

## **The Ten OK's**

Acceptance Remarks by Jay McDaniel

It takes a village to make a person and it takes a person to make a village. John and Jean have been part of the Pilgrim Place village for many years now, and Pilgrim Place has been wonderful to them. It is their village and it is ours, too. Thanks so much to our hosts at Pilgrim Place; thanks so much to Zhihe Wang and Meijun Fan for the incredible work you do; thanks to our friends from China for being with us tonight and working with us on hopes for a better world; thanks to Philip Clayton for such a wonderful talk and the leadership you are giving the China Project; thanks to Joseph Hough for such a great introduction and all the good you do in the world on so many fronts, and, of course, thanks to John Cobb and also to Jean.

Jean has been especially important to me over the years as a friend, a guide, a companion, and a fellow musician. I cannot count the kindnesses she has given me and also the pleasures we have enjoyed together, such as singing Christmas carols together whenever I am in town. There is a practical side to Jean, a wise side, and also a musical side; and I've loved them all. The very person in whose name this award is given has become 'himself' through Jean's help. I am so grateful to her.

And of course I am grateful to her companion – John – who is my teacher, my mentor, my friend, and source of so much inspiration. I speak for all of his students when I say, from the bottom of my heart, "Thank you for so much." In Chinese society it is often said that a teacher for one day is a teacher for a lifetime. John Cobb is our teacher for a lifetime.

Let me share a little story about how I first learned that John Cobb has an ecological side. It happened around 1968 but I can remember it as if it were today. John is offering a course on Whitehead which is stretching our imaginations beyond anything we imagined, and he takes a day off to attend a Rights of Nature conference at Pitzer College. He comes back from the conference for the next class and tells the students what he experienced and about how some Native American participants spoke of the earth carrying memories of their ancestors. The very

idea that the earth carries memories, and that native people's might hear them, made me appreciate them all the more. And the very idea that John was open to what they said made me appreciate him all the more. Over the years I learned and still learn so much from him, but I would like to live up three things that I think all of John's students have learned from him.

So here are ten things I've learned from John, along with so many other of his students. I'm going to call them, not the Ten Commandments, but the Ten OK's.

1. It's OK to care for life even more than religion.
2. It's OK to recognize the truth and value of perspectives different from your own.
3. It's OK to live simply and generously.
4. It's OK to be imaginative.
5. It's OK to be prophetic.
6. It's OK not to take yourself too seriously.
7. It's OK not to care about dress and sports if they are not your thing.
8. It's OK to love Jesus even if you aren't a Christian and even if you are.
9. It's OK to welcome truth wherever you find it.
10. It's OK to live with roots and wings.

John, your students – and I much included – carry these Ten OK's with us every day of our lives, with you as our teacher. We look forward to the conference in 2015 as a time when we can build upon your legacy and help build Ecological Civilizations. We look forward to helping build a wonderful website, Pando Populus, which will be a site where people all over the world can learn about how to celebrate the beauty of our planet, protest the injustices, thinking and feeling and acting our way into an alternative to the mechanistic approach to life from which it suffers. So many years ago you asked, Is it Too Late? We realize that, in some ways, it is too late. But maybe not completely. Maybe with the vision you've given us, to which we add, a movement can be underway that brings new life to a small but beautiful world. That's been your hope. It's ours, too!