

# ‘Experiencing God’ author Henry Blackaby dies at age 88

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Henry Blackaby, co-author of *Experiencing God* and other discipleship books, died Feb. 10. He was 88.

“He is now experiencing God in ways that surely surpass even his most cherished dreams,” his son Richard wrote in a public statement announcing his father’s death. “We were privileged to have a spiritual giant for a father.”



“Experiencing God” has sold more than 8 million copies in English and was translated into 75 languages.

Blackaby introduced a generation of pastors, missionaries and laypersons—as well as organizations such as Texas Baptist Men: Texans on

Mission—to principles such as “God is always at work around you” and “God invites you to become involved with him in his work.”

“Henry Blackaby’s principle of watching to see where God is working and joining him has profoundly impacted TBM for decades. It has shaped how the ministry functions and why volunteers are flexible to respond to needs as they arise,” TBM Executive Director Mickey Lenamon said.

“We are grateful for his teaching, kind spirit and desire to empower Christ-followers around the world to live out their faith. Because of his ministry, millions of people have and continue to share God’s love with those around them.”

Ben Mandrell, president of Blackaby’s longtime publisher Lifeway Christian Resources, described him as “a great man of God and minister to the body of Christ.”

## **Joining God where he is working**

Born in Canada, Blackaby was serving at a church in Southern California when a Canadian Christian challenged him to return home to become pastor of a struggling congregation in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

When members of Faith Baptist Church in Saskatoon extended a call to the pastorate, Blackaby and his wife Marilynn answered. In the next 12 years, a congregation that had 10 members when Blackaby arrived grew into a thriving church that started 38 mission congregations and Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary and College.

In 1987, while he was serving as director of missions in Vancouver, British Columbia, TBM leaders invited Blackaby to speak at their annual convention in Fort Worth. He talked about the critical importance of being willing to make radical adjustments to be in God’s will.

At that TBM event, he outlined principles that became the basis of an interactive workbook he co-wrote with Claude King. The Baptist Sunday School Board—now Lifeway Christian Resources—published *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* in 1990.



Henry Blackaby introduced a generation of pastors, missionaries and laypersons to principles such as “God invites you to become involved with him in his work.” (BP File Photo)

“Henry taught me to find where God is working and join him,” King said. “God has a plan, and he’s working in places we wouldn’t know. When we recognize where he’s working and join him, he does amazing things.”

King pointed to the number of pastors, missionaries and Christian workers who cite the principles of *Experiencing God* as life-changing influences.

“Only heaven would have an accounting,” King said. “There are thousands

and thousands who have sensed God's call to ministry because of *Experiencing God*. Through Henry, God has revealed what he can do through one ordinary man who is a humble servant and full of faith."

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Blackaby's teaching—particularly as expressed in *Experiencing God*, but also as presented in books such as *Fresh Encounter* and *The Power of the Call*—drastically transformed the ministry of TBM. The group moved from being driven by denominational programs to becoming a missional organization that now is international in scope.

"When we began looking at where God was working and responding to his invitations, we didn't have to dream up things to do," said the late Bob Dixon, longtime TBM executive director.

"The Father kept giving us assignments. And when we were faithful, he would give us another one."

Blackaby described *Experiencing God* as "my life's message." He served as director of prayer and spiritual awakening at the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board and founded Blackaby Ministries International.

"Only eternity will reveal the extent of Henry's impact on the church. I know of no published material that has impacted more churches in more ways than *Experiencing God*," said Lifeway President Emeritus Jimmy Draper.

"Though Henry wrote more materials after *Experiencing God*, that book became the foundation upon which his entire ministry was built. It was obviously the hand of God upon Henry and his message. He will be forever remembered for his passion for spiritual awakening and for the practical

working of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. The impact on the church will continue until the Lord returns."

Blackaby was born April 15, 1935, in British Columbia. He is preceded in death by his wife Marilyn and survived by their five children and 14 grandchildren.

*With reporting by Carol Pipes of Lifeway Christian Resources.*