

## **Extemporaneous Message – Donne Hayden (unprepared), Dec. 28, 2008**

*We were just having a rather stimulating conversation in the Queries group this morning, and I had to leave before I had a chance to say something. But since what we were talking about really deals with my message today, so I'd like to start by saying what I didn't get to say in the Query group.*

*Michele asked, in looking at nature and the world, and what is our place in it as humans, how do we fit into it, and Jeff suggested that we are a cancer. I want to share a strong image I have; it first came to me when I was on an airplane landing in some city. As we approached the city, the way the sun glinted off the buildings and making shadows, it looked metallic, like armor or scales, and then it looked like a scab on the surface of the earth. And I started to think of us as mange on a dog, like a parasite that feeds on its host until eventually it kills its host. As the parasite thrives, the host weakens.*

*I see us that way sometimes. I attribute this, the fact that we've gotten to that point—we are over-populating the place now—because our sole concern seems to be that we survive, that our species survive, and that every one of our species survive. And I'm not arguing for death—I'm just saying you can't have a species where nothing is allowed to die and have the balance of nature be maintained.*

*And I think we have gotten to this point in our relationship with the earth from a couple of places (many places, probably—I've oversimplifying greatly) but one of them, of course, is that message that was taken from the Old Testament and joyfully used that God created all this for humans to use as they saw fit; that everything was*

*for our use. There is a degree of arrogance in this I can hardly talk about. But it has guided human development and Western Civilization for a long time.*

*The other place is just as bad at the other extreme: it's science. If we can build it, by gosh, we should. If we can do it, we should, no matter what the long-term ramifications are (bombs, gas-guzzling cars, etc.).*

*I wanted to talk today about something I think will address these problems, the problems we create on the planet. And that is I see us lacking reverence for nature, for our environment. And for me, it's all wrapped up in God. Michelle asked why is that things we make don't seem to have the same quality as something that's natural. And she mentioned the difference between a plastic bag and a twig. It has to do with – we're not God. Much as we would like to pretend or act like it sometimes, we just aren't.*

*I am awed. I am awed to the point that I want to re-spell the word "God." That's the title of my message today "(G)Awed". It came to me when I was working on a poem for *The Traveling Friend*, and I thought, "I'm in awe, I'm awed." And the things that create awe in me are the things that leave me breathless and make me think, "God!"*

*I don't know if we humans have enough awe—if we had more awe, we might temper our actions on earth. So here is my message for today.*