

**ABSTRACT*****MISSIO DEI DETERMINES MISSIONES ECCLESIA: A STUDY ON THE  
MISSIONAL THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE AMONG IPC CHURCHES IN  
KOTTAYAM, KERALA, INDIA***

by

Thomas Thoppil Varghese

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. The research primarily is to listen and study the definition of the mission of the God and the mission of the church that the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam are advocating. “Mission” is an important activity of the IPC churches in Kottayam. It is reflected in their mission statement as “supporting a missionary in a mission field” and is evident by the support they provide to fifty-three missionaries in north India. This view is frequently advocated in their common meetings and conferences.

This study is limited to IPC churches in Kottayam. The IPC churches in Kottayam number sixty-three. The total number of churches involved in this research are only ten. The criteria for selection of each church were: the church has existed for more than twenty years, is active has a membership of more than thirty families. The instruments used in this research were semi-structured interviews, open and closed questionnaires, focus group and participant observation. There was a total of forty-six participants involved in the research, consisting of mission coordinators, believers,

pastors and lay leaders. The collected data was analyzed through theme analysis as laid by James P. Spradley.

This research revealed the definition the IPC churches have on the mission of God and the mission of the church. The reason for holding this definition is doctrinal and historical. The present definitions of *missio Dei* and mission of the church by IPC churches are action oriented and focus on the spiritual dimension only. The influence of the doctrine of *Parousia* and fear from society was an unexpected discovery. It led them to define mission as activity in the spiritual dimension and to be much less interested with the concerns of the society. Thorough information with regard to the patterns; and principles of a missional church is needed for the churches in Kottayam to be more effective within society.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
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by

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## CHAPTER 1

### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter highlights existing theology and practices about *missio Dei* and *missiones ecclesiae* (mission of God and mission of the church) among the IPC (Indian Pentecostal Church) churches in Kottayam, Kerala.

The major research questions that guided the research were:

1. What is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam?
2. What factors influence their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church?
3. To what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics, compared to Barrett's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness?

The above research questions were an aid to understand the factors that influenced how churches defined the mission of God and the mission of the church. The project aimed to understand the root of their affirmation on the mission of God and the mission of the church. The basic foundational text for the project was John.17:18 "As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into thy world" (RSV).

This project was limited to the Pentecostal Churches in the city of Kottayam. The methodology employed in this project was qualitative research consisting of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observations and a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires. The key terms looked at in literature review were: mission, missions, *missio Dei*, missional theology, and missional church.



This chapter states the purpose, problem and the methodology employed. The objective of this project was to learn the definitions the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam had on the mission of God and the mission of the church.

### **Autobiographical Introduction**

I was born prematurely to a Pentecostal family on 23 November 1975. I had a severe head infection and my days were restricted by the medical sciences. The doctors gave one week for my survival. Seeing the pain and cry of my parents, my father's aunt who had lost her eyesight because of high fever, took me in her hands and prayed. She then insisted my parents to commit me to God's ministry and experience the touch of God. My parents submitted me to the wish of God's voice and dedicated me to God's ministry. God healed me. This is a true story and I cherish that healing.

Upon reaching adulthood, my mother reminded me of being dedicated to God's ministry. Several times, prophets, God's servants reminded me too. I was reluctant to be in God's ministry and wished to be a computer professional. After 12th grade, when I had to decide, I had a personal time in the presence of God, on 13 February 1993 at 11:00 p.m. Everyone at home were asleep. I had a silent conversation with God. "Jesus, everybody says, I am dedicated and called to ministry. I am not convinced. If it is correct, I wish you to talk to me and confirm my call to ministry." I heard a small voice telling me, to read Job 23:10- "He knows the way that I take, when he shall try me, I shall come forth as gold." This encounter was the turning point of my life. I believe for sure; it was the great role; that the Holy Spirit played in my life and thereby I dedicated my life full time to the mission of God.

The next question to be answered was “What to do or what to become? Or what am I called for?” or hat to become? Or What I am called for? The initial Bible study, fasting prayer and a vision, confirmed the call for me to be a preacher and teacher. In my early theological studies, I always desired to major in theology. It was my second choice to go for intercultural studies; however, I pursued Th.M (Master of Theology) in intercultural studies. Right from the beginning, I have always struggled to understand the terminologies in missiology. They seemed to be philosophical jargon that made simple truths complicated. It was a new learning experience. Of all the terms in missiology, mission, missions, *missio Dei*, and mission of God, disturbed and confused me a lot. I looked for accurate definitions of the above terms. Meanwhile, a course on cultural anthropology and holistic missions gave me some instructions and guidelines in understanding these terms.

Ecclesiology was always close to my heart. I love teaching it and enjoy reading its dimensions, history, essence, scope, and future. I always longed for a book which can guide me to a clearer understanding of the mission of God. *The Dictionary of Missions* by Karl Muller expanded my thinking on *missio Dei*. Allen Tippet’s and Andrew Murray’s writings were satisfactory, but they increased my curiosity rather than resolved my doubts. However, it was the writings of A Scott Moreau, Gary McGee, and Gary Corwin (*Introducing World Missions*) that gave me the answer and a launching pad from where, I started building my foundation or convictions for *missio Dei*.

My role as an instructor in IPC Theological Seminary, Kottayam and later as a Pastor in New Life Church, Bangalore, only added new questions to my concern. The

questions from multi-missionary religions added woes to my accepted wisdom. I was always eager to distinguish the exactness of mission of God and mission of the church.

When the IPC churches in Kottayam North and South decided to start and help mission outstations; I was curious to know their mission statements, which I observed to be “supporting a mission station or missionary” as the central drive. This drive to support was heard often in their council meetings and all worship services. The churches and individuals always treasured their contributions and constantly sought reports with high accountability. To the mission statements by the Pentecostal Churches; the definitions stated by Moreau, McGee and Corwin on: i) *missio Dei* “as everything God does in relation to the kingdom and everything the church is sent to do on earth;” ii) Mission “as everything with redemptive purpose that the church is sent to do” and finally iii) Missions “as describing the activity of churches, agencies and people in making disciples and planting churches” (73) provided me a context to learn, think and study what mission of God (*missio Dei*) is. Accordingly, the question “If everything is mission, then what is mission?” (Neil) also raised my curiosity on the clarity in the definition on mission of God and mission of the church.

It had an intense desire to understand *missio Dei* and Mission of the church and reflect biblically and theologically. An appropriate understanding of mission, missions and *missio Dei* and discipleship will truly change the understanding of missional theology and practice among Pentecostal churches. The overruling framework of this project was to learn/understand *missio Dei* and mission of God from a biblical and theological perspective and thereby help the Pentecostal churches to advocate a concrete understanding of missional theology. The statement that “mission has a church rather

than church has a mission” (Moltmann 64) and that the Mission of God is the church’s mission, or a theological identity must precede ecclesial activity also provided a frame of reference for me.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The word Missional denotes being characterized by mission. Eitel comments that “Missional denotes a certain impulse among Christians and churches, whereby one sees oneself as a missionary regardless of their particular vocation or geographic location” (1). In the Willingen’s conference report, Wilhelm Richebächer stated- that the “church’s mission is derived from the mission of the triune God” (589). An appropriate missional understanding of mission of God (*missio Dei*) and church is thereby essential. The ministry of Jesus lays the foundation for a proper understanding of the mission of God. Missional Ecclesiology specifies that the church is missionary in nature, but it is not the church which undertakes mission; it is the *missio Dei* which constitutes the church. As David Bosch notes, “To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love” (390). The nature of the church is participation in the *missio Dei* or God’s mission. Mission for the IPC churches are supporting a missionary or mission field rather than being missional. The term *missio Dei*, “sent one” or “mission of God,” is considered as just one more thing to do among other activities of the church by the IPC Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. “Mission” is an important activity of the IPC Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. This understanding of the mission of God by IPC churches is reflected in their mission statement as “supporting a missionary in a mission field.” Their mission statement is evident by the support they

provide to the fifty-three missionaries in North India.<sup>1</sup> The mission leaders and pastors of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam have repeatedly advocated the above mission statement at their common meetings, general conferences, and even during Sunday worship regularly. I had the opportunity to hear it at different times. This opinion/view questions the biblical and theological understanding of the (*Missio Dei*) Mission of God and the mission of the church in Trinitarian perspective.

Based on the above hypothesis, the issue I noticed is that “the mission of church for them is more on supporting ministries financially, bringing and influencing individuals” into their churches rather than making them missional disciples. It was Jurgen Moltmann who rightly stated that “it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world, it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church” (64). The research primarily listened and studied the definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church that the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam advocated. This project attempted to learn: 1) how the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam defined the mission of God and the mission of the church; 2) the factors that influenced their definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church; and 3) the missional characteristics IPC churches can adapt from Barrett’s eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam.

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<sup>1</sup>Due to security reasons, no data are printed nor uploaded to the webpage. The following information is available from their official. The data on number of support and the amount is not for publication, but an internal sharing of information in the church is done.

## **Research Questions**

This study focused on three specific research questions for understanding missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam.

### **Research Question #1**

What is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam?

### **Research Question #2**

What factors influenced their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church?

### **Research Question #3**

To what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics, compared to Barret's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness?

## **Rationale for the Project**

Craig Van Gelder, quoting Guder, stated that the “missional church is much more explicit about bringing the connection of *missio Dei* with the kingdom of God” ( *The Missional Church in Context* 27). Missional church helps us to understand the mission of God and mission of the church in a tangible way. When observing the fundamental meaning of the church from the Apostle's creed, it is helpful to agree with Gelder that “missional points to the unique call of the church to be God's divine presence on earth and to live by eschatological values that brings different people through a common bond in Jesus Christ.” ( *Missional Challenges* 70). Contrary to Gelder, J.C. Hoekendijk is with the assessment that “church- centric missionary thinking is bound to go astray as it revolves around an illegitimate center” (332).

Taking a closer look at the theme of missional ecclesiology in Kottayam, the statement of Hoekendijk cannot be avoided. Accepting Hoekendijk position there are reasons to agree that the church's apostolic ministry becomes obscured; when the church becomes the major focus of mission thinking. Wilhelm Anderson stated that the "church cannot be the starting point for the theology of mission. He says, the origin of mission is found in the triune God from whose nature and purpose the church received the commission, impulse and power to engage in mission" (10).

Participation in God's mission to the world becomes the key to defining the function, reality, and validity of the church's existence. Rodger C. Bassham states that the understanding of church and mission underlying the phrase "the church is the mission" must be viewed as "church as a function of mission and not mission as a function of the church" (333). This understanding thereby validates the true existence of church. A missional church considers itself responsible to participate in witnessing and impacting society at large.

The call of the church's mission issues from the triune nature of God (John.17). Missional ecclesiology begins with the *missio Dei*. The classic definition of *missio Dei* locates the source of mission as proceeding from the Trinity itself rather than being within ecclesiology or soteriology. To the source of *missio Dei*, Bosch rightly states that "classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world" (390, 1991). The above Bosch statement is an attack to those advocating mission as originating out of the church or from any other human agency or as an activity of the church. Affirming the true nature

of mission, Bosch rightly states, “mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a foundation of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people” (392). In stating the other dimension of the church’s purpose and to understand the nature of God’s mission, Newbigin comments “the church was instituted by Jesus Christ to be a sign of God’s reign and the means by which witness to that reign would be carried to the ends of the earth” (64). The statements by Bosch, the Willingen conference, and missional writers do advocates that the mission of God does not represent ministry to dispossessed and famished people but rather participates in God’s design on mission.

Bosch states that mission is not principally an activity of the church but an attribute of God (390). He further adds that mission is the participation in the divine movement of God’s love toward people, the church being the central channel through which God continues to pour out his love to the world (390). In other words, God is the sender of the church for the mission and not the vice-versa. Mission does not proceed from the inventiveness of the church. The mission of God is the motive for the church. Church does not exist to serve its own aims, it solely exists to participate with Christ in declaring the love of God to the world. The calling of the church is to be a community of witnesses to participate in God’s future. The above affirmation on the mission of God and the mission of the church provides a durable source to comprehend *missio Dei* and the mission of God in a better way.



### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Mission:** The word “mission” comes from the Latin root “to send.” There were many shifts to true understanding of the word “Mission” in the present century. Newbigin considers the term “mission” as a comprehensive term that refers to the entire task of the church in the world (121). Clarifying the concept of Newbigin, Dean Flemming states, “mission is not simply an activity of the church. it is who we are...” (258). The above contributions by Newbigin, and Flemming help me understand mission as being not initiated by any institution, but rather by God and with a true purpose of reconciliation and restoration. Moreau, McGee, Corwin while describing the role of the Church in God’s mission, states that mission is “action with redemptive purpose that the church is sent to do” (73). Richebächer taking the statement of Karl Barth states that mission is “*actio dei*” (action of God) (593) with a redemptive purpose which the church has to obey and fulfill. This leads us to the idea of participation by the church in the mission of God. The aspect of participation is stated clearly by Christopher. J.H. Wright. He defines mission as “committed participation as God’s people at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation” (22-23). The above definitions also confirm that mission begins with the triune God and flows out of the boundless love of the triune God.

Taking the *being* and *doing* aspect from Missional, Michael Frost and Hirsch defines Mission in a similar tone;

mission “as not merely an activity of the church. It is the very heartbeat and work of God. It is in the very being of God that the basis for the missionary enterprise is found. God is sending God, with a desire to see humankind and creation reconciled, redeemed, and healed.” (34).

The above definitions establish Mission as participation of God's people in God's mission. I used *mission* to refer to God's comprehensive purpose for the whole of creation and for which God has called and sent the church to do. God and his mission defines the missionary existence of the Christian community.

**Missions:** There are differences of opinion on the word missions. George W. Peters regards missions as the "sending forth of authorized persons beyond the border of the N.T church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ...and thereby to establish and multiply local congregations who will bear the fruit of Christianity in that community and to that country" (11). When Peters sees Missions as more on *Proclamation*, Newbigin sees more of the *Presence* aspect. Newbigin considers that "missions or foreign missions are intentional activities designed to create a Christian presence in places where there is no such presence or at least no effective presence" ( 121). Moreau, McGhee, and Corwin are of the view that the word missions are "used for the specific task of making disciples of all nations. It is seen through the work of mission agencies, churches and missionaries around the world" (72). There is still difference of opinion on mission with S and without S. Sometimes, missions in the plural is understood as the cross-cultural missionary work of the church. I agree with what Moreau, McGee, and Corwin states, "missions are a subset of mission and mission combines the total assignment of the church while including the traditional idea of missions" (72). Their view is broad and beneficial in understanding the relationship of the terms.

**Missio Dei:** The term *missio Dei* is understood and defined with various insights in the present century. *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* does clarify that the term *missio Dei* is the Latin term for “the sending of God” in the sense of “being sent” (Moreau, et al. 631). Bosch defines *missio Dei* as “God’s self-revelation... God’s involvement in and with the world...whereby church is privileged to participate” (392); Verkuyl defines God’s mission as “God being actively engaged in re-establishment of His rule (72). In short, Bosch and Verkuyl considers God’s mission as an activity of the triune God and not the activity of any persons or the church. Clearly, God is the focus and through God’s activity the church, and the world learn of God’s immanence. I understood *missio Dei* as mission with God’s program, not that of the church. The expression *missio Dei* also conveys the idea that God’s work is broader than the church. Toward a concrete definition of *missio Dei*, the following questions needed to be answered. They were as follows: 1) Who is the initiator? 2) What is undertaken (being carried on)? 3) What is the instrument? 4) Who is the receiver? 5) What is the motive or intended goal? The answers provide a framework to understand *missio Dei* and the greatness of God’s work in a better and tangible way.

**Missional Theology:** Steven Hovator in his blog on missional theology states that “missional theology is a conversation about nature of God’s intent for world and the role of Church in God’s reign” (2016). In the present scenario, the various concepts to the word missional have made it complicated. Eugene Bose et al. affirms to the Lutheran brethren that missional theology helps to understand the nature of Church and its reason for existence (3). I considered missional theology as understanding God’s universal

mission (*missio Dei*) in the context of the world with all its meticulousness, contradictions, and misperceptions theologically. The Pentecostal church in Kottayam should understand God's intent and the missional nature of church as described biblically for doing a healthy missional theology. Missional theology is about theology of the missional church and not about theology of the church with its mission programs/activities.

**Missional Church:** The word *missional* is not a new trendy tag to define or ascertain any activity. It is also not a substitute word nor another program. In the words of Ed Stetzer and David Putman, it is a shift in thinking. I considered this term as an adjective in a broader sense as characterized by mission and associated with the mission of God. It is therefore a helpful term to describe what it means to be Jesus' sent people in terms of identity, vocation to any situation and place by engaging with the culture, without being absorbed by that culture.

A missional church is not a congregation with an attractive mission statement. It exists for participation in God's mission of reconciliation. A missional church understands both the Great Commission (making new disciples) and the Great Commandments (loving God and loving others as self). Barrett rightly describes the quality and identity of a true missional church in describing the essence of a missional church. She says,

“A church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between

outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission." (x).

On defining a missional church from a multi-dimensional or holistic perspective, I considered the missional church as one which enthrones God, encourages one another, empowers people, and engages them in the world. I understood the missional church as not being a complete church or one which was multi-dimensional in activities. The simple essence of a missional church for me was: a church sent by God to participate in His mission (*missio Dei*) of a redemptive program to restore His lost image in the world.

### **Delimitations**

This study did not focus on the history or theology of ecclesiology. The study did not seek to introduce a new theology of mission for the church but sought to learn and discover the existing missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam in relation to the Trinitarian understanding of the mission of God and mission of the church.

The Pentecostal churches in Kottayam include IPC, Church of God and Assemblies of God. The total number of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam was one hundred twenty. This study was limited to IPC churches in Kottayam. The IPC churches in Kottayam number sixty- three. The other predominant churches were excluded owing to their diverse opinions on the mission of God and with the nature of the research. The boundary of this study was within Kottayam. The total number of churches involved in the research were only ten. IPC churches in Kottayam are bifurcated as North and South. In the project, five churches from North and South were selected. The criteria for selection of churches were as follows:

1. The church existed for more than 20 years.
2. The church was active in ministry and had a membership of more than thirty families.

