

## *Goddess and God in the World: Conversations in Embodied Theology*

BY CAROL P. CHRIST AND JUDITH PLASKOW, FORTRESS 2016.

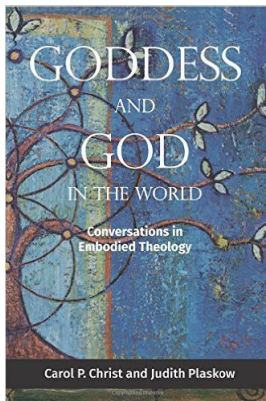
Plan to read this book slowly and carefully. This book is filled with theological insights and you'll want to savor it.

It might be described as dual autobiographies, plus — but what amazing “plus” there is! — Carol and Judith are both trained feminist theologians. They met when they were graduate students at Yale. That's when they learned what it's like to be unheard and erased. Frequently the only woman in a class of men, each

of these two highly intelligent women proposed new ideas that were promptly rejected by the “distinguished”

(read:

patriarchal) faculty members. But this was the Sixties and they enthusiastically joined the social upheaval. They joined the Civil Rights movement. Judith went to the 1963 March on Washington and heard Dr. King's famous speech. They marched in the anti-war protests. They came to feminism through what we today call support groups. And they participated in a notable sit-in in the Yale Divinity School library. All the bathrooms were male-only. One day a group of women went into one of the boys' bathrooms, locked the door, and put flowers in the urinals. That got the university's attention. Yes, these women have done interesting things.



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Chapter 6, “Feminist Theology at the Center,” is one they wrote together. Here is part of the opening paragraph:

*Though some theologians might place feminism outside the theological mainstream, for us it is at the center. It was not just chronology that led us to include the first stirring of feminist theology in our discussion.... Feminist theology was part of the theological ferment that included Vatican II, Holocaust theology, and the death of God movement. It was built on the revaluing of the body in the human potential movement... (p. 131).*

What do Carol and Judith now believe about Goddess and God?

Carol: *Goddess is a personal presence who loves, understands, enjoys, and inspires every individual human and other than human, on this earth and throughout the universe. She is not the earth nor did She alone create the universe, but it is appropriate to think of the universe as a whole and our earth in particular as the body of Goddess because She is as intimately connected to all of the individuals who live or have lived on this planet as we are to the cells of our own bodies (p. 170).*

Judith:

*My own beliefs about God can be stated very simply: I see God as the creative energy that underlies, animates, and sustains all existence; God is the Ground of Being, the source of all that is, the power of life, death, and regeneration in the universe. God's presence fills all of creation, and creation simultaneously dwells in God. In technical theological language, I am a panentheist: I believe in a God who is present in everything and yet at the same time is not identical to all that is (p. 184).*

In graduate school and later, Christ and Plaskow read the works of the standard-brand theologians (Buber, Tillich, et al.), plus the Book of Job and the novels of Elie Wiesel and Doris Lessing. They were in conversation with feminist theologians like Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Mary Daly, and Starhawk. They wrote papers they presented at conferences in many lands, they wrote and contributed to important books, and they made some challenging life decisions. Carol moved to Greece, while Judith came out as a lesbian.

Part 2 of the book is Theological Conversations, four chapters in which they respond to each other's chapters in Part 1. These are thoughtful women. It's good to hear them voicing both agreement and disagreement.

Pay close attention to the footnotes as you read. Many of us have read most of the books cited, but if you've missed some and you consider yourself a serious Goddess feminist, add those books to your reading list. *Goddess and God in the World* is a book every one of us needs to buy and read, after which we can engage in similar conversations with our own friends. **REVIEW BY BARBARA ARDINGER.**

## *WeMoon: Gaia Rhythms for Womyn, Stardust* 36<sup>th</sup> Edition

MOTHER TONGUE INK, 2017

“We are a fierce and loving People. We honor Femaleness. Our religion is the Wheel. Our language is Ritual, Our Tribe: Goddess, Dianic, Amazon.” (p 29)

The 2017 issue of *WeMoon* comes shimmering in *Stardust*, the theme for this year's collection of inspiring art and writings that make up this long- running publication.