

New Beginnings

October 2015

Nick & Amy Modrzejewski

Missionaries on the campus of University of Illinois with Illini Life Christian Fellowship



i·life A New School Year Off To A Great Start!

The start of the school year always seems to fly by as we go all-in meeting new students, and reinvesting in our returning students.

In Illini Life, we tweaked our approach to our early Fall events and *we have seen our largest Sunday Service numbers in about 15 years.* It has been encouraging to our students, us, and our fellow missionary staff to see our lecture hall full on Sunday Mornings (we've been between 110 and 150 for the first few months). This was our first fall starting out with a Sunday service, and students have really embraced it.

We spent the first 2 months studying 1 Corinthians (the first 6 chapters). Our goal was to elevate our sense of who the church is called to be as we live in a campus culture not unlike the city of Corinth. Each week we challenged Illini Life to reclaim some crucial aspect of the churches identity or mission (unity, the treasure of the gospel, holiness, etc...). For the next four weeks our series is called *Can I Ask That?* It's an apologetics series based on material from the *Fuller Youth Institute.*

Personal Updates Seminary, Athletics, & Family

Nick is continuing his seminary work in addition to his full-time missionary assignment. He's taking Old Testament Survey this semester and really enjoying his coursework and seeing the interconnectedness of God's work from creation, through the patriarchs, prophets, kings, and culminating in Jesus.

We both continue to pursue our athletic goals, competing triathlons and running races when time allows. This continues to be a great place for us to build friends and reach out to students on campus. Nick has a group of guys that run with him on Friday afternoons and enjoys getting to know these young men and investing in their lives.

We are still praying for God to bless us with a child and have spent sometime with doctors trying to understand why things haven't worked out in the past 2 years. We hope you'll continue to pray that the Lord would give us a child.

Prayer Requests

- We're at 75% of our overall monthly support.
- Additional monthly support so we might be fully funded and focused on the work God has for us here.
- Pray for Nancy and our other new students; for their understanding of God's grace and desire for relationship with them.
- For God to bless us with a child.

Phone

Email

Online

www.nicknamy.net

Twitter

@modrzeje @AmyVanMod

Where We Live



GREAT COMMISSION MINISTRIES IS BECOMING RELIANT.



REACHING STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS AND BUILDING GENUINE, LOVING DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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Highlights So Far

Fall Retreat, Home Fellowship, & The Gospel

- Of the 106 people who attended our **Fall Retreat weekend**, 32 were brand new to Illini Life this year. Yes...1/3...30%...1 out of every 3 :) One of the ways we make this happen is by raising "sponsorships" from our alumni so our new students can go for free. For the third straight year, God provided just the right number of scholarships. Our Fall Retreat was a powerful time where students were challenged by a Christian counselor - Tami Smith, PhD - who has done a few retreats for us.

- So far **students have shared the gospel individually with 10 new students** who asked to see an explanation of the basic message of Christianity on the Sunday Connection Card. U of I students are truly some of the most brilliant and broken people around! We love seeing a heart for reaching the lost cultivated and practiced without our church.

- Our **Home Fellowship** has continued to be blessed with growing numbers of students eager to know Jesus and share about Him with others. Two of the student **Connect Group** leaders Nick coaches, Brianna and Amanda, have been doing an excellent job building community and knitting new students into it. Just this past week we multiplied into 2 Home Fellowship groups to allow younger leaders opportunity to lead and to give more room for growth as new students join us.

- We met **Nancy** through Amanda, one of our students. Amy quickly connected with her and realized she had a number of questions about Jesus and suggested the 3 of them get together to go through the Bridge Diagram to explain The Gospel. Amy saw the opportunity to not only share about Jesus with Nancy, but also the chance for Amanda to learn how to present The Gospel in a clear way using the tool of the Bridge Diagram. Here was Nancy's response:

"I've always believed that Jesus died for me, but I never really understood why. I always thought God made us and then decided he didn't like us very much. I always believed he existed, but I got to U of I and started meeting people who talked about a "relationship" with God and I didn't understand, so I figured I should find out what that meant."

Nancy went on to tell Amy and Amanda that she felt like she still had a lot of questions, but wanted to jump in and get them answered. "I checked all the boxes on the comment card at church. I even checked one that said something about being discipled? I don't even know what that means, but I figured it has to be good!" It has been ridiculously encouraging to get to know Nancy and to experience the effusive manner in which she desires to know Jesus.