The criteria for selection of leaders are as follows:

1. They were active members of the church for ten years.
2. They held leadership responsibilities in the ministry of the church

This study was limited only to the Pentecostal IPC churches in Kottayam and to learn and study their claims on missional theology. The other denominational churches like Roman Catholic, Marthomite, CSI, and Orthodox were excluded as the research was neither extensive nor a comparative study on missional theology of the different churches in Kottayam.

For this project, the researcher chose to work with pastors, lay leaders, mission coordinators and youth leaders (men and women). The researcher did not do a church growth study to define church growth factors among Pentecostal churches. The decision to select these churches (criteria for selection was mentioned above) addressed the issue of missional theology and thereby avoided the danger of mere pragmatism.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

Books, and articles from leading journals served as secondary sources of information. The literatures for the research was examined and validated with theological merit. The attempt was not to accept or absorb any thought and reject everything that existed locally. The literature reviewed the characteristics of missional churches; and the

theological and biblical foundations of the missional churches in order to address the primary research questions.

The prominent influential writers on the missional church are: Lesslie Newbigin, Darrel Guder, Alan Hirsch, George Hunsberger, Craig Van Gelder, Michael Frost, Michael W. Goheen, Wilbert Shenk, Ed Stetzer, David Putman, Patrick Keifert, Allan J. Roxburgh, Milfred Minatrea and Lois Y. Barrett et al. Their influential writings on missional theology and church help to clarify the theological and biblical foundations and the characteristics of a missional church.

Debates in mission gave a new understanding to being missional. After the International Missionary Council, Willingen, Germany (1950), Newbigin shaped his missional ecclesiology and summarized his understanding of the missional church, resulting in his seminal work, *Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (1989). Michael Goheen's dissertation on *Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* also proved the influence of Newbigin on missional theology. This work opened the way for David Bosch and Darrell Guder to expand the mission of God and missional church movement. Darrell Guder should receive the credit for coining the term missional church.

Rick Warren and Christian Schwarz in describing a healthy or growing church outlines the functional characteristics. These do not describe for me what a missional church is. Taking Newbigin's six characteristics (*Praises God, Stands on Christian Truth, Engages with Secular community, Empowers to disperse, Models exemplary community, Rooted in Christian history*) of Missional Church, Guder, Tim Keller, Barrett, Frost and Hirsch, Minatrea describe it as *patterns, principles, practices, elements* and *indicators* of a missional church. Guder in describing missional, emphasizes the essential nature and

vocation of the church as God's people and sent people. Expanding Newbigin's characteristics, Guder gives twelve *indicators* for a missional church; to this Keller pronounces nine *elements* for a missional church; Frost and Hirsch calls them three *principles*; Milfred Minatrea considers them as nine *practices* of a missional church and Barrett et al. discerns it as eight *patterns* of a missional church. All these *characteristics, indicators, patterns, principles, and elements* are to synthesize the basic pieces of a missional church. All this correlate with Newbigin's characteristics of a missional church. To describe the characteristics of a missional church, I prefer to consider, the three *principles* of Frost-Hirsch (*Messianic, Incarnational and Apostolic*) and the eight *patterns* of Barrett et al (*worship as public witness, missional authority, missional vocation, biblical formation and discipleship, risk taking as a contrast community, practices that demonstrate God's intent for the world, pointing toward the reign of God, dependence on the Holy Spirit*) as primary more than the others. In Barrett's *patterns*, the theoretical characteristics of a missional church are presented very practically, and Frost-Hirsch's *principles* are more action oriented in nature. The integrated approach of Barrett and the Biblical (apostolic teaching), and Theological (Nicene Creed) approach of Frost and Hirsch helped me study the missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam so as to be missional.

In the words of Stetzer and Putman in *Breaking the Missional Code*, "Missional church is not a new model/tag but a shift from the Christendom way of thinking. It is a thrust/call to recapture the missionary nature of the church. It is important to understand the nature and purpose of church to understand a missional church." (72) Gelder in his *The Ministry of the Missional Church* clarifies the nature and purpose of the church. He



says it is a community created by the Spirit. He also states in *The Essence of the church*, What the church is, what the church does and how to organize to be missional in nature? To understand the biblical and theological foundation of a missional church, Frost and Hirsch's (*The Shaping of Things to Come*) missional DNA description is informative. They describe the missional church to be *incarnational*, *messianic*, and *apostolic* in nature. To this Hugus, Schwanz and Veach in *Marks of the Missional Church: Ecclesial Practices for the sake of the world* look in descending order on marks of the church from the Nicene creed. These missional writings urge churches to recover their missional passion. A biblically faithful, missional understanding of God and church is essential. The above literature can serve as a guide for the church as it seeks to be a witness in its culture.

### **Research Methodology**

The project was a pre-intervention that used a qualitative research method. The methods used were semi structured interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and a combination of open- and closed- ended questionnaires.

### **Type of Research**

This project followed a pre-intervention type of research. The research was qualitative in nature. This project sought to describe or explain the phenomenon and thereby analyze it. Having John.17:18 as the basic text for being missional, I studied existing missional theology in order to process and help to diffuse a missional pattern into the life of the church.

The methods used to collect qualitative data were:

1. Semi-Structured Interviews
2. Researcher-designed open-and closed-ended questionnaires
3. Participant observations
4. Focus group interviews (Small Groups)

### **Participants**

This project involved only selected IPC churches in Kottayam. There are a total of sixty-three IPC churches in Kottayam. The total number of churches involved in the research were ten. IPC churches in Kottayam are bifurcated as North and South. In this project, five churches each from north and south were selected. The criteria for selection were as follows:

1. Church had existed for more than twenty years.
2. Church was active in ministry and had a membership of more than thirty families.

I considered the views and suggestions, opinions of mission coordinators and evangelism directors, pastors, church councils (lay leaders), and believers. All participants in this project were structured into groups for data collection. For all these groups, the content of the questions in the questionnaires and interviews were identical in order to maintain the qualitative nature. The District Ministers (In charge) from Kottayam North and South were consulted in selecting the pastors for the focus groups.

### **Data Collection**

1. **Semi-Structured Interview.** The mission-coordinators and evangelism directors from ten churches were considered. I utilized interviews and questionnaire

forms based on the needs. The interviews were captured on a digital recording device. I believed in a qualitative response and hoped that the responses from these leaders would be helpful.

2. **Open-and Closed-Ended Questions** (Paper format): In this approach, the structure of the questions were very basic. Ten open-ended questionnaires were used so that the participants could express their ideas freely. Ten closed-ended questions were also provided to maintain the focus of the research. The number of believers considered was twenty (ten from the north and ten from the south). The selection of the believers was based on their active participation in the church and contingent on their membership for at least ten years. This was done only in the paper format and not the online format.

3. **Participant Observation:** The participant observant consisted the lay leaders of six churches from among the selected churches. They consisted of only the church executives. Participant observation was done by me and a co-worker who followed me at the respective times for the mission's meetings. The verbal and non-verbal communication actions were observed.

4. **Focus Groups:** This group comprised of ten selected pastors from the identified churches. Five pastors were from the north and five from the south district of Kottayam. These pastors were selected based on their involvement with the mission stations outside Kottayam and by their support for the missional activity of the church.

The four ways for gathering reliable information were to know, understand, identify, and evaluate the theology that the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam held. The questions in the open-and closed-ended questionnaire were directly related to the three

research questions. The research respected all participants' ideas rather than being judgmental.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was collected through interviews, open-and closed-ended questionnaires, focus groups, and by participant observation. I evaluated the data using theme analysis as laid out by Spradley. The procedure for this analysis consisted of: making a componential analysis, searching for similarities, identifying organizing domains and lastly stating the themes identified through the data.

### **Generalizability**

This study was generalizable in two ways:

1. The missional principles taken from John.17:18 about mission Dei, were to bring *missio Dei* understanding on Trinitarian principle.
2. The observations from these and the missional characteristics, were suggestive to pastors of other churches (those not in the project) to be mission shaped churches.

### **Project Overview**

Chapter 2 reviews literature associated with the missional church, *missio Dei*, and missional discipleship. Chapter 3 includes discussion and explanation for the nature and purpose of the project, research questions, land demography, population and sample, description of participants, data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 details the major findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the conclusions derived from analysis of the data. That chapter also provides ministry implications of the finding. Recommendations are on the principles to be applied based on the findings. I very

eagerly suggest the possible area of change to be adopted on a biblical basis. This research will help churches to consider themselves as unique from other religious organizations in terms of service, and believers to understand “being missional” as a commandment and not as a suggestion or option in the Christian life.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter reviews literature associated with the missional church, *Missio Dei*, and Trinitarian mission. The basic drive of this project is to study and understand the IPC churches' perception of the "mission of God and mission of the church" in Kottayam, Kerala, India. The problem with the Pentecostal Churches in Kottayam is they consider the mission of the church as an activity rather than participation in God's mission. The major research questions that guided the research were threefold: primarily, what is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam? Secondly, what factors influence their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church? and thirdly, to what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics, compared to Barrett's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness?

I employed the qualitative method, consisting of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and combination of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires. The literature focused on *Missio Dei*, Missional Church, and its Theology based on the foundation of the Trinitarian mission (John 17:18; 20:21). The literature also focused a biblical and theological foundation and thereby to conclude, that it is the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) that determines the mission of the church.

#### ***Missio Dei*: Definition and Historical Tradition**

The definition of *missio Dei* clarifies the nature and essence of God's mission. It is important to exegete the word, "mission." The word "mission" comes from the Latin

root “*to send.*” Newbigin considers mission as the entire task of the church in the world (121). It refers to the reason for the church’s existence. Looking at mission’s personal and participation aspects, Dean Flemming defines it as “not simply an activity of the church, it is who we are...” (258). This definition helps one to understand the task of mission. It belongs to God and the church has a role to participate in it. When regard to the role of the church in God’s mission, Moreau, McGee, and Corwin describe; it as “action with redemptive purpose that the church is sent to do” (73). With more clarity, Wright defines mission in the aspect of participation. To him it is “committed participation of God’s people at God’s invitation and command in God’s own mission” (22-23). When considering the aspect of being and doing from the missional perspective, mission is not merely an activity of the church, it is the very heartbeat and work of God. Frost and Hirsch in clarifying the purpose of mission comment: “God is a sending God with a desire to see humankind and creation reconciled, redemmed and healed” (34). The above definitions served me as guides toward defining mission as participation of God’s people in God’s mission in God’s ways. God’s mission is God’s comprehensive purpose for the whole of creation. God who controls, plans, calls and sends individuals to accomplish. God with his mission, defines the true missionary existence of the Christian community.

*Missio Dei:* *Missio Dei* is a Latin theological term that can be translated as “mission of God.” The history and tradition concerning the understanding of *missio Dei* acknowledges that the writings of Karl Barth in 1939 gave birth to a new understanding of the church and its mission. He regarded mission as *actio dei* (action of God) with a

redemptive purpose and church participates in it. The concise statement of Karl Barth at Brandenburg Mission conference is as follows:

The congregation, the so-called homeland church, the community of heathen Christians should recognize themselves and actively engage themselves as what they essentially are: a missionary community! They are not a mission association or society, not a group that formed itself with the *firm intention* to do mission, but a human community *called* to the act of mission (qtd. in Guder 42, 2003).

From Barth's statement, Karl Hartenstein in 1934 coined the term *missio Dei* which led further to the declaration that churches do not exist for themselves (Schwarz 126). They exist to participate in God's mission. Bosch defines *missio Dei*, as "God's self-revelation... God's involvement in and with the world... whereby church is privileged to participate" (10). To support further with the act of God's order and direction and the church's participation, Verkuyl defines God's mission as "God being actively engaged in re-establishment of His rule" (72). In a concise manner, Bosch and Verkuyl consider God's mission as an activity of the triune God and not the activity of any person or the church. These definitions of *missio Dei*, authenticates God is the focus in the mission of God and in the mission of the church. It also conveys the eternal truth that God's work is broader than the church. God's role in sending individuals raises questions of an initiator, an instrument, the motive, the receivers and the intended goal in it. The Latin term of *missio Dei* answers all enquiries and clarifies that all Christian mission is God's. God alone initiates, empowers, directs and blesses all true mission. All God's people engaged in this mission are co-workers with God and they participate in it as a privilege and not as an activity-oriented engagement.



Historical Tradition: An understanding of *missio Dei* in historical perspective will inform its formation. There were paradigm shifts to the concept of mission of God over the centuries. There are various pioneers to the use of the term *missio Dei*. Englesviken comments that the term *missio Dei* has a long history that goes back to Augustine and it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity (482). Still further, John Hoffmeyer believes it was Aquinas who first used the term to describe the activity of the triune God: Father sending the Son and the Son sending the Spirit (108).

Tracing the further development of *missio Dei* as a concept, in the modern setting the credit goes to Karl Barth, with his idea that mission was God's work and the church's mission is in response to God's mission. This idea was picked up by Hartenstein who used the term *missio Dei* to differentiate it from *missio ecclesias*, - the mission of the church that takes its existence from participation in God's mission- which is always accomplished in Trinitarian fashion (Bevans and Schroeder, 290). Later in 1952 at the Willingen meeting of the International Missionary Council; the concept of *missio Dei* was given full recognition.

The meeting in Willingen was a historically important moment in the life of the church historically.” After World War II, when missionaries were expelled from” China and missionary sending nations faced serious of questions to the aspect of ‘*sending*’ as mission and missionary. Within this political and ministerial milieu, the Willingens statement on *missio Dei* and the missional church with Barth's and Hartenstein's insights were undoubtedly helpful and meaningful. Hartenstein created the term to summarize the main findings of the Willingen conference, which said:

The missionary movement, of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of His love for us, the Father has

sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God. We who have been chosen in Christ, ... are by these very facts committed to full participation in His redeeming mission. There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world-mission. (qtd in Richebächer, 589, 2003).

The conference concluded that mission is participation in the sending of the Son in the *missio Dei*, to establish the Lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation.

The highlights of Willingen were:

1. Mission is primarily God's mission. This is a foundational truth to the true understanding of the Mission of God or *missio Dei*. The church does not have a mission of its own. The reference and emphasis are on the action of God for the redemption of the world. The questions which need greater consideration is how the church participates in God's redeeming mission.

2. God's mission must be defined in terms of the Triune character and work of God. This Trinitarian emphasis was important, and mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. This participation in the mission of the Triune God gives the church its role in God's story and its missionary identity (Goheen,77).

#### Post Willingen

In Willingen and the following period, the two major approaches to *missio Dei* were:

1. The dominant view was mission as God's evangelizing action through the church. There was serious opposition to this dominant view.

2. *Missio Dei* as God's activity in the secular world over and above the church, in which the world provides the agenda.

Michael Goheen defined the two points of view above as:

1. Christocentric Trinitarian: It sees God's mission as centering on the work of Christ through the church.

2. Cosmo centric Trinitarian: It sees God's mission as being active in all the cosmos.

The opposition to the dominant view on Mission of God as "God's evangelizing action through the church" (Christocentric Trinitarian) was led by Hoekendijk. To him, the church is an appendix to God's work (Sundermeir 560). He carried the notion that "when one desires to speak about God's dealing with the world, the church can be mentioned only in passing and without strong emphasis." Hoekendijk believes God is at work in the world which then influences the church, as opposed to the classical view which considers God at work in the church and through the church to the wider world. His definition of mission was no longer confined to the activities of the church... (qtd in Richebächer, 591, 2003). In the years following the 1960s, many individuals from various denominations adopted Hoekendijk's view, and in 1968, at the Uppsala conference of the WCC, the church was often ridiculed and was itself considered as an arena for mission. This led to a great confusion in the true understanding of the role of church in God's mission. Evangelicals continued to believe in a dynamic role for the church in mission; those with an Ecumenical background followed Hoekendijk's Cosmo centric model. The polarized understanding of the *missio Dei* led to a big split and consequently the

establishment of the Lausanne movement as a counter summit to the World Council of Churches.

In the following years, a re-reading of the whole concept of *missio Dei* emerged. Even today, the two interpretations of *missio Dei*- Christocentric and Cosmo centric echoe in the mission and missionary journey. For centuries, mission was understood to be work done by international missionary-sending societies for God in different cultural and social milieu. Following the Vatican II council and the succeeding years, a shift towards understanding mission as God's mission occurred. The attempt was made to understand mission in soteriological terms, thereby defining it as saving individuals from darkness. From a geographical perspective, it amounted to taking the culture and beliefs of Christian western world to the people in the global south and east. In addition to the above positions, Goheen considers mission as going to the third world countries of dark continents (25) and with only a partial gospel-social or medical, not the *whole Gospel*. Sometimes the term mission was presented from an ecclesiastical perspective as expansion of the church or a specific denomination. The Dutch missiologists F.J. Verstraelen and others replaced the "paradigm of expansion with communication" (qtd. in Goheen, 26,2014). The definitions of mission based on ecclesiastical and soteriological perspectives and their influence are still relevant to Indian churches at large. Amid varied interpretations, IPC churches need to affirm the mission of God from a Trinitarian perspective, rather than on a biased ecclesiastical structure. A final definition which I acknowledge Goheen is "Mission is the whole church (not just missionaries) taking the whole gospel to the whole person (not a 'spiritual gospel' for the soul and a 'social gospel'

for the body) in the whole world (not just to mission fields)” (26). This definition will be meaningful for the IPC churches in Kottayam to be missional in nature.

Biblically and theologically, mission can no longer be considered as the practical extension of the church nor an idea developed on mere soteriological terms. The ministry we are involved in and the activity we do, must reflect participation in the mission of God. This participation in the mission of God has to be authentic in nature. The primary purpose of the mission of the church (*missiones ecclesiae*) is not simply the planting of churches or saving of souls, rather it is service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, and pointing to God. To this Bosch says that the mission of the church is to “be a witness to the fullness of the promise of God’s reign and participate in the ongoing struggle between the reign and power of darkness and evil” (490,2006). The centrality of God in the mission of the church provides a deeper understanding to the mission of God. Barth’s hypothesis on mission in 1934, as originating from God, led Hartenstein to define *missio Dei* with the aspect of participating in God’s mission.

