

William Nyman

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN

At thirty years of age, William Nyman was the secretary-treasurer of a lucrative lumber plant in Chicago. Later he bought the lumber mill, and it yielded great profits. The prominent businessman was highly regarded as a member of several fraternities and civic organizations and as an officer in a local church. Despite his religious practices and his financial prosperity, Nyman was unsatisfied.



Then one day Nyman unwittingly invited a Bible-believing preacher to speak to his men's group. The speaker preached the gospel and presented the Word of God powerfully. That night as he lay on his bed, Nyman was unable to sleep. He could not shake the conviction that the Holy Spirit, through the words of the preacher, had aroused in his heart. At two o'clock that morning, painfully aware of his own depravity and his need for a Savior, Nyman knelt next to his bed and gave his life to Christ.

NEW BUSINESS PARTNER

The next day, Nyman summoned his staff and announced that there was now a new partner in the business: Jesus Christ. Some of them laughed and ridiculed him, but Nyman was resolute in his dedication to God. Even some members of Nyman's church labeled him a fanatic because of his newfound spiritual ardor.

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

A nearby Bible school taught Nyman about God's Word, and there he became impassioned to take up the cause of the millions of people in the world without Jesus and without Scripture. Nyman dedicated his business to the support of missionaries and committed to pray for them diligently. His prayer list soon included missionaries in China, Africa, Siberia, South America, India, Central America and various islands around the world. Nyman and his wife, who was also a fervent Christian, decided to stop paying dues to fraternal societies and to instead donate the money to missionaries.

His withdrawal from the many clubs caused his former friends to stop doing business with him. The lumber mill suffered great losses and was almost forced to shut down. Nyman did not even have enough workers to complete projects that were half-finished. In desperation, he went to the home of an Italian carpenter who he hoped to hire.

FREE GIFT

The Italian man's fourteen-year-old son lay on his deathbed, and the father was bitterly distraught. Nyman tried to help, but high emotions and a language barrier made it nearly impossible to communicate with the anguished man. Finally Nyman discerned that the

father wanted to make sure his son would go to heaven, and a clergyman had demanded 35 dollars to come speak with them. “Thirty five dollars to get your boy into heaven?” Nyman countered, “Why I’ll get him in for nothing!” The father eagerly pulled Nyman into the boy’s room.

In the bedroom, the father watched as Nyman used some Bible verses he had memorized to tell the boy about the love of Jesus. The boy’s frail young face lit up as he understood the encouraging words of the stranger and prayed to accept the Savior. The father wept for joy. After a few more days, the boy entered eternity. The grieving parents told everyone how Nyman had helped them. Soon the man’s Italian friends sent the mill more business than Nyman knew what to do with. At one point, he even asked God to stop sending him new customers!

MOVING ON

Eventually Nyman moved to California in 1930, leaving behind many Chicago business associates that he had led to Christ. Nyman joined Cameron Townsend’s home church, and built a partnership with the missionary couple. The Townsends often stayed at an apartment in Nyman’s home while on furlough or during times when they needed to regain their health.



By 1939, Nyman had developed a heart condition, which made his health extremely fragile and rendered him a semi-invalid. Doctors ordered him to stop all of his outside activities or to risk losing his life. Reluctantly Nyman complied.

A NEW START



But despite his ill health, in 1942, Nyman told Uncle Cam he would establish a mission board and home base in California, for Wycliffe. Nyman took no salary, and he donated an apartment over his garage for the headquarters. Since the office was on the second floor, Nyman was unable to see it for six months. Finally his son Bill Jr., home on a visit, carried his ailing father up the stairs so the mission executive could get a glimpse of the new office.

Nyman’s expertise provided financial structure for Wycliffe and gave future administrators a firm foundation on which to build. Although doctors had told Nyman he was “as good as dead,” he would serve faithfully for nearly 20 more years as a board member and as Wycliffe’s secretary-treasurer. His career ended when he died in 1961. In spite of his infirmity, Nyman called

the years he served Wycliffe “the fullest and happiest of my life—a little bit of heaven given in advance.”