My name is Elin Henderson. My husband and I have been missionaries for the last 20 years serving in Mozambique as church planters among the Mwinika people group. As a nurse of nearly 25 years, I have been trying to incorporate community and public health initiatives into our church planting effort. Last year, I came into contact with Deborah Ziebarth through our sending church in Wisconsin. She introduced me to Faith Community Nursing (FCN). I began seeking more information about it which led me to the FCN course that I just completed.

I was so blessed to find a program that incorporates the two aspects of my ministry in Africa; health and spirituality. The “wholistic” approach that the FCN course taught blended these components beautifully together. It provided me with many helpful tools and resources that I hope to take back to Africa with me, when I return next year, to improve my serve there both as a nurse and a church planting missionary.

Besides the benefits that I have gleaned from the FCN course, I am hoping to share this new discovery with other fellow nurse-missionaries as they seek to incorporate health programs into their church planting efforts around the globe. I am already encouraging them to take this course and become certified on their own.

Our organization, Ethnos 360, has a health/medical course that they teach their new missionaries. I am looking at the possibility of creating a short “incorporating public health into your church plant” to add to this program. Even for those who are not nurses, it is my heart to encourage these colleagues to consider a “wholistic” approach to their ministry. As missionaries we tend to focus on the spiritual only but forget that we are multi-dimensional beings with minds, bodies, and souls. My goal in this course would be to raise awareness of this need and to provide some basic help in developing simple public health initiatives that could be implemented from a faith-based platform such as a church planting initiatives. I would incorporate some of the principles and practical tips I learned through my FCN course.

My heart is grateful for the things I have learned, and I am excited to put them into practice cross-culturally. I will keep you posted on how that goes.

Blessings,

Elin Henderson