The contribution of Newbigin towards missional movement cannot be avoided. At the International Council meeting at Achimota in Ghana in 1958, Newbigin published major imperatives describing the missional nature of the church:

1. The church is the mission, which means that it is illegitimate to talk about the one without the other.
2. The home base is everywhere, which means that every Christian community is in a missionary situation.
3. Mission is partnership, which means the end of every form of guardianship (qtd. in Bosch 370).

This theological breakthrough to the understanding of *missio Dei* with missional theology and missional ecclesiology is important for this project. The project carried the position that church does not have a mission; but mission has a church. Newbigin's statement on the nature of the church can be affirmed from bible based on John.17:18 (As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into thy world and John. 20:21, Jesus said to them...As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. These verses convey the truth of church participating in God's mission. In conclusion, any ecclesiastical structure or denomination has no authority to create or define its own agenda to define the mission of God. Newbigin speaks very clearly to the understanding of *missio Dei* in a Trinitarian context and concludes that the purpose of *missio Dei* is three-fold. He is quoted by David Bosch as follows:

1. Proclaiming the kingdom of the Father, which means integration of faith and action.
2. Sharing the life of the son and amalgamation of love and action.
3. Bearing witness of the Spirit, incorporation of hope and action.

The Church through its participation in the *missio Dei* reflects the life of the Triune God in the world and through that identity, it participates in the mission of God and fulfills the characteristics of being missional by making His name known to the world. Based on the calling of Israel, the church also communicates the same truth to make His name known to the world. Newbigin's explanation of participation in *missio Dei* conveys a lot of direction and encouragement to individual Christian and ministers who are largely in a heterogeneous and homogeneous context. It also highlights the identity of a disciple and the result (outcome) of true participation in *missio Dei*. As the

*missio Dei* is initiated by God for the redemption of the whole creation, including the church itself, the role of the church is only to take part in the *missio Dei*. The concluding note to the definition of *missio Dei* is to win the lost and to establish the reign of God over the whole creation.

### **Missional Church: Definitions and Characteristics.**

The root word for missional comes from the noun form of the Latin, *mitto*, *mittere*, *misi*, *missus*- “send.” (The Latin noun derived from the verb *mitto* is *missio*, *missionis*). When the word missional relates to the nature of God, a specific reference to the theological concept that Trinitarian God is a missionary God or sending God is obvious.

The word *missional* is not to define or ascertain any activity. It is a shift in thinking. The missional church is not a congregation with attractive mission statements. It exists to participate in God’s mission of reconciliation. The general observation with regard to the missional church is: that it takes every command in the Great Commission (making new disciples) and governing principles and rules in the Great Commandments (loving God and loving others as self) very seriously. Barrett describes the quality, identity, and essence of a missional church. She describes it as:

‘A Church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it and restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending as being sent. A Missional congregation lets God’s mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since in its life together, the church is to embody God’s mission.’ (x).

In understanding the word- '*missional*' Hirsch comments on what *missional* is not: *Missional* is not synonymous with *emerging church*; *missional* is different from *evangelistic or seeker-sensitive*; *missional* is not a new way to talk about *church growth*, and *missional* is more than *social justice*. When mission was considered as taking a medical, social, or educational gospel to the third world or darkest continents, the use of the word *missional* was then a means to enhance or grow the church. Roxburgh and Boren correct the wrong notion of *missional* by stating:

A missional imagination is not about the church; it's not about how to make the church better, how to get more people to come to church or how to turn a dying church around. It's not about getting the church back to cultural respectability in a time when it has been marginalized. (20).

Defining church and mission, Roxburgh and Boren quotes Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury's imagination: "It is not the church of God that has a mission. It's God of mission that has a church" (20). To the true meaning of the word *missional*; the notion is that every church and believer ought to engage in God's mission not as an activity but as a way of life. Being missional also carries the sense that every individual is on mission all the time everywhere. Being missional is not limited to weekends or Sundays, but it is all the time. The definition of "being missional" is not a new idea or theological breakthrough. The aspect of being a disciple defines the missionary nature of the church and vocation of a disciple.

The term *missional* as an adjective in the missional church is used to describe the nature of church. It relates to being conformed to the image of God. The missional church consists of missional believers acting in unity to fulfill the *missio Dei* (Mission of God). They are faith communities willing and ready to be Christ's people wherever they are.



They practice hospitality, willing to take risks, understand the power of the gospel and much more in all dimensions. The term *missional* can be understood in three varied dimensions:

1. In the theological dimension, it conveys the notion that God is missionary and has sent all as missionaries, into their immediate communities.

2. In the cultural dimension, it conveys the notion that church must be contextual in approach to effectively communicate the gospel. Gospel transforms culture; therefore, the gospel must be translated in terms that people in that cultural context can grasp and understand the truth of the rule and reign of the kingdom of God.

3. In the mission/ministry dimension, it conveys the notion that everyone is sent by God into the world to bear the message of redemption. Unlike in the past, it is not the job of professional missionaries sent from the west to a less privileged society. It is the responsibility of all followers of Christ. Guder comments, “mission is not merely an activity of the church, rather it is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purpose to restore and heal creation. It means sending and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history” (*Missional Church* 4).

Hunsberger, Guder, and others coined the term ‘*missional*’ when the word ‘*mission*’ was only considered as proclamation of the gospel across the seas and on the mission field. The important aspect of being a disciple or being engaged in mission or in the community was missing with the word ‘*mission*.’ Flemming taking the whole aspect of missional dimension, describes it as “a community that is shaped by God’s story, community that shares God’s story and community that embodies God’s story” (231-251). This is the true understanding of a missional church. Being missional is not another

church growth strategy or mechanism for smart Christian living. Tracing the eight mega trends in missional conversation, Roxburgh and Boren in their comments state what missional does not mean? (31-34).

1. Missional church is not a label to describe churches that emphasize cross-cultural missions.
2. Missional church is not a label used to describe churches that use outreach programs to be externally focused.
3. Missional church is not another label for church growth and church effectiveness.
4. Missional church is not a label for churches that are effective at evangelism.
5. Missional church is not a label to describe churches that have developed a clear mission statement with a vision and purpose for their existence.
6. Missional church is not a way of turning around effective and outdated church forms so that they can display relevance in a wider culture.
7. Missional church is not a label that points to a primitive or ancient way of being the church.
8. Missional is not a label describing new formats of church that reach people who have no interest in traditional churches.

The church needs to be missional in nature always. The mission of God and reign of God in missional perspective guides a missional church in meaningful participation. Being missional has multi-dimensional effects; it is a living exercise of faith and action working together. The whole episode of the missional church starts with God, with the power and help of Holy Spirit, the will of the Lord on this earth is fulfilled. Gelder

plainly describes the missional church on: 1) What it is? 2) What it does? 3) What it organizes? (*Essence* 37). To achieve the church's missional mandate, the church needs to identify itself with Jesus' life. Being a missional church is obedient to the Great Commission and Great Commandment. God is the initiator to the missional being of the church.

I contend that the term *missional* ought to be understood as the characteristic and behavior of the church. It reflects the idea that the church is missionary in nature because of a missionary God. The term missional describes the grand themes of restoration and reconciliation with the focus on the commission, commandment, instruction, and declaration of Jesus. This understanding awakens the lost understanding of the missionary nature of the church, by the after effects of post-Christendom.

#### Missional Church: Characteristics

The word *missional* is a new term in the phraseology of the church and is much more than a list of projects or priorities. The word *missional* is not another word used as a model for church growth, nor a device or a mechanism for safe and better evangelism or another pragmatic means to success. The word *missional* describes the very heart of the church's existence, Christian life and identity, the nature of the gospel and the focus of God's mission. It is not an esoteric language invented by clergy but has the description of intentional participation of everyone in *missio Dei*. The concept and essence of the missional church challenge the basic assumptions on the nature and purpose of the church.

There are different terms used by missional church proponents to describe the characteristics and patterns of a missional church. They are described as *characteristics*, *patterns*, *practices*, *indicators*, *elements*, and *principles*. All these descriptions are to highlight the nature and task of the church in participating in God's mission. Many are confused about the true characteristics of a functional church. Rick Warren focuses on five purposes of the church: Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Membership and Evangelism (*Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising your message and mission*) and Schwarz follows eight qualities for a healthy church: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship service, holistic small groups, need oriented evangelism and loving relationships (*Natural Church Development: A Guide to eight essential qualities of healthy church*). These two proponents of church growth propose steps that advocate a healthy church. However, these steps are not practical, sometimes remains superficial.

The major problems with today's church ministry are three-fold in nature: 1) The goal is to attract people to church, 2) To take care of those who are attracted and 3) Mission is just one of many activities of the church. However, the missional church describes what a missional church looks like. The church sees the biblical call as preparing everyone to be sent as missionaries to their own work areas or communities. Six proponents have defined characteristics of missional church as *characteristics*, *pattern*, *indicators*, *elements*, *practices*, and *principles*.

Newbigin lists six *characteristics* of a missional church: The church Praises God; Stands on Christian Faith; Engages with Secular Community; Empowers to disperse;

Models exemplary community; Is grounded in Christian history and focused on the eschaton.

Guder mentions it as empirical *indicators* of a missional Church: The church Engages in celebrative worship; Proclaims the Gospel; Discerns God's specific missional vocation; Practices Hospitality; Visible impact on community; Growth in discipleship; Bible informs community; Distinctively Christian; Christian Behavior; Loving Accountability; Diverse Community and Community in Process (*Missional Church* 1998).

Keller mentions it as *elements* of a missional church: The church stands on doctrinal-truth/experience; Discourses in the vernacular; Enters and retells the culture's stories with the gospel; Theologically trains lay people for public life and vocation; Works for the common good of whole city; Lives in the City; Christian community as counter-cultural and counter-intuitive; practices Christian unity as much as possible on local level and Lives in kingdom hope (Keller, '*The Missional Church Redeemer*' June 2001).

Frost and Hirsch mentions their *Principles* for a missional church: Messianic, Incarnational, and Apostolic.

Minatrea describes the *Practices* of a missional church: Rewrites worship; Lives Apostolically; Expects to change the world; Mission sending; Teaches to obey; High threshold for membership; Authentically Christian; Orders actions according to purpose and Places kingdom concerns first.

Lois Barrett describes it as *Patterns* for a missional church: Worship as Public Witness; Biblical formation and discipleship; Missional vocation; Missional authority;

Taking risks as contrast community; Practices that demonstrate God's intent for the world; Pointing toward the reign of God and Dependence on the Holy Spirit.

All these missional church proponents describe their sense of missional meaning in multiple dimensions and do not limit or confine it to an idea or a model. A closer analysis of these makes me realize mission as all-encompassing vocation of the church. The above descriptions, due importance to understanding the nature of the church and its task of participating in *missio Dei*. Personally, I find that being missional enables one to publicly profess, confess and proclaim His name amid all adversity. For IPC churches in Kottayam, the *patterns* of Barrett and *practices* of Minatreau are meaningful. It is not to underestimate others. The description of Frost and Hirsch is meaningful in dealing with *missional leadership*. Newbigin's characteristics and Guder's indicators guides one for how to be holistic in missional approach.

After reviewing and comparing all these characteristics, indicators, elements, principles, practices, and patterns, I see it as three dimensional in approach: *Vertical dimension (Relationship with God); Horizontal Dimension (Relationship with the community in and around), and Self Dimension (Personal Growth, Maturity aspect)*.

For IPC Churches in Kottayam to be missional, the patterns laid down by Barrett are worthwhile and for the church as a community to be missional in nature, Minatreau's practices are apt and helpful for individuals to be missional. Both these models are holistic in approach and covers three dimensions (*Vertical, Horizontal, and Self*). The patterns as laid by Barrett are as follows:

1. *Missional Vocation*: Missional vocation is about one being faithful to God's calling and sending. The congregation together is discovering the missional vocation.

The IPC churches must redefine the missional vocation as the vocation of every member of the community rather than the clergy.

2. *Biblical Formation and Discipleship*: The Bible is normative in life. All members reflect the meaning of being the disciple of Jesus. The *Being, Doing, and Telling* of Christ's story is not the mandate from the church, but the mandate of Jesus Christ and Scripture teaches it.

3. *Taking Risks as a contrast community*: Scripture speaks about our identity in this world and how to accommodate ourselves to the challenges. We live and associate in this world but are not of this world (1 Jn. 4:16,17). In the endeavor to participate in God's mission, the missional church is involved in taking risks by behaving in contrast to others because of participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The life of distinctive discipleship is by making disciples "*of nations*" rather than "*from all nations.*" This aspect of distinctive discipleship needs to be seen in the community life of the missional disciple. Sometimes the IPC churches in Kottayam, prefer to keep silent on issues in the community and remain isolated and feel happy to live an isolated life. It is opposite to the true nature of the missional church.

4. *Practice that demonstrates God's intent for the world*: The practice of a missional church is a true demonstration of what God intends for the life of the whole world. The acts of compassion, sharing, helping, counselling, prayer, hospitality are all the result of being shaped by God's heart. Theologically, a missional church is a reflector of true Christ's character on this earth. God's intent for the world is not limited to preaching only. IPC Churches in Kottayam must discover all practices that God's

intends from a missional church. The acts resulting in compassion, and social concern are very less evident with IPC churches in Kottayam.

5. *Worship as Public Witness:* Worship is giving due honor to God and celebrates God's presence and promise in the journey of life. From worship flows the act of public witness. The aspect of worship is limited to place and especially with Sunday service and other services in the church. In fact, worship as public witness must remain strong from Monday to Saturday, and not limited to Sunday worship alone.

6. *Dependence on the Holy Spirit:* The missional community confesses that it is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. This pattern is never a problem with the IPC churches in Kottayam.

7. *Pointing toward the reign of God:* Participating in *missio Dei* in the present world is to let the kingdom of God be known to all creation. This act of the missional church, where others in the world understand the present and future concept of kingdom of God, must be the top priority of every missional individual and community at large. For IPC churches sometimes, the future reign is more important than the present. Through identity, activity, and communication a missional disciple or church can make their missional living and their witness meaningful.

8. *Missional Authority:* The Holy Spirit guides the missional church in varied ways with diverse functional roles and practices. The role of the Holy Spirit is intentional and helps those in the missional church to discern their part in the community's life. The role of Holy Spirit for the IPC churches is more vertical in dimension. The role of Holy Spirit is very evident from the prayer of Jesus in John 17.



The Holy Spirit guides the missional church in a variety of ways with diverse roles and practices.

Having stated the patterns of Barrett, the Minatrea model is worth and commending. Minatrea quoting the statement of Shannon Hopkings (a young visionary with Emerging Church) on missional churches, states- “missional churches understand that Christ initiated His church as a movement, with the big idea of inviting all people to experience life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ” (16). It speaks about the passion and zeal of the missional church towards God and people. The passion and zeal of IPC churches in Kottayam towards God and in reaching the spiritual dimension of the people are appreciable. It will be helpful to take a note on what Minatrea comments on missional church living on their passion. I agree with Minatrea that “for missional churches, passion does not stay personal or referential; it is the essence of and expression of their corporate culture, the primary value that drives their behavior” (17). To explain that, Minatrea presents the *four* dimensions of missional churches and the *eight* characteristics in these four dimensions, which drives one with a concrete passion to live missionally and faithfully (17).

*1. Dimension one: Love God*

*Loving God* is not out of fear or with fear but is one’s intimate relationship with God. Loving God comes after knowing God personally.

The Characteristics of this dimension are: *Worship* and *Obedience*.

*Worship* in missional churches is not limited to days, but it is dynamic and constantly developing. The growth in the attitude of worship is reflected in one’s intimacy and knowledge of the Lord. Minatrea comments “*as relationship increases,*

*expression of worship also deepens (21) and as objects of His love, missional Christians express their responding love for God through worship” ( 21). Worship is important for everyone, and it is tied to mission.*

*Obedience* is automatic response to God’s love. Those loving God will obey him. Missional Christians seek to live in obedience to his commands (Minatrea 21). Missional christians not only know the Word of God, they also respond to its teaching in obedience. Obedience is not an option for the missional community, but it is one’s life journey. IPC churches in Kottayam needs to more seriously consider worship and obedience in the dimension of loving God, thereby increasing their sphere of influence among the community.

## 2. *Dimension two: Live His Mission*

The dimension of *Live His Mission* carries the true essence to the definition of being missional. This aspect is not reflected with the word *mission*. Living his mission every day is the challenge for IPC churches members in Kottayam. A great disparity of spirituality exists for Christians on Sunday and from Monday to Saturday. The testimony of present-day Christians in the city of Kottayam reflects the nature of *Live His mission*. The statement that the “Great Commission is not a suggestion but a command to follow without any alternative” needs to be inculcated in the life of every believer in Kottayam. Those who *Live His Mission* consider the Great Commission as a command and its values control their lives.

The characteristics to this dimension are: *Serve and Share*

The concept of *Serve and Share* is clear from the prayer of Jesus in John 17. The life of Jesus depicts a good example of Serving. Missional churches live his (Jesus)

mission of serving and sharing. Through this ministry, they influence people. The ministries of missional churches are: they follow the leadership pattern of Christ, provide compassionate care to persons in need, meet the physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of people in communities (Minatrea 22).

These are good indicators for the IPC churches in Kottayam to understand what the missional practices of missional churches are. The serve and share characteristics must not be limited to the spiritual aspect only. It has to be holistic in nature and missional churches do show us.

### 3. *Dimension three: Love people*

The title of Minatrea's book, *Shaped by God's Heart*; is one true characteristic of a missional community. When God's heart shapes us, we become objects of his love and will genuinely love people too. To love others is an important commandment of our Lord. "Love your neighbor as Yourself" (Matthew 22: 39). This love is without reservations. Missional churches love God, live his mission and love people too.

