to convey the power delivered by each image. Readers will find that each picture encourages meditation in fresh ways. In addition, many of the images will “stick with” the reader long after the book has been closed.

This book will appeal to a wide variety of readers, but will certainly find a home in the home, church, or workplace of those who desire to grow in their spirituality. In addition, this book would work well for couple, family, or small group devotions. Let us hear the call from Mark C. Mattes and Ronald R. Darge and *image the journey!*

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### *The Grand View College Reader*

Edited by Mark Mattes, Evan A. Thomas, Kathryn Pohlman Duffy, and Ronald Taylor. Minneapolis: Lutheran UP, 2006. Pp 134. \$12.00 (paper). ISBN 1-932688-17-X

This volume presents the history, heritage, and values of Grand View College (Des Moines, IA), while emphasizing both the college's rich traditions and bright future. The writers explore the core values of the founders and how those values have shaped the college's liberal arts program.

In the first section, *Foundations*, readers are provided a thorough overview of the college's history and values. Thorvald Hanson, professor emeritus of sociology, explains that "Grand View College is the result of the educational endeavors of Danish-Americans who were deeply influenced by the teachings of the churchman educational philosopher, theologian, historian, and linguist, N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872)." Hanson provides a helpful and detailed review of Grundtvig's view of education and Mark C. Mattes, professor of philosophy and religion, offers selected writings from Grundtvig on education, culture, and religion. After this glimpse of the College's founders, readers are invited to consider "Symbols and Folklore of the Past Speaking Today." Mattes, with English professors Norma Bolitho and Solveig Nelson, and 2007 graduate Matthew Nemmers, takes readers on a virtual tour of the Grand View campus. The authors describe the symbols of Grand View's heritage and provide a "list that decodes some of those symbols and interprets that folklore." This chapter proves to be a perfect "travel guide" for visitors. Next, associate professor of philosophy and religion, Kenneth Sundet Jones, explores the Lutheran identity of the college. Jones concludes that, "When a Lutheran college sends you out into the world, it doesn't just do it for your own benefit. [It] sends you out to be of good use to the world God has given you." Campus pastors, LeAnn Stubbs and Jack Mithelman, follow with an overview of campus ministries. They explain that various programs engage students with the "big questions of life" in a "safe environment where students are encouraged to ask and wrestle with questions and wait upon the answers; doing this enables us to grow as human beings and as people of faith." The first section concludes with a history of student life at Grande View by Evan A. Thomas, professor of history. This chapter serves not only as a history of the college, but also as an insightful look at American social history. For example, we are provided with a glimpse at how both World War I and World War II impacted student life.

The second section, *Creativity*, includes eight chapters exploring the variety of creative expression found at the college. Kevin

Gannon, assistant professor of history, and Amy Getty, associate professor English, begin with an overview of the liberal arts tradition at Grand View. The authors emphasize that one of the goals of a liberal arts education is to teach students not *what* to think, but *how* to think. They show the importance of this in the classroom and the world. After the introduction to the liberal arts, seven different examples of "creativity" are explored. Included are the music programs, the health, physical education, and sport programs, folk dancing, the visual arts, images by current art faculty, "onstage" productions, and Grand View College's heritage of healing. It is here that the beauty, care, and quality of this book might be most evident. Readers are treated to eight color images that challenge and comfort. It is clear from this section that the students, faculty, and staff of Grand View College are working to integrate creative thinking and artistic expression into the daily life of their liberal arts education.

The final section, *Vocation*, includes four reflections. Gannon builds upon his previous description of the liberal arts by exploring multiculturalism. He explains that, "At present, Grand View College is an institution that presents a dual nature: it reflects the reality of urban diversity while continuing to embrace the core values of its Danish Lutheran, Folk-School heritage." It is in this dual nature that Grand View finds its vocation as an institution and where the vocations of the students are nurtured. Professor of sociology, Ammertte C. Deibert, follows with a description of "A Vocation of Peace and Justice." He describes Grand View College's commitment to "deep learning," and notes that this type of education "facilitates continuous intellectual growth and promotes inquiry which looks beyond the individual self toward wider spheres of social interdependence." He concludes that as students contemplate such issues, they are also encouraged to consider that in their own vocations, they might choose deeper relationships advocating peace and justice. Steven Snyder, professor of humanities, contributes a short article titled, "With a Little Help from our Friends." Snyder reminds current students and those who have completed their educations of the importance of relationships made in college. The book concludes with the "President's Reflections" by Kent Henning. President Henning offers what might serve as both an ideal address on the opening day of classes and a moving address at commencement. Here, he balances what Grand View College provides its students with what the students contribute to the college. While the book is written primarily for the Grand View College community, it will also be of interest to others who are interested in how specific core values shape an educational institution.