

Ministry awards go to church planter, pastor & social worker

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November 12, 2004

Posted: 11/12/04

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By Ken Camp

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SAN ANTONIO-The “trail boss of the Cowboy church movement,” a veteran Texas Panhandle pastor and a Christian social ministries leader received Texas Baptist Ministry Awards at a dinner held in conjunction with the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual session.

Baylor University and the Baptist Standard presented the awards at the Friends of Truett Seminary dinner.

Ron Nolen, statewide consultant for Western heritage church planting with the BGCT Church Multiplication Center, received the George W. Truett Award for ministerial excellence.

Joseph Parker,
pastor of
David Chapel
Missionary
Baptist
Church in
Austin,
receives the
inaugural
Truett Alumni
Association
alumnus of
the year
award,
presented by
Dean Paul
Powell. Texas
Baptist
Ministry
Award
recipients
honored at the
Friends of
Truett Dinner
in San Antonio
are (left to
right) Charles
Davenport of
Tulia, Gaynor
Yancey of
Waco and Ron
Nolen of
Maypearl.

The award-named for the Baptist statesman and longtime pastor of First

Baptist Church in Dallas-honors a Texas Baptist minister for a recent singular ministry achievement that exemplifies imagination, leadership and effectiveness.

Nolen started the Cowboy Church of Ellis County in 2000 to reach people "who prefer rodeo arenas to church sanctuaries," said presenter Marv Knox, editor of the Baptist Standard.

The church has baptized more than 600 new Christians in four years and averages about 1,100 in worship.

Nolen went on to start the Frontier Church of Ellis County and the Ranchhouse Cowboy Church in Maypearl.

He also started the Ranchhouse School of Cowboy Church Planting to train other church starters for Western heritage-style congregations.

Charles Davenport, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tulia for 30 years, received the Winfred Moore Award for lifetime ministry achievement.

The award-named for the former pastor of First Baptist Church in Amarillo-recognizes a Texas Baptist minister for a lifetime contribution that exemplifies commitment, stability and effectiveness.

Davenport preaches and teaches a Bible study at a local prison, and he led the church to conduct an ongoing Bible correspondence program for prisoners.

The church also offers a Tuesday night Bible study designed particularly for children who do not attend church regularly, has opened its facility to an African-American congregation that needed a meeting place and has launched a truck-stop ministry.

Davenport has participated in more than 20 mission trips to Brazil, numerous trips to Mexico, and also has been involved in mission efforts in

Australia and China.

He is a former first vice president of the BGCT, past chairman of the BGCT Administrative Committee and vice chairman of the BGCT Executive Board, as well as an institutional trustee.

Gaynor Yancey, assistant professor in the Baylor University School of Social Work, received the Marie Mathis Award for lay ministry.

The award is named for a past president of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas who led the Baptist University Student Union more than 25 years, served two terms as national WMU president and led the women's department of the Baptist World Alliance.

The award honors a Texas Baptist layperson for singular or lifetime ministry achievement.

Yancey served with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as an inner-city missionary in Philadelphia, Pa., and Camden, N.J., for which she was named the first recipient of the Clovis Brantley Award for outstanding service in Christian social ministries in the United States.

She later became president of the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank, growing the agency from a \$200,000 annual operating deficit to a \$500,000 surplus.

She taught at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa., before joining the Baylor social work faculty in 1999. She teaches in the school's graduate program and directs its baccalaureate program.

Also at the dinner, the Truett Alumni Association presented its inaugural alumnus of the year award to Joseph Parker, pastor of David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Austin.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.