The characteristics in this dimension are: *Embrace and Invite*.

Sharing love and accepting everyone are the true quality of a genuine Christian. Additionally, missional Christians extend the loving embrace of Christ to those in and around them without any reservations. Embracing is more than receiving; it is about having concern for those in need. In doing so, missional Christians advocates for powerless persons in their communities. Missional Christians, by doing so, reflect the peace and righteousness of God. When the missional community share, serve, and embrace people, they also invites them to experience the personal love of God. People are invited to experience God's personal love and concern by missional communities not

only by preaching but through other gifts also. There are multiple entry points to invite individuals to ask questions about God. IPC churches in Kottayam do need to take a note of this dimension and the characteristics attached to it. The churches in Kottayam gives more preference to gospel preaching or conferences and consider them as places to invite others. However, missional church principles provide us multiple entry point, to welcome people to experience God personally.

*4. Dimension four: Lead them to follow*

Discipleship is not complete by just bringing someone to Church. It is the starting point. Sharing the gospel with someone and bringing him to Church for fellowship is considered a great accomplishment for IPC churches. Yet, a missional church is not content by only loving people, they also desire to see everyone become an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. They *Love God, Live His mission, Love People, and Lead* those who will become followers, who will in turn lead those who will become followers. Missional churches focus beyond themselves to love people and lead them into being authentic disciples.

The characteristics of this group: *Equip and Empower*

In the New Testament, equip is used to measure the growth of a disciple in his/her journey of faith. The term refers to training to make authentic the disciple of Christ. Missional communities equip members for God's mission. They encourage and empower people. The missional community attempt is to make everyone the *salt* and *light* of the earth. In doing so, they count everyone as a missionary whereby they influence and dispel darkness. IPC Churches in Kottayam do need to empower everyone in being a missionary.

The *patterns* of Barrett and *passion* dimensions of Minatrea show the driving factors of the missional communities. They are driven to love God and share that love in everything they do. Their life in the community is the same every day and everywhere. All these missional church characteristics are important. For more clarity, these are characteristics seen in John 17 when looking at the missional church from a Trinitarian view of God's mission.

1. *Missional church recognizes the missionary nature of God.*

The term '*sending*' in scripture reveals and speaks about the missionary nature of the triune God. About forty times in John's Gospel the word sent is used to express Jesus' sending. Jesus sees himself not only as the one sent, but also as one who is sending (Jn.20:21).

2. *Missional church recognizes the missionary nature of Church.*

The church is really *the church* more in its going or when being sent. The purpose of the church is derived from the very nature of a sending, missionary God.

3. *Missional church advocates the incarnational approach rather than the attractional approach.*

The missional church is more concerned about sending people in the church out among the people of the world, rather than getting the people of the world to the church. Missional is *go and be* and attractional is *come and see* approach. In the *go and be* approach, missional churches see their function as *moving* into the community, *embodying and living* the word in *deed*, and *witnessing* to the life of Jesus. To the missional incarnational lifestyle, Hirsch states, 'to act incarnationally will mean in part that in our mission to those outside the faith, we will need to exercise a genuine

identification and affinity with those we are attempting to reach. It will probably mean moving into common geography/ space and thus setting up a real and abiding presence among the [people]" (133,2006).

4. *Missional church defines mission as participation in missio Dei.*

God's primary activity in the world is through the church. There is a great difference between a mission- minded church and a missional church. A church with mission programs considers missions as one activity among others, whereas a missional church considers it as their daily vocation with a privilege to participate.

5. *Missional church understands its being as rooted in God's mission.*

There is a purpose for a church's '*being*' to be rooted in God's mission. The church is entrusted with the task of restoring, healing, and calling people to a relationship. God's mission calls the church into existence. I agree with Moltmann "church don't have a mission, but mission has a church" (64) or in the words of Bosch, "it is not the church which undertakes mission it is the missio Dei which constitutes the church." (519). To this Wright says, "it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world; but that God has a church for his mission in the world" (62).

All these characteristics and descriptions of missional church describe its essence and the nature of the missional community. Yes, the missional church defines *missio Dei* and God's concern for the broken world.

### **Mission of God as Trinitarian**

This section also declares the essence of the church, which is divine in existence. The mission of God has a pattern for its functioning. It is neither ruled nor controlled by man; man does not devise its plans. The Trinity is another way of expressing the reality that the God of Bible is one God who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. Genesis 1:1, Exodus 20:2-4, and Deuteronomy 6:4 reveal that there is one God. The Bible also makes it evident that one God, who is creator, sustainer, and redeemer, is spoken of in plural. God has forever existed as Father, Son, and Spirit. The Bible is very clear that there is something inherent to the very nature of what it means to be God. Stanley Grenz states, “there is no God but the triune God; God is none other than Father, Son and Spirit... the threeness of the one God is eternal; threeness is the way God actually is in his essential being” (66).

The term *missio Dei* reveals the authenticity, identity, and author of the mission of the church. The attempt to see other faiths (religions) mission statements as like the mission of the church does no justice to Jesus claims of uniqueness, nor to the Trinitarian nature of God. Bosch defends the concept of *missio Dei* and is convinced that neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Bosch further states “The classical doctrine on *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit, was expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world” (390). Supporting strongly the Trinitarian nature of mission, J. Andrew Kirk comments, “When Christian communities speak about God, by definition they have to speak about Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There simply is no other God. Therefore to speak about the

*missio Dei* is to indicate, without any qualification the *missio Trinitatis*” (27). Bosch and Kirk affirm the *who* and *what* of God’s mission. John.20:21 is a reminder from Jesus himself of the nature of his mission and also speaks about the factor of accountability of his mission.

The church’s mission belongs to God and its nature is given by God. This nature with its uniqueness in a community denotes its reality and power from above. The mission of God as Trinitarian is a social community of three persons within the Godhead and their existence as a social community- serves as the basis to understand the nature of the church. A God who acts is the reality of this *missio Dei*. He is a sending God; God sent his Son into the world to fulfill the plan of redemption. The Father and Son sent the Spirit to create the people of God as a missionary people.

The social relational nature of the triune God can be seen from creation. God created heaven and earth through the full participation of the Son and the Spirit. The created world is fallen, and God seeks to redeem it. The entire Godhead Father, Son and Holy Spirit are dynamically involved in the mission of God within creation, re-creation, and the final consummation. The mission of God as Trinitarian is related to the sending work of God, Son sent by Father, Spirit sent by the Father and the Son.

### **Biblical Foundations**

To understand the good indicators for missional living, scripture’s grand narrative is the place to begin. Scripture points out that mission is at the heart of God’s story, beginning with God himself as missionary in nature pursuing fallen creation. The central



truth of mission is the *sending of God*. He sent his son and now his redeemed children (the church) to join in his redemptive work.

The mission of God has its author, direction, order, and purpose. There is a God who acts, He is active even today (Jn.5:17). His work is a great motivation for the Church in participating with him. The mission of God is seen with the nature of Trinity itself. It extended through Israel, now through the church, and it includes all members from their vocational life. Understanding the biblical foundation of *missio Dei* and the missional church will help us to understand the constant invitation from God to his redeemed community to participate with him. A Trinitarian understanding of *missio Dei* with a biblical and theological foundation will encourage and motivate individuals toward the true nature and essence of being missional. To this, the attempt is to see the *missio Dei* and *sent* in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

#### *Missio Dei* and Mission (*Sent*) in the Old Testament

The understanding of *Missio Dei* and mission (*sent*) in the Old Testament will lay a foundation in understanding the authenticity of a concrete missional theology and its practice.

#### *Missio Dei* in the Old Testament

The involvement of God's people in mission in the Old Testament reflects a strong missionary nature. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. narrates, "many will still claim that Abraham and his successors did not have anything like a missionary mandate to be actively involved in spreading the good news" (*Mission* 12). To this negative opinion, Kaiser affirms positively about Israel, "they were just to be the people of God in the

world” (*The Great* 1-2). The need is to look at Old Testament mission in *sent* perspective. The Old Testament understanding of mission, has a different appeal than the New Testament. Bosch comments, “ There is, in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old Covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in-order to win others to faith in Yahweh” (17). I do content that God did not act alone. Rather, God’s choice of Israel as his treasured possession was a calling to join him in worldwide mission. God’s missionary heart, passion, and intention is present and consistent throughout the Old Testament.

From the creation of man, there has been an aspect of calling on man’s life. They are to rule on God’s behalf as is representatives. Victor P Hamilton when describing the meaning of *subdue and dominion* considers it as peaceful rule and not harsh and exploitative (137-138). After the fall, the redemption plan and calling of Abraham to lead a people all had two definable actions by which God’s people would be known: *blessing* and *sentness*. The role of Israel is clearly mentioned in Exodus 19:4-6. Israel was chosen for a mediatory, missionary role as a servant nation. For this service, Kaiser says, “Election was not a call to privilege, but chosen for service to God. The people were to be God’s ministers, his preachers, and his prophets to their own nation as well as to the other nations” (*Mission* 14). Even though Israel was unfaithful to its calling, yet God did not abandon them nor his plan. However, the blessing of nations continued through the line of David to all nations. Even in the book of Isaiah, God’s worldwide missionary purpose for the nation is mentioned through prophecy in the servant songs (Isa. 42:6; 49:6).

Through Exodus and exile, God continued his theme/act of *calling*, *gifting*, and *sending* in order for him to be glorified. Israel as God's treasured possession was called with a purpose to live for him and be a light to the nations. As a missional community, Israel's engagement with other cultures was expected to be a faithful presence within. To this James Davidson Hunter comments, "God was calling them to something different not to be defensive against, isolated from or absorbed into the dominant culture, but to be faithfully present within it" (419). Jeremiah 29:7 describes the missional heart of God for Israel. The nations were to be a blessing for others, by living distinctively while contributing constructively to the good of the community where were living. It included raising families, seeking the welfare of Babylon, praying for the city, "for in its welfare you will find your welfare." From the accounts of the *Exodus* and *Exile*, the motifs of calling, gifting, and sending have not changed. Their calling was clear and Israel was to know Yahweh and be reflectors of him. Yet, the chosen ones often did not go. Israel as a nation was reluctant and not faithful to her calling. To this Allen Hilton says, "though called and sent, time and again, people were often resistant, not pictured as missional, lacking conscious participation in God's mission" (88).

#### Mission (*Sent*) in the Old Testament

The meaning of mission is filled with insights when looking at the Old and New Testaments with the aspect of *sending*. The word *mission* derived from a Latin word meaning *send*. The English equivalent is used in the Bible to translate the Hebrew word *shalach* and the Greek words *pempo* and *apostello*.

The whole aspect of sending in the Old Testament is based on three questions. They are:

1. Who is the Sender? Or, who initiates the mission?

2. Who are Sent? Or, who are missionaries?
3. Why are they sent? Or, what is the purpose of the mission?

The subject of sending in the Old Testament is God himself. The sending references in Old Testament are in three tenses: 1) It refers to God sending in the *past*, Ps 105:26- “He sent Moses his servant and Aaron whom he had chosen.” 2) It also refers to sending in the *future* as in Ps.57:3- “He shall send from heaven and save me when he that would swallow me up reproaches; God shall sent forth his mercy and his truth.” 3) It is also sometimes a prayer to God to send in the *present* situation as in Ps.43:3- “O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me and let them bring me unto they holy hill.” Clearly from the Old Testament, the divine proposition of sending is a prerogative which belongs especially to God himself. The initiative in mission begins with God.

The Hebrew word *Shalach* suggests not merely a God who sends, but whatsoever or whoever he sends, he sends as his instrument or as his agents officially authorized to act on his behalf. The importance lies with the sender rather than the person sent. In the Old Testament, God sending had four acts.

1. God sends various kinds of troubles, plagues, pestilences, sword, hornets, serpents, and others.
2. God sends Judges (I.Sam.12:11) like Gideon (1. Sam. 9:16).
3. God sends Prophets (Jer. 7:25); Samuel (1 Sam. 16:1), Nathan, Elijah, Ezekiel, and others.
4. Judges, Kings, and Prophets are all regarded as God’s specially authorized agents sent by him to perform some special work for him. God sends his angel to

deliver Daniel from the lion's den (Dan.6:22) and to protect the Hebrews in their wanderings (Exod.23:20).

When considering the reason for sending, the Old Testament answers that the purpose of God's sending is seen in the types of things and people whom he sends.

1. The primary purpose of God's sending is redemption and salvation. This aspect is seen in the sending of Judges and Kings. Saul is sent to deliver people from the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. 9:16); Moses and Aaron are sent as the agents of God's redemptive purpose (1 Sam. 12:8); God sent Joseph to preserve his people in a time of famine (Gen 45:5-8); the angels are sent to protect and defend God's people in their time of need (Exod. 23:20).

2. The second purpose of God's sending is to bring God's people back to himself. This purpose is seen in the sending of the prophets whose function is to make Israel repent and turn back to God. Nathan is sent to David to make him repent of his sin with Bathsheba (2. Sam.12:1); Ezekiel and Jeremiah are both sent to bring home to God's people their sinfulness and turn them back to God (Jer. 1:7; Ezek. 2:3,4)

#### *Missio Dei* and Mission (*Sent*) in the New Testament

The understanding of *Missio Dei* and mission (sent) in the New Testament continues from the Old Testament. There is no difference to its meaning and essence. The New Testament aspect of *missio Dei* and mission culminates with the coming of Jesus Christ and by presenting himself to the real aspect of being missional.

The *missio Dei* continues in the New Testament. Jesus too was called, bestowed, and sent with a purpose to glorify his Father. Jesus was sent to fulfill the will of the

Father. Jesus completed God's mission on earth. Jesus' mission is rightly described by Robert Webber as follows, "Jesus called disciples to be like him by delivering the same message of repentance (Matt. 9:36), (Matt. 20:24-28) and emulating the same servant attitude" (24). When looking at Jesus' commission in the Gospel of John, *mission as participation in God's mission is very clear* (John 17:18; 20:19-23). In the commission of Jesus, sentness is not optional. In Jesus himself, we see a disciple who sought to do his Father's will, not his own (John 15:16-20). Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God always aligned with his life and deeds. In other words, Jesus' kingdom message serves as an interpretation of who is in the incarnate Jesus.

Mission is from God and the relationship of Jesus with God the Father proves it. The intimate connection between the Father and the Son gives hope to today's Christ follower who wants to be on mission with God. Gerald Borchert comments, "Inherent in the love of the Father is the desire of the Father to reveal to the Son all the activity of God" (237). In a similar manner, as the Son looked to the Father for his assignment, those who believe in Jesus must look to him for their role in God's kingdom. The truth on the missional church is that the christian church is a missionary church, with the commission from Jesus.

#### Mission (*Sent*) in the New Testament

The aspect of sending in the Old Testament and the New Testament have the same purpose of either delivering or recalling people back to God. The Major passages in the New Testament speak of God sending our Lord Jesus Christ. Many passages make Jesus the object of the sending of God. The major emphasis is laid on the sender rather

than on the sent- as clear from the use of the Greek words *pempein* and *apostellein*. The significance of sending lies in the fact that it is in the context of the Father-Son relationship. The Apostle Paul also associates God's sending of Christ with the Father-Son relationship.

A careful reading of the passages in the fourth Gospel speaks of God sending of his Son. The main emphasis is on the fact that Jesus is sent as the representative of the Father, authorized to do the Father's will (John.5:23;12:44; Matt.10:40) and that Christ's work is in fact the work of the Father through Him (John.8: 16,18,26,29). The reason for the sending of Christ is important to understand. The purpose of sending Christ is to *redeem* and to *bring His people back* to himself. This act of bringing His people back to Himself is seen in the sending of Christ by God into the world.

Clearly the sending of the Son by God made all men his sons in the Son, and by the sending of the Holy Spirit by God enabled those who are made sons in Christ's redemptive sending to respond to God as sons and call Him Abba, Father. The Holy Spirit is sent not to rescue and to redeem but to enable men to come back to God as redeemed sons. Thus, God's sending of the Holy Spirit corresponds roughly to God's sending of the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, with the purpose of teaching and making people aware of their sin; God's sending of the Son corresponds roughly to God's sending of judges and kings with the purpose of delivering people from the hands of enemies.

In the New Testament God's sending is virtually confined to the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Almost no references exist at all of God sending anyone after sending the Son and the Holy Spirit. God's purpose of redeeming his people and bringing

them back to himself has been in principle fulfilled in the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit. God's sending of the Son and the Spirit have fulfilled his purpose, for the Church as the body of Christ is his redeemed people, empowered by the Holy Spirit to offer back to God the filial response of worship. The church is the redeemed community with a task and purpose. The church has no mission, it is simply the sphere in which the purpose of God's sending has been and is being fulfilled. The New Testament has dozens of references to Christ's sending of the disciples and it remains the point of reference where we understand the dimensions of the mission of God. The sending of the disciples by our Lord Jesus Christ occurred in his own lifetime and the disciples were his representatives on the earth. The sending of disciples had a two-fold purpose, *to heal, to cast out devils* and *to preach repentance*. This sending was of a temporary nature, it reached its climax in the upper room on Easter day when Christ not only gave the assembled apostles, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but also authorized them to act as his representatives to carry on his work. John 20:21, "*As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you,*" here the sending is more permanent in nature and describes what constitutes the Church's missionary appeal, nature, and charter.

The mission of the church is an extension of God's sending of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We speak of the mission of God as one who sent his son to redeem and his Holy Spirit to bring back the redeemed to himself. The church as the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit is both the sphere in which these sending have been fulfilled and are to fulfill his purpose by being missional in nature. The mission of the church has no meaning apart from her being the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. These spheres are not in her own right; God's sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit



have made her so. God's mission through the church is simply the completion of his mission through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The triune God himself is the source of the mission of the church. Essential in the missionary purpose of God are the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. God did not cease to participate in the missionary enterprise with the sending of the Son once for all in the flesh. He did not make a beginning which must then be carried forward by human efforts. He did not lay down a pattern, after which men were to develop their missionary enterprises. With the sending of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son God has made it evident that he retains the missionary enterprise in his own hands and does not surrender it to any human authority.

Mission of God as Trinitarian (John.17:18; 20:21).

The word 'Trinity' is not mentioned in the Bible, yet the word is another way of expressing the reality that the God of the Bible is one God who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. The verses from Genesis 1:1, Exodus 20:2-4 and Deuteronomy 6:4 reveals that there is one God. This one God is the creator, sustainer, and redeemer. God has for all time existed as Father, Son, and Spirit. Grenz states, "there is no God but the triune God; God is none other than Father, Son and Spirit... the threeness of the one God is eternal; threeness is the way God actually is in his essential being" (66).

John 17 describes the whole ministry of Jesus Christ on earth. John 17 and the preceding discourse do teach that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a community of love, unity, order, and mission. In John 17 the words of Jesus make it clear that he expects his followers to possess the same characteristics once he ascends to the Father and sends the

Spirit to live with them. The characteristics of this Trinitarian community which must be reflected in our participation in the mission of God are:

1. *Sacrificial Love.* Moltmann says, “Self giving love is the Trinity’s signature. This characteristic is at the heart of triune life... the obedience and humiliation of the Son, culminating in his death on the cross, are a revelation of the inner life of God” (*Trinity* 77-79). The evidence of this sacrificial love is seen in John 17:24 when Jesus prays, ‘Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.’ The practice of love seen between Father, Son and Spirit perfectly defines what the true meaning of Love is. True love is without any demands or conditions and it is evident from the social relation within the Trinity. Fred Sanders comments, “God is that being who exists as the triune love of the Father for the Son in the unity of the Spirit. The good news of the gospel is that God has opened to us the dynamics of His triune life and given us a share in that fellowship” (70). Yes, God has given the privilege to share with him in fellowship, and yet John 17 makes abundantly clear that the believing community or every missional church does have the responsibility to love one another in a way that reflects the value and principle of triune love and points individuals or people of other faith to God.

2. *Divine Order.* The role pertaining to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is divine and the characteristics of submission is clearly seen. Jesus truly submitted to the will of the Father and glorified him in every manner. The life of Jesus Christ is a true act of submission. Bruce Ware considers this act of submission as an important characteristic of trinitarian relationships. He says, “the most marked characteristics of the trinitarian

relationships is the presence of an eternal and inherent expression of authority and submission” (137).

An act of submission from Jesus to the Father’s provide an example of how to be involved in *missio Dei*. The order and submission seen from the Trinitarian relationship is a great model for missional churches. The Godhead are reciprocal in work and nature. The account of exercising authority over others is not there, but elements of mutual respect and relationship are mentioned. These attributes are to be followed by everyone and must reflect the similar characteristics of love and submission in God’s ordered way.

3. *True sense of Unity*. In the Trinity or Trinitarian community, there is the true meaning of unity. In John 17: 11, Jesus prays that his followers, ‘May be one, even as we (Trinity) are one.’ The nature and essence of a missional church is evident from the expression of unity in the Trinitarian community, which is a great example for the missional churches to follow. Sanders comments:

‘The Son and the Spirit are always together in carrying out the world of the Father. They are always at work in an integrated mutually reinforcing way, fulfilling the Father’s will in unison. Yet they are not interchangeable with each other, and they are not duplicating each other’s work’ (138).

The characteristics of perfect oneness in nature, will, and mission are seen with the union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In John 17, Jesus also prays that his followers would be perfectly united with the Triune community and with one another so that the entire world may know God. The important characteristics of unity are not very evident among the Christians in Kottayam, in the IPC churches in Kottayam and even in India at

large. The nature of true unity, the sense of oneness is the key ingredient of a true missional church. It has great implications and does give better result.

4. *Mission of Triune God.* In John 17:18, Jesus clarifies his Mission. He says, as thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. Without knowing the missional nature of Triune God, it is impossible to speak of God's mission. Taking a note to the Trinitarian mission Ott, Strauss and Tennent comment, "The mission of God beginning with the very good creation, continuing with the redemption of sinners from every nation, and culminating with the glorious restoration of all things is rooted in the divine initiative and character of triune God" (67). The mission of God begins with God's act of loving mankind and His own creation. This love is further reflected in his mission by sending his Son and Spirit to redeem and reconcile to himself. The mission and ministry of the church is not out of a vacuum. John 17 and the characteristics of the Trinitarian mission of the Father, Son and Spirit communicate the truth that God is the author of the mission of the church.

### **Research Themes**

#### **The Missional Church Begins with God- Empowered Love**

Someone does not establish a church by intelligence; people do not respond to the gospel because of a preacher's charisma. The gospel calls for a response and change. The role of the Holy Spirit is important in a soul's repentance. Sharing the gospel is not for any ulterior motive but is by the *Love for God* and *Love of God*. The Holy Spirit alone can complete the task, but He chooses us and makes us to be intimately related to him by being involved in his world. By doing so, God allows us to participate in his redeeming work which is empowered by God's love. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit,

God's love moves us to see the world through God's eyes and enables one to move out of our comfort zone and become a church *in* the community rather than a church *for* the community.

The Apostle Paul gives us his perspective for ministry and mission in 2

Corinthians 5:14-21:

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. <sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This verse comments on living our faith in a corrupt society. God's love compels the Apostle Paul and he understood the love and work of God for him. The love that motivated Paul into action, is the same love that motivates a missional church too. Compelled by love also means seeing people through God's eyes and seeing them as objects of redemption.

God showed his love to us. His demonstration of love towards his children is powerful, His love resides in us and transforms us and therefore as missional churches, we need to follow this love of God when we relate to people. Along with the Apostle Paul, John the apostle also tells us to witness God's love and our love for him and for the people. To be missional we have to love the children of God in the world of God's created people: "By this all people will know that you are my disciple, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). The world must consider the church as 'a true expression

of God's love.' To be a missional church, it must constantly prove the reality of God's love in all dimensions of life (*vertical, horizontal, and self*).

### **God's Mission shapes every Missional Church.**

To advocate missional passion, the missional church needs to *Love God, Love People, Live His Mission, and Lead People for His Mission*. This passionate principle is evident from the reciprocal relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A church cannot shrink God to their needs and methods, neither can it limit the scope of God's mission. The missional church is a community shaped by God's story and one who embodies God's story in their life (Flemming). The church's desire must be God's desire which is to glorify God rather than limit God.

To recover the missional vision of the church we need to recover the grandeur of God's mission and his greatness. The Apostle Paul was devoted to the church and the people whom he met. His zeal to see others convinced of gospel truth and redeemed of God's eternal mercy and grace was out of God's love which compelled him (2 Cor. 5:14). The world and its situations never compelled the Apostle Paul to share God's love. To be a missional church, one needs to be driven by God's love.

### **Missional Churches consider Mission as Participation**

The initiative for mission lies always in God. Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He may give you" (John.15:16). The motivation for mission exists in Christ, who summons the church to

participate. A missional church does not own the mission; they only share in the marvelous plan and mission of God. A missional church considers participation because they enjoy witnessing the glory of God's creation and invites people to be transformed by the gospel of grace and love. Every member of the missional church reflects the nature of being transformed.

Mission as participation also declares the calling and purpose of the missional church. The church has not chosen God's mission; God has chosen them for his missional purpose. It is God's mission, and his missional church. By participation in God's mission, a missional church defines mission as the essence of the church rather than an expression or representation.

### **Theological Foundations**

#### Theology of *Missio Dei*

*Missio Dei* theology is a defining paradigm of mission for many church traditions after the Willingen conference. The term was reaffirmed at respective councils (the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1999, and the World Evangelical Fellowship's *Iguassu Affirmation* of 1999). The term *missio Dei* rejects the concept that mission is executed by the church sending missionaries overseas.

The understanding of mission as originating from the Triune God emphasizes the inner-trinitarian sending-the Father who sends the Son, and the Father and Son who send the Spirit, and the Father, the Son, and the Spirit who send the Church into the world. It conveys the idea that mission begins with God and not the church. The explanation for

*missio Dei* describes the wider implications of the salvific work of God for the kingdom, in which the participation of the church is very important.

### Theology of Missional Church

At the 1952 Willingen missionary conference, when the church-centric paradigm stressed the missionary nature of the church, questions were raised on the existing forms of church life. The challenge was to change the Christendom structures which the church had inherited. The intention was to find patterns, structures, and nature to serve and define the missionary nature of the church. The efforts of Lesslie Newbigin for a concrete missional church theology in Trinitarian perspective is appreciable. His aim highlights the fact that the church is a sign and foretaste of the kingdom. A missional church's emphasis is to reflect God's calling and be practical in living as *sent* people. Guder comments on the five qualities of a missional church, which is theological in nature. It also reflects the true nature and vocation of the church as God's called and sent people (*Missional* 11). The five qualities are:

1. A missional ecclesiology is *biblical*

The vocation of the missional church is found in the Bible. The bible speaks explicitly on God's mission; it is authoritative in nature and is reliable all through the centuries.

2. A missional ecclesiology is *historical*

Every church has its own development story. Every church has its own cultural expressions owing to varied backgrounds. A missional church accepts all cultural expressions without any restrictions.



3. A missional ecclesiology is *contextual*

Context plays an important part in cross cultural ministry. The gospel transforms every culture, and God's people are formed in that culture by the Spirit-empowered word. The one way to be the church in any context is to be incarnational in approach. In doing so, the truth and faithfulness of the gospel is communicated effectively to that context.

4. A missional ecclesiology is *eschatological*

The existence of the church's life is dynamic in nature. The church had a beginning with God the initiator and it is moving toward its promised consummation of all things. There is a hope and future to the life and ministry of the church.

5. A missional ecclesiology is *practical* in nature.

The missional Church with all its functions and theology equips the church for its calling and shapes God's people for their faithful witness in anyplace at anytime.

The terms *missional* and *missional church* are deeply rooted in the person and nature of God. Genesis to Revelation narrate the story of a God who loves, a missionary God active in restoring and redeeming the broken relationship. God's initiatives in the Bible for the world are entirely self-initiated and aim for restoration of all his creation.

The missional nature of God as love and missionary is emphasized in both Old Testament and New Testament. Theology for the missional church is drawn from the theology of the Love of God and God as a Missionary.

1. The Love Nature of God and Theology of Missional Church.

Love of God is clearly emphasized and described as an attribute which our God shares. In 1 John 4:9, *God is Love* is declared and he showed his love for us by sending his Son. The Bible in 1 John 3: 1,16 also describes the depths of God's love. Jesus lived

with full assurance that he was the full demonstration of the love of God. Jesus showed love to all without any reservation and left a living legacy; the very essence and nature of God is love.

Because of his loving nature, God expresses that love to all his fallen creatures. His love for the corrupt and sinful world is amazingly shown by the coming of Christ (John 3:16). The incarnation of Jesus on earth, is the reflection of God's love for his creation. God's loving nature is not an idea, but a reality. Evil, sin, and the fall separated man for eternal damnation. The loving God desires every human to know and worship him.

The love nature of God took the initiative to restore all for his glory; he started by extending extending his grace to Adam and continues still today in various forms and ways. The sending of his son for the reconciliation of all is the theological foundation for the term *missional*. Jesus' life ministers to us the ministry of reconciliation, the love of the Father to his created being.

## 2. Missionary Nature of God and Theology of Missional Church.

The Bible narrates the story of a God who is on a mission. The Bible speaks God's story of reconciliation. The missionary nature of God is seen with the grace extended to Adam and Eve. That message of God's grace and reconciliation still continues today. The story of Abraham depicts God's blessings by turning him into a great nation. Exodus tells of God's intervention and redeeming people from Egyptian oppression to bring them back to their promised land. Stories of God's intervention and guidance with the people of Israel prove that God is on a mission. God's action redeemed Israel and established Israel as a nation.

The calling of Israel was to be as a *light to the nations* (Isa 49:6). They were not sent by God to speak of his love, but they were to be light and God assumed the role of missionary, thereby drawing people. The entire world is blessed through God's missionary movement and guidance of his people, Israel. In the New Testament, the narrative of God as missionary culminates with the sending of his Son to redeem and restore the world (John 3:16). The Great Commission accounts in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 22, and John 20 speaks of Jesus sending his disciples into the world to live alongside people and to bring those separated from God to faith (1 Pet 2:12). The truth of the church is this: It is called out of the world and sent into the world. Bosch says "the church is always and at the same time called out of the world and sent into the world"(253) .

In the Acts of the Apostles, the focus of the apostles and the early church is very clear. They were obedient to the purpose of God's call, and the early church was on a mission. They understood the importance of *being sent*. The early church was missionary in essence and nature. As Flemming commented, being missional "is a community who is shaped by God's story, shares God's story and embodies God's story"(231-251)...is evident from the life of early church. The missional aspect of being, telling and doing is also seen from the life of early church. To the statement church is missionary by its very nature; Bevans and Schroeder comment "... the origin of church is intimately connected to its consciousness of the mission" (30).

## Research Themes

### *Missio Dei* describes the Being of God

The term *missio Dei* indicates the truth that mission primarily is not a human endeavor but the work of the Triune God. It describes God's missional activity on earth. The term *missio Dei* has valuable features. It is Trinitarian in nature. This Trinity moves among man as a missionary, to make known the reign of God. To this David Bosch writes that "mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world and the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love" (390).

The *missio Dei* or the mission of God is rooted deeply in the nature of the Trinity. The Trinity not only expresses God as one who sends but also one who participates in this world. This *missio Dei* or mission of God is a Trinitarian theology of mission. It begins first with God's own proper life as Father, Son, and Spirit and their relationship to each other. This living God's actions from creation and in sending the Son describe the priority of God and the intentionality of his action. God was the only subject from the beginning of creation and gave the human a share in his action to participate. This act of participation is what *missio Dei* describes. The being of God (initiator of God's mission, the meaning of *sentness*) and the nature of the Trinity reflect a true emphasis on the missional character of God, which every missional church is urged to follow.

### **Trinitarian Mission as the Basis of Mission**

The purpose of the incarnation was for God to have a relationship with humanity. The theological insight that God is on a mission is a call first to have a relationship with God and then to join God's mission to bring others into relationship with him. That God is a God of mission signals a God who sends. Moltmann states that "it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church" (64). The ultimate basis of mission is the Triune God the Father who created the world, sent his son to be our salvation.

Living a Trinitarian faith means living as Jesus Christ lived : preaching the gospel, relying totally on God, offering reconciliation, resisting temptation, praying constantly, embracing the enemy, and the sinner, and rejecting the sin, willing to die for the sake of the gospel for God's will. The Trinitarian basis for mission does not suggest a three-fold nature or division, but it reflects the aspect of participation in the mission of God. The Trinitarian basis for mission enables one to have a renewed vision of God as a God of a loving relationship. The missional church's mission is not only to take a message to the people; it is to live a message among them so as to make God visible.

### ***Missio Dei institutes the Missiones Ecclesiae.***

It conveys the meaning that mission of God determines the mission of the church. The proper definition to *missio Dei* suggests God is a sending God. God the Father sends the Son, and God the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit. The further movement to it is when Father, Son and Spirit send the church into the world. To this aspect of sending the church, the church changes from *being* on a mission, to *being* an instrument

in God's mission. In summary, the sending God is the motivation for all the missionary activities of the church. A missional church is not that send's others on mission hut is only sent by God alone.

In this act of sending by God, the world is the focus of God's mission and the church is only privileged to participate. The true observation from all this definition is *Missio Dei* defines mission of God by clarifying the role of church as participation.

### **Research Design Literature**

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam, Kerala, India. The project is a pre-intervention that uses a qualitative research method. The methods used are semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observations, and a combination of open- and closed-ended questionnaires. Taking John 17:18 as the basic text for being missional, the existing missional theology of IPC churches will be studied to recommend for a concrete and biblical missional pattern for the life of church.

The literature used in this research design were: Mission, Missions, Missional theology, and *Missio Dei*. The project revolved around the mission of God, the mission of the church, missional theology and *missio Dei*. The definition and theology of *missio Dei* helped to lay a strong foundation.

Literature about Biblical foundation of mission and *missio Dei* ladi the foundation to the research. The literature about the historical formulation of the term *missio Dei* *provided* the basic framework for understanding the mission of God in a better way.

The literature frequently used covered the nature, or characteristics of missional churches. The patterns, principles, characteristics, elements, indicators, and practices as stated by the missional church proponents were looked at. The missional patterns of Lois Barrett were considered as the checklist for understanding the missional faithfulness of IPC churches in Kottayam. Literature on the history, formation of IPC churches as a movement and of the indigenous Pentecostal movement in India, also added strength to the research design of the project.

The literature used for data analysis through theme analysis was laid by Spradley in his book *The Ethnographic Interview*. The data was evaluated using theme analysis. It consists of componential analysis, searching the similarities, identifying, and organizing the domains, and lastly, stating the themes identified through the data.

### **Summary of Literature**

From the history of Pentecostal church formation in India, only the theme of its ministry and mission was taken into consideration.

I studied the basic theme of mission from its Latin root, 'being sent.' The theme of 'being sent' from the Bible has the theme of a sender, sent one, and the task to be done.

The theme taken from John.17 on the Trinitarian nature of God's mission had the theme of love, unity, order, and mission. This theme is the crux of the real mission of God.

The basic theological understanding that the 'church does not have a mission, but mission has a church' as stated by Jurgen Moltmann was the theme. The overall theme

running from beginning to the end is that the mission of the church is not an activity, but it is participating in God's mission. It is the theme against the argument that the mission of God is also there outside the church.

The patterns and principles of Barrett and Minatrea will help the churches to see and understand how to be missional holistically. These themes helped me conclude that it is *missio Dei* which determines the mission of the church and not the activity of the church that determines a church to be missional in essence and practice.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter explains the methodology associated with the project. The basic drive of the project is to study the IPC Churches' perception on *Mission of God and Mission of the Church* in Kottayam, Kerala, India. The problem I noticed among the Pentecostal churches is that they consider the mission of the church as an activity rather than participation in the *missio Dei*. The research questions that guided the research were three-fold in nature. They sought primarily to study present missional theology and practice; secondly, to determine the factors that define it; and lastly, to see to what degree the IPC churches can reflect the missional church based on the eight patterns of Barrett's missional faithfulness.

The methodology employed was the qualitative method. The instruments used for the research were semi-structure interviews, open and closed-ended questionnaires, focus groups, and participant observation. A total of forty-six participants were employed in this study and ten churches from the IPC Kottayam (North and South) district were studied.

#### Nature and Purpose of the Project

The Indian Pentecostal Church (IPC) of God in India carries the tag of being the largest Pentecostal indigenous movement in India. IPC is established in all states of India. The state of Kerala holds the flag of being the headquarters of IPC in India. The presence of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam is enormous. This study was basically

limited to the selected churches among the IPC Churches in Kottayam North and South. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam, Kerala, India. Participants who were part of this study came from the selected ten churches. There were forty-six participants comprised of ten pastors from the selected ten churches, twenty believers belonging to the selected ten churches (two from each church), ten mission coordinators or evangelism directors from the selected ten churches, and six lay leaders or church executives who were actively part of mission programs from the IPC Kottayam North and South district.

I (researcher), being a part of the IPC Kottayam have heard the missional theology and practice of IPC Kottayam North and South churches in many of their regular meetings and common gatherings. The major drive for IPC churches in Kottayam North and South on the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) and the mission of the church is ‘*supporting a missionary or any mission station.*’ The objective of this project is to learn and understand the *missio Dei* (mission of God) from a biblical and theological perspective and thereby help the Pentecostal churches gain a concrete understanding of missional theology. The statement that *mission has a church rather than church has a mission* (Moltman) and that *the Mission of God (missio Dei) is the Church’s mission* provides a frame of reference for my research.

Having stated so, the research questions for this study are:

1. What is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam?
2. What factors influence their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church?

3. To what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics compared to Barrett's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness.

The Purpose of the project was to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam.

### **Research Questions**

#### **RQ #1. What is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam?**

This question aimed to understand the definition of mission as stated by IPC churches in Kottayam North and South and to study their view on the missionary nature of the church, and what they consider as the mission of the church.

The closed-ended questions acknowledged the definition of mission and the practices in mission- which the IPC churches holding or stated. The answers to this question addressed the position they had on the mission of God and the mission of the church. This was the basic issue for this research. The open-ended questions from 1-2 also enabled me to get more clarity on Research Question No: 1. The interview questions numbering 1 to 3 for participant observation and for semi structured interviews helped gain information on the definition of mission and the mission activities of the church. Participation and actions with response from participant observation were keenly observed during the discussion. Along with participant observation, the ideas, points, and topics discussed in the mission meetings for focus group helped in understanding the definitions that the IPC Churches had.

Since the participants had different positions or roles in the church and the world, I expected a multiple sets ideas and reflections on this.

**RQ #2. What factors influenced their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church?**

This question is secondary to the first research question. Both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> research questions address the issue of Kottayam IPC Churches' in understanding of the mission of God and the mission of the church and the factors that influenced them to arrive at the definitions they held.

From the closed-ended questions, question no.6, and from the open-ended questions, questions 3 to 5 helped me get the answer to the second research question. The interview questions used for the semi-structured interviews, and participant observation, had corresponding questions attached to their response from question number 1 to 3, which enabled me to draw out the foundational reason for their claim on the mission of God and the mission of the church. The reflections and discussions in the focus groups also contributed a lot. The contribution of participant observation was very important to this research question. It had to do with the reasons, history, and origin of *what, why, and how* they defined mission. The comments, individual narrations and the responses were observed and it was meaningful.

What factors influenced them in defining the mission of God and the mission of the church were clear from their responses to the questions in the respective instruments used for research. The input from focus groups and the participant observation led to

concrete answers and a meaningful discovery to what the Pentecostal churches in Kottayam believe and confess.

**RQ #3. To what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics when compared to Barrett's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness?**

Barrett's patterns were helpful tips for determining the true meaning and life of a missional church. In the closed-ended questions, I incorporated the patterns of Barrett from questions number 7 to 10 and in the open-ended questions, the patterns of Barrett were incorporated from questions 6 to 12.

All these questions which had Barrett's pattern mentioned, enabled me to understand or seek the view of the participants and their position about Barrett's pattern. The reflections, actions, and suggestions of the participants primarily enabled me to comprehend and evaluate IPC churches with the Barrett's model and thereby recommend the IPC churches in Kottayam to be missional by also focusing on the horizontal dimension also.

### **Ministry Context(s)**

Understanding the Context: People and Place

India is known for its varied culture, and its multi-religious and rich heritage. It is the second most populated country in the world after China. It has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. The Indian population growth rate raises concerns over widespread unemployment and political instability. India has more than 2,000 ethnic groups and major religions like Hinduism,

Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity. The Indian physical structure has 29 states and 7 union territories. Every state in India has its own language and culture which describes the unique diversity of India at large.

The context for this research is the state of Kerala. It is an important state in Southern India. The name Kerala is derived from the word *kera* meaning coconut, a very common fruit in the state of Kerala. Kerala is composed of three former states: Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar and is an accepted tourist destination. Malayalam is the authorized dialect of the people. The people in Kerala derived their ancestry from the mixture of the Dravidian and Aryan communities. The natural beauty, surrounded by rich flora, fauna, and wilderness confers Kerala the title of “*God’s own country.*”

Kerala’s social development index ranks highest in India in terms of such factors as elimination of poverty, primary education, and health care. Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India (93.91%) according to the 2011 census, and life expectancy in Kerala is the highest in India. The UNICEF and WHO designated Kerala as the world’s first ‘*baby friendly state*’ due to its friendly hospital initiative. The state is also known for *Ayurveda*, a traditional system of medicine. Its unique geographical position and peculiar physical features have credited Kerala with a unique identity. Kerala depended for its posterity on the sea and sea-borne trade. Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Parsees came here first, following a sea route; the geographical position of Kerala with a number of harbors gave it a good connection to the sea.

Kerala is home to Hindu saints of all castes. They are *Jagatguru Sree Adi Shankaracharya*, *Sree Narayan Guru*, *Sree Chattambi Swamikal* and *Vaikunda Swami*. The major religions are Hinduism (54.7%), Islam (26.6%), and Christianity (18.4%).

Kerala also had a tiny Jewish population until recently. The 2001 Indian census recorded only fifty-one Jews in Kerala. The Synagogue in Kochi in Kerala is the oldest in the commonwealth of nations. The state has many famous temples, mosques, and churches. The oldest church in India is found in Kerala, believed to be established by St. Thomas—the disciple of Jesus Christ.

Kerala has several tribal and folk forms. The *ragas* and *talas* of lyrical and devotional Carnatic music dominates Keralite classical musical genres. The folklore of Kerala includes elements from the traditional lifestyle of the people of Kerala. Keralite have their culture and lore which are mostly parts of agricultural stages. The folk arts of Kerala can be broadly classified under two headings: *ritualistic* and *non-ritualistic*. *Ritualistic* folk arts can be further divided into two: *devotional* and *magical*. Kerala has its own indigenous form of martial arts called *Kalaripayattu* based on the ancient knowledge of the human body.

The elephants are an integral part of culture and daily life in Kerala. It is the state animal of Kerala and is featured on the emblem of the Government of Kerala. It has a prestigious place in the state's culture. They are often given names by which they are known across the entire state. The State of Kerala with its rich culture offers a multi-ethnic outlook. Having been ruled by several dynasties, it adopted different lifestyle patterns and evolved with a unique, colorful, and vibrant culture. Keralites prefer western clothing to traditional Kerala wear. The people of the state are great patrons of art and literature and foster their love of art through various forms of dance and theatrical exhibitions. The people are equally passionate with and fond of sports (soccer and

cricket). All these give insights to the rich taste and aesthetic sense of the Keralites with their traditional customs and cultural heritage.

#### Pentecostalism and the Indian Pentecostal Church of God (IPC)

This project dealt with the IPC churches in Kottayam. Therefore, it is important to understand Pentecostalism as a movement from its inception, and its position and identity today. The Pentecostal movement has a long history. William Menezis (Pentecostal Historian) defines a Pentecostal as anyone who believed in the possibility of the gifts of the spirit as described in New Testament (7). The Indian Pentecostal Church of God (IPC) is the largest Pentecostal organization in India and is headquartered in Kumbanadu in the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala. It has about eight thousand local churches spread over all the states of India, besides the middle east, America, Europe, Australia, and Africa and so on. Alfred Garr and Lillian Garr who arrived in Calcutta at the turn of 1907, realized that Pentecostal movements had already preceded them in India by nearly fifty years (Thomas 82). Several factors influenced the early church leaders. They got the vision for an independent Indian church mainly from the teachings of the New Testament apostles. The “Faith-living” from the life of the apostles also influenced many natives. The Pentecostal movement which focused on evangelization, is now a structured, institutionalized, and established organization. Today, there is a tendency among the leaders and pastors to promote their church building or organization. The main purpose behind the formation of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God was to exist and work independently without joining any foreign missionary organization and be self-sufficient. Ministerial Training/Development.



Pentecostal churches raise their support from friends and missionaries around the globe. Most pastors and evangelists from early times were trained for *mission work* without having graduate or postgraduate theological degrees. They undertook a short-term course which did not last more than a year or two. Early IPC pastors went to the mission field after having a personal experience with God. At present, there are institutions which offer post-graduate degrees also. However, the Indian Pentecostal Theological Seminary Kottayam (IPCTSK) is the only IPC institution which is owned by the IPC churches of Kottayam North and South district offering graduate and post-graduate courses. I have been part of this institution for nine years.

#### Leadership Structure.

The early leaders of the Indian Pentecostal Church emphasized the independence of the local churches ministered by a local Pastor. At present, IPC has ministries in all the states of India. Every state has its own Executive council consisting of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint-Secretary, Treasurer, and the council members. The Central office consists of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and the council members. At present the posts of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint-Secretary are taken by Pastors and only the post of Treasurer is given to believers. The executive council of states has lay representation too. The leadership structure is hierarchical in nature.

#### Nature of Mission in Indian Pentecostal Churches.

Pentecostals focus sharing one's experience of Christ with others in narrative form. The commandment of Jesus to go and preach the gospel to all nations is taken

literally and they do everything to obey it. They share the gospel in simple terms and mostly through their life experiences. The five-fold offices of Ephesians 4:11 is considered seriously. During the initial days of IPC, the offices of prophets and pastors were seen in tandem and supported each other. It resulted in greater growth of the church. However, with changing times and scenario, the understanding of the five-fold office and its ministries became segmented. The Pastoral ministry and its office became powerful, whereas the ministry of prophets was limited to only prophesying with the prosperity theology attached to it.

Many challenges within IPC need serious attention. When Pentecostalism started in the early part of twentieth century, the movement was filled with people who were called by the Lord. The younger generation of Pentecostals struggled to discern between ministry as a career and as a calling. From a movement, IPC transformed into a structured, institutionalized, and established organization. Today evangelism is understood to mean promotion of church and organization rather than *participation in God's mission*. The areas of concern in IPC are as follows: the dependence on prosperity theology, casual attitude, using satisfying symbols, and others. The two major areas of concern in IPC I consider are: *Leadership structure/pattern and being a missional community*.

The concern of being a missional community within IPC is important. To early believers in the IPC, community feeling was the reason for growth beyond south India and even into the middle east. Today, IPC churches measure the ABC (Attendance, Building, and Cash) to determine the growth of church. This is not the portrait of a missional disciple. In the words of Craig Van Gelder, being missional is a fresh way to

rethink what it means to be church (*The Essence of the Church* 34). It is another way to frame the historical understanding of missions in the life of the church. Today, the understanding of mission and ministry is like activity rather than participation in God's mission. The common understanding of mission is *church* and *mission* than being a *missional church*. The model followed today is attractional rather than being incarnational.

### **Participants**

The churches selected for this qualitative research were within five kilometers from my place. The sole purpose of this research was to understand the IPC churches' affirmation of the mission of God and the mission of the church. To study and understand it, I employed qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and closed- and open-ended questionnaires. The participants of all these four instruments were individually different. I had a consent form for all instruments. A total of forty-six participants helped in this research.

### **Criteria for Selection**

For this study, I selected ten churches from the sixty-three churches of IPC Kottayam North and South. Five churches were taken from IPC Kottayam North and five churches from IPC Kottayam South. The criteria for selection were: a) had existed more than twenty years, and b) had a membership of more than thirty families.

The selected churches and their pastors, believers, lay leaders, and mission directors/evangelism coordinators truly represented the church. Their selection was based on their involvement with the churches. The lay leaders equally represented the IPC

Kottayam North and South districts. They were actively involved in mission fund raising and visiting the mission station which these churches support. Their information and participation represented the whole of their respective districts.

The selection of the church was in consultation with the District minister of both Kottayam North and South IPC Churches. The permission letter signed by the District minister is attached in the appendix. The selection of believers was based on their active participation in the church's missional activity and contingent on their membership for at least ten years. Their choice depended on the advice of the local church pastor. The ten pastors were from the ten selected churches. The mission directors or evangelism coordinators are from the ten selected churches and the selection of these individuals happened by their office. The six lay leaders from the selected churches were selected by the nature of their position in the church.

The selected churches from IPC Kottayam North and South are listed below.

#### **IPC Churches from Kottayam North**

1. IPC Zion Tabernacle, Baker Junction, Kottayam.
2. IPC Ebenezer, Vadavathoor, Kottayam
3. IPC Salem, Illickal, Kottayam
4. IPC Immanual, Kumarnallor, Kottayam
5. IPC Ebenezer, Thiruvanchoor, Kottayam.

#### **IPC Churches from Kottayam South**

1. IPC, Philadelphia, Kanjikuzhy, Kottayam
2. IPC, Salem, Thalappady, Kottayam

3. IPC, Bethel, Kaithamattom, Kottayam
4. IPC, Ebenezer, Kollad, Kottayam
5. IPC, Salem, Njaliakuzhy, Kottayam

The churches were selected in consultation with the District minister of both Kottayam North and South IPC Churches. The permission letter signed by the District minister is attached in the appendix. The selection of believers was based on their active participation in the church's missional activity and contingent on their membership for at least ten years. Their choice depended on the advice of the local church pastor. The ten pastors are from the ten selected churches. The mission directors or evangelism coordinators were from the ten selected churches and the selection of these individuals happened by virtue of their office. The six lay leaders from the selected churches were selected based on the nature of their position in the church.

The project employed a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and closed-and open-ended questionnaires. The participants of all these four instruments were individually different. I used a consent form for all instruments. There was a total of forty-six participants for this research. The participants were both men and women. All of them were adults ranging in age from 30 to 60. The criteria for choosing this age group was to have a balanced view both young and experienced perspectives. All the participants were healthy physically and mentally.

For the semi structured interviews, the mission directors or evangelism coordinators from the ten selected churches will participate. The selection of these individuals happened by virtue of their office. For open- and closed- ended questions,

twenty believers (ten from IPC Kottayam north and ten from IPC Kottayam south) participated. Believers were selected based on their active participation in the church's missional activity and contingent on their membership for at least ten years. Their choice depended on the advice of the local church pastor. For focus groups ten pastors from the selected churches were considered. The selection of these pastors in the research depended on the ten churches selected. The churches were selected based on two criteria: a) They had existed more than 20 years, and b) they had a membership of more than thirty families. For participant observation, I observed six lay leaders from the selected churches. The selected lay leaders equally represented IPC Kottayam North and South district. They were actively involved in mission fund raising and visiting the mission station which these churches supported. Their information and participation represented the whole of their respective districts. They were aware of what the IPC Kottayam North and South churches' mission statements were and what they were doing. They even stood in between the missionary who received the support and believers who supported the missionaries. In this particular research, they represented the churches accurately, and helped a lot in this research by answering the second research questions more accurately.

In the research following, participants' details were collected through the questionnaires distributed to them. In this research, the participants' office-held and age were collected through the questionnaires. Other participants information became known only through code assignment as described.

### **Description of Participants**

The sole purpose of this research was to understand the root of the IPC churches' affirmation of the mission of God and the mission of the church. To study and

understand it, I employed qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and closed- and open-ended questionnaires. The participants of all these four instruments were different. I used a consent form for all instruments. There were total of forty-six participants for this research. The participants were both men and women. All of them were adults ranging in age from 30 to 60. The criteria for choosing this age group was to have a balanced view from both young and experienced perspectives. All the participants were healthy physically and mentally.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In the research following, I used consent forms for all instruments in research. It is attached in the appendix. The participants' details were collected through the questionnaires distributed to them. In this research, the participants office-held and age were collected through the questionnaires. Other participants information became known to me only through code assignment as described.

For the IPC Kottayam North five churches the alphabet uppercase letters A, B, C, D, and E were used as the major codes. For the IPC Kottayam South's five churches, the alphabet uppercase letters R, S, T, U, and V were used as the major codes. For the evangelism coordinators or mission directors, the number 4321 was used with the assigned church alphabet. For the believers it was be 3412, along with the assigned church alphabet. Along with the alphabetic code, followed by the numerical number, the alphabet in lower case (a, b, c, d, e,) was used as code to understand the number of participants. For the focus groups participants, it was 2341 along with the assigned church alphabet. For the participant observants, it was 1234, along with the assigned

church alphabet. All the hard copies were collected and kept in my closed cabinet in the office which was locked. The interview and focus group details were be stored in my personal system with password. No one had access to my personal system.

### **Instrumentation**

The four types of instruments used for data collection were:

1. Semi- structured interview. This instrument will interview the mission directors or evangelism coordinators from the ten selected churches.

2. Open-and closed-ended questions. Twenty believers (ten from IPC Kottayam North and ten from IPC Kottayam South) participated. The selection of believers was based on their active participation in the church's missional activity and contingent on their membership for at least ten years. Their choice depended on the advice of the local church pastor.

3. Focus group. Ten pastors from the selected churches were considered. The selected pastors from Kottayam North and South were asked to gather at the IPC Seminary or in any selected church accordingly on any Sunday evening from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. I personally facilitated the discussions. At the end, snacks were provided for all.

4. Participant observation. Six lay leaders from the selected churches participated. Their selection was based on the nature of their position in the church. They were actively involved in mission fund raising and visiting the mission station which these churches supported. These participants regularly visited the mission station and brought reports from the field to the believers and encouraged them to support and pray.



IPC Kottayam North and South churches respected the leader's participation in the mission activity of their churches. They were the church's mouthpiece in mission activity of the churches. They even stood between the missionary who received the support and believers who supported the missionaries. In this research, they helped a lot by answering the second research questions more accurately. I observed them closely as they participated in the research.

In the research following, participants' details were collected through the questionnaires distributed to them. In this research, the participants' office-held and age were collected through questionnaires. Other participants' information became known to me only by assigning the codes.

### **Reliability & Validity of Project Design**

Information for this project was collected through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Valid and reliable methods for gathering the information were important. The procedures employed to collect the information on the church's missional nature covered all the groups/divisions in terms of their position and responsibility. The selected groups represented the whole church in terms of their roles. There was ample rapport between me and all the participant at its best. No attempt was done to bypass the Pastor/District minister in this study.

To increase the reliability of the data, I triangulated with data source triangulation and methodology triangulation methods. To support data source triangulation, the visuals of the lay leaders and pastors visiting the mission station are attached in the appendix. Due to security reasons, from the governments, the documents related to church financial

supports and church growth were not published. With the methodology triangulation method, the attempt was to see whether the information collected through different approaches complemented one another. The analysis section provides the insight to the reliability of data through the methodology triangulation method.

As, I am involved with IPCTSK, the Principal Rev. Abey Peter provided one Expert Review to my research writing and he was informed of my whereabouts in the field study. To consider the credibility of the information shared, the Pastors, believers, Mission/Sunday school coordinators, and Lay leaders did know what they were saying. All of them were mature, educated, and involved with the church for more than ten years. Their experiences were unique, and I considered their information and inputs as valuable and credible. I respected all participants for their valuable information, as they said it out of their experience and not because of any outward influence. There was a sense of mutual respect for the information shared.

All the research was carried out with the knowledge of the central minister in charge of both Kottayam North and South. The consent letter from them also is attached. There were no chances of outside influence to affect the research. The four instruments were used widely to understand *what they said* and *why they said that?* The open-ended and closed-ended questions, interview questions covered all the three main research questions.

The participants involving Pastor, Believers, Evangelism/Mission Directors and Lay leaders were selected only to draw out the meaning of their missional life and practice from all perspectives, thereby the theme or discovery was not biased or one-dimensional in approach.

In the questionnaires and interviews, the names of the person and the church were not mentioned. Only the position they held in the church was mentioned. The input or contributions from the respective positions of the participants will truly help any new researcher in the future to understand the dimension/angle of thoughts covered and will inform him/her what area was missing. The researcher questions were also arranged in logical order, keeping in mind the theme and aim of being missional with the concrete patterns of Barrett's missional faithfulness.

### **Data Collection**

The procedure for collecting evidence from participants involved in the four instruments were as follows:

- 1. Semi-structured interview.** Using this instrument, the mission directors/evangelism coordinators from the ten selected churches participated. I took time to be present during the mission meetings of the churches and took time to personally interview and listen to them. The interviews were captured on my digital recording device (mobile). The recorded data were transferred to my computer and were kept safely with a secret password. None will have access to the recorded data other than me.

- 2. Open-and closed- ended questions:** Through the use of this instrument the twenty believers (ten from IPC Kottayam North and ten from IPC Kottayam South) participated. Every Saturday of each month both IPC Kottayam North and South had a joint meeting. At this meeting I explained the project and with the consent of the pastor visited the church personally to meet the participant in person to give and later to collect the questionnaire. For better participation from the participants, the questionnaire was

simultaneously bilingual (English and Malayalam). The handwritten answers were fed into the computer.

3. Focus group. Ten pastors from the selected churches were considered. The selected pastors from Kottayam North and South were asked to gather in the IPC Seminary or in any selected church accordingly on any Sunday evening from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. I personally facilitated the discussions. At the end, snacks were provided for all by me.

4. Participant observation. Six lay leaders' participation was important in this research. The participants' action and response provided the needed information for this research. I attended and participated in their mission meetings with the permission of the pastors. They were the church's mouthpiece in mission activity of the churches. These participants regularly visited the mission stations and brought reports from the field and reported to the believers on needs and concerns for continued support and prayer. Their information represented the whole of their respective districts. The verbal and non-verbal communication actions and comments were observed.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were collected through interviews, open- and closed-ended questionnaires, focus groups, and by participant observation. I evaluated the data by using theme analysis as laid out by Spradley. The procedure for this analysis had the following stages: making a componential analysis, searching for similarities, identifying organizing domains and lastly stating the themes identified through the data. Reflection on the themes emerging from the data was done based on the research themes from the biblical

and theological foundations as stated in the literature review. The suggestions and implications for the IPC churches in Kottayam were developed from these.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative research involving 46 participants involving church pastors, believers, mission/evangelism coordinators, and lay leaders. The findings were derived from open and closed ended questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and by participant observation. This chapter analyzes the research collected to determine answers to three research questions. It considers the demographic (social or anthropological or historical or cultural or ecclesiastical) influence on the participants to their approach to missional theology and practice.

#### **Participants**

##### **Description of Participants**

The sole purpose of this research was to understand the root of the IPC churches affirmation of the mission of God and the mission of the church. To study and understand it, I employed qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, closed-and open-ended questionnaires. I used four instruments with different participants. I had a consent form for all instruments. A total of forty-six participants took part in this research. The participants were both men and women. All of them were adults ranging in age from 30 to 60. The criteria for choosing this age group was to have a balanced view of both young and experienced perspectives.

All the participants were healthy physically and mentally. The following table provides data about the participants.

**Table No: 1. Description of Participants**

Instruments	Position	Units	Gender%		Ages	Involvement	Ethnicity
Focus Groups	Pastors	10	M	100%	50-60	Leads the church	Kerala
Participant Observation	Lay Leaders	6	M	100	45-55	Visitation, Fundraising	Kerala
Open ended & Closed ended questionnaires	Believers	20	M F	60 40	45-58 50-60	Prayer, Spiritual Meetings, and Outreach Programs.	Kerala
Semi-Structured Interviews	Evangelism Directors/Mission Coordinators	10	M F	70 30	30-45 25-40	Youth Camp	Kerala

### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

#### **What is the current missional theology of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam?**

This research question facilitated an understanding of the definitions of “mission, mission of God and Mission of Church” as stated by IPC Churches in Kottayam North and South. The closed-ended questions numbering 2 to 5 and open-ended questions numbered 1 and 2 helped me to know the missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. The interview questions numbered 1 to 3 for participant observation and for semi structured interviews guided me to facilitate the discussion on the mission of God and Mission of the church. The participation, actions and responses were keenly observed during the discussion. The focus group comprised of pastors and lay leaders had a great commonality in understanding the mission of God and mission of the church. Ideas and reflections overlapped among instruments.

The structure for analysis included the following: Making a componential analysis, Searching the similarities, Identifying the domain, and Identifying the theme to address the questions:

1. How do you define the word *mission* (column three below)?
2. What are different activities of the church (column four below)?
3. What are different characteristics of your church (column five below)?

**Table No.2: Componential Analysis for Research Question#1**

Instruments	Positions	Questions		
		Definition of Mission	Activities of the church	Characteristics of your church
Open-closed ended questions	Believers	God's Program, A Task or Duty to perform, Evangelization and social work is mission, Fulfilling the Great Commission, Reaching the Unreached, Social Work	Sunday School, Hospital Visitation, Special Meetings, Monthly Meetings.	Worshipping, Missionary giving church, Praying, Evangelizing.
Interviews	Evangelism Directors/ Mission Coordinators	Evangelization, Last words of Jesus.	Open air preaching, Visitation, Youth camps.	Worshipping, Evangelism
Focus Groups	Pastors	A Command, Commission by Jesus, Mission as Evangelization, and Reaching the Unreached	Evangelization, Social work, Missionary Support, Financial help, Sending missionaries, Pray for the sick, Counselling, Charity work.	Praying Church; Bible Study; Mission Supporting
Participant Observation	Lay leaders	Commission from above, A Task, "Go"	Prayer, Visiting mission stations.	Giving. Praying, Worshipping, Importance to Word of God.



## **Searching the Similarities**

**The responses to the three questions were similar in these ways:**

1. Mission was defined as evangelization
2. Mission activity of the church consisted of praying, counselling, helping, preaching, and worshipping.
3. Characteristics of a missional church were worshipping, giving, supporting, and praying.

Similar terms found similar with four instruments were more spiritual in dimension (vertical). The believers and mission coordinators/evangelism directors considered evangelization as “preaching the gospel, winning the souls, reaching the unreached.” The definition of mission is more emphatically considered as “a command from Christ to follow.”

The response from focus Groups and participant observation were similar. They considered mission “a task, a command involved in various dimensions.” The definitions, activities, and characteristics stated by all participants were more vertical in dimension and practical in domain than theoretical.

## **Identifying the Domain**

Orthopraxis in nature. (More practical than theoretical).

The statements from believers, youth coordinators, lay leaders, and pastors all reflected as “to do” and “doing.” The domain identified with this is orthopraxis (practical in nature).

## **Identified Themes**

1. Mission was defined as evangelization with respect to sharing the gospel.

2. Missional church activities were giving, worshipping, supporting, and praying.

The aspect of evangelization involved the following: preaching, sharing, a command to follow, a task to do, the last and final commission of Jesus, and winning souls for his kingdom. The characteristics and missional nature of the church were stated as giving, praying, helping, counselling, and supporting. The characteristics and activities of the church overlapped as evident from the table by the comments from the participants.

In summary, the data showed the following responses to research question#1:

1. Mission was defined as evangelization. This was similar with all the instruments.
2. The response to the activities of the church was more spiritual in nature. It involved praying, counselling, preaching, hospital visitation, financial help, praying for the sick, missionary support, and evangelization. The pastors and lay leaders considered visiting the mission station and supporting the missionary as important activities of the church. The response from lay leaders and pastors in terms of supporting the missionary and mission field were stated joyfully and with much honor.
3. The characteristics of the IPC church in Kottayam was determined by their weekly spiritual activities. The definition of mission as understood by believers and mission coordinators/evangelism directors was from what the Pastor of the respective church taught and preached. There was a reference to this in research question 2. The report of lay leaders from the mission field visitation encouraged the IPC churches to

define mission in terms of giving and supporting along with other spiritual activities to determine the life of their church.

### **Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

#### **What factors influence their present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church?**

This question was a secondary question to the first research question. The primary two research questions of the project enabled me to understand the definitions IPC churches in Kottayam had on the mission of God, the mission of the church, and why they were so defined. The questions numbered 6 from the closed-ended question, and open-ended questions numbered 3 to 5 enabled me to answer the above research question. The focus groups, interviews, and participant observations also provided the reason, history, and origin to *what*, *why*, and *how* they define mission.

The structure for analysis included: Making a componential analysis, Searching the similarities, Identifying the domain, and Identifying the theme to address the questions:

1. When did you hear the word *mission* first [ third column below]?
2. How frequently do you hear the word *mission* now (occasion and the influence) [fourth column below]?
3. What is the true mark of the church? / How is your church missionary in nature [fifth column below]?

**Table No: 3 Componential Analysis for Research Question #2**

Instruments	Positions	Questions		
		First time you heard the word <i>mission</i> .	How frequently do you hear the word <i>mission</i> now?	What is the true mark of the church?
Open-closed ended questions	Believers	<i>In Church, Youth meetings, Sunday School</i>	<i>In all meetings and church Services</i>	<i>Living Holy life, Guided by Holy Spirit.</i>
Interviews	Evangelism Directors/Mission Coordinators	<i>In Youth Camps</i>	<i>Youth Camps</i>	<i>Praying and Worshipping</i>
Focus Groups	Pastors	<i>At my young age from Late Pr. P.M. Philip</i>	<i>Was said to encourage us to go as missionary</i>	<i>Work of Holy Spirit, Preaching</i>
Participant Observation	Lay leaders	<i>Sunday School</i>	<i>On campus, Conventions and conferences</i>	<i>Giving Church, Worshipping church</i>

### Searching the Similarities

#### 1. The role of pioneer leaders in Kottayam/ Early pioneer pastor Late Pr.

P.M.Philip.

Late Pastor P.M. Philip was the first pioneer for Pentecostal churches in the city of Kottayam. The churches today and believers' formation were influenced by the life and ministry of Pr. P.M. Philip. Still today, there is a ministry training center located in Kottayam and that is run by his children. There are ministers being trained there. During the early days of his ministry in Kottayam, many pastors began training under him. These Pastors pioneered churches in different parts of Kottayam, Kerala, and India. His passion, and love for God for taking the gospel to unknown places yielded results all over Kottayam. Pastors and lay leaders have a great loyalty to the contributions of the late Pr. P. M. Philip. They credit him for introducing them to the word "*mission*" in his preaching, in Sunday school and even in conventions and weekly meeting and

encouraging youngsters to go as missionaries. Pastors in the focus group communicated this truth about the Late Pr. P.M. Philip and his contributions to their life.

**2. The significance/influence of attending camps and meetings.**

Every year in the month of August, IPC churches in Kottayam North and South conducted youth camps and youth retreats away from their homes. During this camp, many youngsters heard for the first time the word “*mission*” meaning evangelism, preaching, supporting, and praying. Youngsters and lay leaders acknowledged it. The camps conducted even today also have the same curriculum. I had the privilege to attend the youth camp of 2015 and 2016, as it was conducted on the IPCTSK campus. The activity in the camp involved sharing, preaching, praying, and encouraging youngsters to listen God’s word and guiding those interested in full time ministry.

**3. Practical Spirituality.**

The response to the true mark of the church is more about practical spirituality. For youth, believers, pastors, and lay leaders the true mark of the church is based on what they are doing. It has to do with preaching, worshipping, being led by Holy Spirit, and giving.

In all the instruments, participants commonly heard the word ‘*mission*’ for the first time either from their Pastor, or while attending youth camps, conventions, and conferences. The word today is also heard frequently in all of the weekly church meetings. The reference to meetings like conventions for believers and youth camps for youth coordinators/mission directors had a marked influence on their lives in hearing the word ‘*mission*’ for the first time. The lay leaders and focus groups pointed out the late

teaching and messages on mission. They credited their knowledge of mission of God to the definition Pr. P.M. Philip taught.

Reaching the lost and preaching to save souls was the definition of mission echoed in all meetings, as one focus group respondent said, “so as to encourage.” In reply to the true mark of the church, it was a more spiritually driven reply (it involved living a holy life, guided by the Holy Spirit, giving, worshipping)

### **Identifying the Domain**

1. Role of leaders in ecclesiastical structure.
2. The worship and activity of the church.

Their understanding of the nature of church, mark of church, and mission of the church among the IPC churches in Kottayam was based on what they learned from their leaders. The lay leaders and pastors acknowledged the role of pioneer leaders and their influence on the ecclesiastical structure. Their teachings and instructions are followed and obeyed till today. The pattern followed in the church in terms of worship, giving, preaching, and activities is all based on what they are taught from the beginning. It is more practical in nature and follows what is being said and taught by their leaders today. Their understanding of mission and missional theology of the church is based on the tradition they follow from what they have heard from their leaders and practice.

### **Identified Themes**

1. Mission as following and obeying Christ.
2. Mission involves a greater role of a leader.

Their definition of the word *mission* narrows down to what they have heard at conventions, camp meetings and especially in Sunday school. It is more ecclesiastical

and traditional in understanding and approach. The role of the Late Pr. P.M. Philip is greatly revered and acknowledged particularly by focus groups and participant observations. Believers state what they have heard from their pastors, youth gave credit to what they received from camps, and pastors from their early leaders. Concerning the true mark of the church, the reference was more spiritual in nature. The reference of their definition was more ecclesiastical in influence with the leadership role.

In summary, the data showed the following response to research question#2.

1. The occasion when pastors, lay leaders, believers, and youth to heard the word '*mission*' for the first time formed the basis of what they say, believe, and consider even today regarding the meaning of the term '*mission*.' The pastors and lay leaders heard it from their pioneer leaders and at Sunday school. The youngsters regularly heard it in camps and the believers in church meetings. The definition of *mission*, which the IPC churches hold today has a historical, and traditional background. It is historical because at a point in time, a pioneer leader defined to them. It is traditional because it was followed for decades without any evaluation or biblical analysis.

2. The true mark of the church for IPC churches is more spiritual in nature. A church guided by the Holy Spirit and with spiritual activity defines the true mark of the church for IPC churches in Kottayam.

### **Research Question #3: Description of Evidence**

**To what degree do the IPC churches exhibit missional characteristics, compared to Barrett's eight concrete patterns of missional faithfulness?**

The eight patterns laid by Barrett are helpful tips for one to execute the meaning and life of a missional church. The patterns from Barrett served as are the check list to evaluate the missional faithfulness of IPC Churches in Kottayam. The eight patterns are:

- 1) Missional Vocation,
- 2) Biblical Formation and Discipleship,
- 3) Taking Risks as a Contrast Community,
- 4) Practices that Demonstrate God's intent for the world,
- 5) Worship as Public Witness,
- 6) Dependence on the Holy Spirit,
- 7) Pointing toward the Reign of God.
- 8) Missional Authority.

These eight patterns from Barrett's missional faithfulness were included in the questionnaires and presented to the focus groups and lay leaders. The closed-ended questions number 7 to 10 and open-ended questions number 6 to 12 helped me understand missional life from the believers. The interview focus groups and lay leaders' reflections and suggestions helped to understand the IPC Churches contribution in society and community so as to define the meaning and life of a missional church.

The structure for analysis included the following: Making a componential analysis, Searching the similarities, Identifying the domain, and Identifying the theme in order to address the questions:

1. What programs benefit the residential community (third column below)?
2. What practices demonstrate God's intent for the world (fourth column below)?
3. How is the church sensitive to the needs of the community (fifth column below)?



**Table No: 4 Componential Analysis for Research Question # 3**

Instruments	Positions	Questions		
		Programs that benefit residential community	Practices that demonstrate God's intent for the world	Is the church sensitive to the needs of the community
Open-closed ended questions	Believers	Praying	Financial helps and educational needs	Yes, by praying and helping them
Interviews	Evangelism Directors/Mission Coordinators	Counselling	Praying and counselling	Counselling
Focus Groups	Pastors	Prayers	Preaching to the lost	Sometimes
Participant Observation	Lay leaders	Prayers	Need full help, Not much	Very less

### **Searching the Similarities**

The dimension of counselling, praying.

Repeated reference to prayer, counselling and preaching were mentioned. The responses from focus groups and lay leaders were a little more open on community needs. The lay leaders were willing for a need- based help and felt that the church was not very much interested in social works or vocation.

### **Identifying the Domain**

Doctrinal in nature.

It was doctrinal based on the mark of the church they defined. The power of prayer was seen as a powerful tool by all participants.

### **Identified Themes**

1. Mission to the community was more spiritual in dimension.
2. There was a reference to need-based support and help.

Taking into consideration Barrett's pattern of missional faithfulness, the responses from believers, and youth were in the spiritual aspect. However, responses from lay leaders and focus groups were social and rational. They believed the churches can do much better or needs to understand the importance of community service. The reason for less or no interest was due to doctrinal and political reasons. It was doctrinal, because the early pioneers of the IPC churches in Kerala were carried away by the doctrine of *Parousia* (immediate return of Jesus Christ). One participant even commented on the political cause of being harassed or persecuted for showing concern about society. Some participants from believers and youths were unaware of this aspect.

In summary, the data showed the following responses to research question#3

The missional faithfulness pattern mentioned by Barrett is more holistic in nature. It attempts to defines the life of the church as a contrast community in its context. Barrett's pattern mentions both the spiritual aspect and the church's response to society. The mentioned patterns of Barrett and the responses of the IPC churches were one sided/dimensional.

1. The response of the IPC churches in Kottayam to the social concern was different. They defined this dimension with the church's spiritual activity. However, the lay leaders understood the need and expected the church to be involved in community affairs. To Barrett's pattern, the response of believers and youths were more in spiritual dimension.

2. The IPC churches' programs and practices that demonstrated God's intent for the world had a more inward focus. The believers and youth answered this aspect in the spiritual dimension.

## Summary of Major Findings

### 1. Defining Mission as Evangelization by IPC Churches in Kottayam.

The major emphasis or definition of *mission* by IPC churches in Kottayam was “Evangelization.” It involved preaching the gospel to the unreached, saving souls, a task to do, the commandment of Jesus Christ to follow and his commission. The definition and statements were based on the teaching they had received from their childhood days, starting from Sunday school to conventions and conferences and camps. The part played by the pastors was enormous and the members of the church believed what their spiritual leader taught. The pastors in the focus groups were quite transparent in acknowledging the impact and contribution of the Late Pr. P.M. Philip to their life. The lay leaders were thankful for the contribution of Late Pr. P.M. Philips to the Pentecostal churches’ growth, understanding, theology, and practices, which are actively followed even today. The believers, youth members, lay leaders, and pastors’ definition of *mission* complement one another. It reminds me of the allegiance given to one authoritative leader within a community in its early times. The definition of *mission* as “evangelization” is primarily focused on the vertical or spiritual aspect only. Mission is ultimately defined as knowing God, obeying God, telling about God, and winning souls. This understanding of mission has historical, doctrinal, and social aspects involved.

**2. The definition of *mission* as stated by the IPC churches had historical, and doctrinal roots attached. This definition of mission reflected their misunderstanding of the *missio Dei*.**

The definition of *mission* by IPC churches has more to do with preaching and winning souls. The history of the IPC churches formation narrates its sole purpose of

evangelization. It was formed only for evangelization. The original name of IPC was SIPC (South India Pentecostal Church). It was changed when growth was not limited to South India; the sole aim of the IPC churches was evangelization of India.

India in the 1900' was striving for freedom from British rule. During British rule, Christian missionaries came to India in abundance. The northern, southern, eastern, and western part of the country had missionaries coming from Europe and the USA. Kerala too had the advantage of having Assemblies of God missionaries coming to India. The lay leaders narrated this story of Pentecostal history. Much literature is available describing the story of Pentecostal history. The definition they carried of *mission* was limited to only evangelization from then and till today. Doctrinal roots were attached to the belief they carried on the second coming of Christ. The early leaders preached that Christ can come at any time. It led them to be less interested in community needs and they devoted more resources to preaching, evangelism, praying and depending on Holy Spirit.

**Table No.5: IPC Churches' Response to Community needs**

<b>Is the church sensitive to the needs of the community? (Research Question #3).</b>	
To this third research question, the response observed from the lay leaders was "it is very less." In this discussion, the thoughts shared were:	
1. The immediate coming of Christ as preached by our pioneer leaders, made believers less interested in and more interested in spiritual affairs. This shift in thinking shaped our understanding of 'mission' as duty, command, praying, preaching, counselling, and being led by the Holy Spirit.	2. At times the threat from religious fundamental groups/political parties made the church less interested in community affairs. We (believers) hated fighting and destruction. To be at peace was the desire and kept ourselves to the affairs of the society.
	3. Activities other than church are less spiritual.

The early preachers and teachers of the gospel were concerned with the coming of Christ. They even expected the coming of the messiah even after the preaching, as shared by the lay leaders when narrating the history of the Pentecostal movement in Kerala and

the early passion of pioneers and believers. This understanding of the immediate coming of Jesus Christ moved the Pentecostal churches to see evangelism as a task to complete than to see the church as being sent. church exist in being sent. A better understanding of *missio Dei* as the mission of God, or seeing the Church as participating in God's mission, is important. The definitions of 'mission' among IPC churches from research question # 1 and the influence from the teaching of *Parousia*, as from lay leaders advocate that a better description and teaching of *missio Dei* and the mission of the church is needed to be missional in nature.

**3. IPC churches considered the missional mark of church to be visible in nature.**

The IPC churches' definition of the mark of the church was vague and unclear. From the field study and the interviews and from focus groups and participant observation the general understanding of the mark of the church was more of praying, preaching, giving, worshipping, counselling, and so on. Their understanding of the mark of the church was something that they did, and which was visible. This visible mark was even considered also as their characteristics. This notion was carried through the centuries. It declared the absence of a concrete Pentecostal missional ecclesiology.

**4. The life of IPC churches in Kottayam is measured by its activity.**

Learning, studying, and understanding the concept of the mission of God and mission of the church among IPC Pentecostal churches in Kottayam was a joy. The lay leaders were very vocal in providing information about the life and ministry of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. An influential member associated with the activity of the church narrated the nature of churches in Kottayam.

The lay leaders and focus group members described the paradigm-shift of interest/practice among the Pentecostal churches. In its inception, the Pentecostal churches were more focused on evangelism, sharing the gospel and mostly evangelization. When they found difficulty in accommodation or managing the crowd, activity shifted to building. The recent trend after 2000 A.D is different. At present, 75% of IPC churches in Kottayam have a well- established church building and they have become self-sufficient. At this time, there are preaching, and altar calls to being missionaries. There are frequent visits to the mission station by pastors and lay leaders and interesting testimonies are reported after their visit to the supporting churches. These visits are meant to know the reality from the mission station and show the concern of God's love. The missionaries also visited the supporting churches and believers were happy to hear from them. A great importance was given to mission offerings. Data on these were neither published nor printed owing to security reasons. The information on contributions were neither circulated nor published. They had a special office for it and the accounts were maintained properly and an officer is accountable to the believers of the church. One participant even defined the health of the church by its support of the mission field and missionary. They measured this giving and sought God's blessing on it. A true description of a mark of the missional church and making known its privileges was needed.

The activities/mark/nature of IPC churches in Kottayam can be better described as follows:

**Table No. 6. Definition of a Church's nature and characteristics.**

<b>Activities that defined or described the nature, characteristics, mark of the IPC churches to describe its mission</b>	
Believers:	Visitation, Sunday Schools, Meetings, Praying, evangelizing, giving,
Youths:	Worshipping, Evangelism, Preaching, Camps
Pastors:	Evangelization, Social work, Missionary Support, Financial help, Praying, Counselling.
Lay leaders:	Prayer, Visiting Mission stations, Giving, Praying, Worshipping.

**5. The IPC church defined their activity/characteristics by supporting the missionary and his family, visiting mission fields, praying, counselling and so on.**

IPC churches in Kottayam were activity oriented. They were visible by their weekly activity in the church. It described their life. A good church is measured by its activity of prayer meetings, mission support, and the role of the pastor. This aspect was clear from the questions when the participants described the nature and characteristics of the church.

IPC churches advocated for a worshipping church, a giving church, and the importance of the Holy Spirit as their ideal mark and characteristic. The frequent conferences and meetings were to attract people/individuals to the church. The path followed was an attractional approach by all these activities. It was even observed in the lay leaders' meetings that all/any activities of the church were meant to keep its identity in the city/society. A newcomer to the church was welcomed and introduced to all the activities of the church. In contrast to what described their characteristics, there was a need to inform/teach the missionary nature of the church. The IPC churches in Kottayam needed a thorough description on the missional nature of the church.

## 6. Mission of the church and mission of God were not understood biblically.

The differentiation of mission, missions, *missio Dei* and mission of the church is important for an authentic missional church based on John 17:21. Mission is all what God wants church to be and Missions is all what Church is doing. The IPC churches understood 'mission' as an activity or task along with other spiritual activities of the church. Mission of Church is what God wants the church to do. It is primarily to lead a holy life and reflect his life and teaching through all our dimensions. Missions is all that the Church is doing in recognition of what Jesus has sent based on John 17:21. The description of the data is given below. It is a summary of what they defined. All the description by them was on the spiritual dimension.

<b>Definition of Mission:</b>	Mission is all what God wants church to be.
<b>IPC churches' Definition of Mission</b>	Mission as Evangelization., a duty or task (Stated by Believers, Youth, Pastors, and Lay leaders.).
<b>Activities of IPC churches</b>	Praying, Worshipping, Giving, Evangelizing, Mission supporting, Bible Study.

## 7. The church's role in community development was not advocated owing to political causes and doctrinal position.

The response of the church's role towards community development by the IPC churches is very minimal. The responses were as follows:

**Table No: 8. Role of Church to Community**

<b>Church's role in community development</b>	
Believers	The believers commented that they do by praying, helping, visiting hospitals.
Youth	The youths commented that they do by prayer and counselling. "We bring people to the camp who need counselling.
Pastors Lay leaders	The pastors and lay leaders were of the view that church is less sensitive to the needs of the community and only provide needful help: "providing stitching machine and education helps."



The common response observed from the IPC churches was that through prayer, counselling and helping they were focusing on the community's welfare. The response from participant observants were quite interesting and a new discovery for the researcher. The response from the lay leaders on the IPC churches' less interest in social concerns due to the doctrine of *Parousia* was a new thought. It was never heard at any meeting other than in participant observation.

**Table No: 9. Reasons of Church not being interested in community concerns.**

<b>Reason for IPC churches' less interest in social/community concerns. The responses and accounts are as follows:</b>	
Believers:	Interested in Spiritual affairs only
Lay Leaders/Pastors:	Early church leaders' emphasis on <i>Parousia</i> . <i>"Expected Christ will come any time, even after Sunday preaching. Due to this we (believers) considered world and its affairs are evil and secular"</i> - A narration. Fear from Government, Fear of not getting Recognition. Good to live a separated life.

The lay leaders recited the early doctrinal position of the pioneers. The doctrine of immediate *Parousia* had influenced the believers from the beginning so that they were less inclined to be involved in social work or community affairs. They gave more importance to the coming of Christ and it continues today. It was understood by the songs, prayers and preaching they do. In every exercise they had references to the second coming of Christ. I considered this as a factor which still rules and this doctrinal position made believers or the church to be less interested in community affairs and needs.

The second aspect of the political factor was also a concern. The right wing religious fundamentalist<sup>2</sup> groups always look at Christian mission and missionary activities with suspicion. Many charitable societies have closed, and the present government is very suspicious of any help or concern rendered to the people of other faith. The villages are asked not to entertain Christians in their community, society, or village. The believers fear wrong allegations and thereby avoid social concern and welfare. The lay leaders represented in the research are all financially sound and have a willing heart to help and support. The lay leaders were more active in the compassion project of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and its ministries in India. Even on the campus of IPCTSK was a center for the youth wing of Compassion Project. I have heard about a recipient of help from Compassion project, a medical student and from other faith, coming to the office and abusing the leaders. Even one leader of Compassion Project with the children's wing was blamed for wrong reasons by religious fundamental groups. It was a tough time. Multiple stories and wrong allegations have made IPC churches to be watchful in what they do.

### **Table No 10. Organization and Individual stories**

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<sup>2</sup> These fundamental groups are recognized as the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), RSS (Rashtriya Sevak Sangh) and BD (Bajarang Dal). These are the associated religious groups of the national party BJP (Bharati Janatha Party). This political party rules India at the center and is totally against Christians and coming of the missionaries to India. They have even stopped the missionaries of charity which was run by Mother Teresa for long. They have banned the missionaries of charity organization in adopting destitute and orphans, blaming that they are converting. These groups always target the church and its economics and are eager to persecute, accuse and put fear in other people's life about Christians and thereby keep people away from knowing the truth.

<b>How have the present government hurt the Christians organizations and individuals? (Stories and Incidents)</b>	
<b>Missionaries of Charity:</b> (An orphanage run by Nuns in Kolkata). Founder: Mother Teresa	Forced to close by present government on the wrong allegation of adopting for conversion
<b>Compassion Project:</b> Run by BGEA (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association).	Accounts were frozen on the allegation that money was used to build churches. Because the support was given through the church, the government never wanted it.
<b>Sis. Kumari (Name Changed):</b> Not allowed to enter home and village.	She is not allowed to enter her home or village. Even she comes, thereafter the house is sprinkled by their holy water. Pastor is always under threat because of her conversion. This sister is studying in our college.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the major findings of the study. The data collected through four instruments and from forty-six participants were useful in knowing their definition of *mission* and how the IPC churches understand the nature and characteristics of a missional church. Findings also indicated their missional faithfulness by considering Barrett's pattern as the check list to measure their holistic missional faithfulness. The purpose of the study involved evaluation of the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. The definition of *mission* held by IPC churches is: of mission as evangelization, a task, or a commandment to obey, sharing, preaching, helping, supporting, and counselling. This definition was associated with the nature and characteristics of their church. Their affirmation of the definition of mission, and the nature and characteristics of church has doctrinal and historical roots attached. Their understanding of a missional church had more to do with spiritual activity than participation. Their missional faithfulness when compared with Barrett's pattern of missional faithfulness was very minimal in terms of the church's concern with society's needs. The findings and its corresponding meaningful implications and needed recommendations for IPC churches will be dealt with in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

The major emphasis of this chapter is to highlight the major findings from the project based on the interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and participant observation. This chapter also states the needed implications with proper recommendations for further research. This chapter is the real crux of the project in terms of discoveries and unexpected observations.

#### Major Findings

##### First Finding

**The definition of *mission* as stated by IPC churches in Kottayam is activity based and action-oriented. It is reflected by their statement on the mark of the missional church. The understanding of *mission as participation* for IPC churches in Kottayam was unknown even after following God for so many years.**

It is important to understand the essence, meaning of *missio Dei*, mission of the church and missional theology. Prior to the research, I have heard lay leaders, pastors and even believers define church mission as supporting a missionary or a mission field. The mission leaders and pastors of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam have repeatedly advocated mission as supporting missionary or a mission field at their common meetings, general conferences and even on Sunday worships. I had the opportunity to hear it at different times. I understood from them: *mission as an activity*. The believers, pastors and lay leaders were very particular in their statement and they obeyed faithfully what they

believed. There were moments when the members of the church justified their action of supporting a missionary as being involved in the church's mission.

The blessed moment of the research was in participating with the lay leaders and pastors in focus groups to understand their view on mission of God and mission of the church.

**Table No: 11. Statements on *Missio Dei***

<b>Pastors and Lay leader's view of mission of God and mission of the church</b>	
Pastors:	Mission of God is evangelization or obeying the command of God. Mission of the church: giving, praying, supporting, preaching, helping. "It is our duty and for which we are called." (A quote from a pastor).
Lay Leaders:	Mission of God is evangelization is Task or "Go." Mission of Church: Giving, Praying, Visiting mission station. "If we don't practice what we do, our faith is meaningless." Christianity is action with love.

According to John 17, Jesus mission was God planned and sent by God.

John.20:21 "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" describes the mission of the church. As Jesus was sent by God, so the church too is sent by God. The mission of the church is therefore more of *participation in God's program* than a *defined or planned activity of the church by the church*.

At the later part of the research when going through the responses, I realized and understood that along with the definition of mission as evangelization, supporting a missionary or mission station was considered to be the activity of the church along with other spiritual activities of the IPC churches in Kottayam. This conclusion was clear from responses to research question # 1, when asked to define the word *mission* and the

activities of the church. Participants gave this definition: mission is evangelization and involves praying, helping, counselling, and supporting a mission station or a missionary.

**Table No. 12. Common Response on Definition of Mission**

Questions	Definition of Mission	Characteristics/Nature/Mark of the church
Pastors/Believers Lay leaders / Youth	Evangelization- A task, A duty, Fulfilling Great commission, Reaching the unreached, Last words of Jesus, A Command, "Go."	Spiritual: Church meetings, Preaching, Praying, Bible study, Activity oriented: Visiting Hospitals, social work, missionary support, financial helps, counselling, visiting mission stations,

Looking at the data received and supporting it with biblical and theological foundations provided good recommendations. Understanding the meaning of the word *'mission'* is important. IPC churches in Kottayam understood the meaning of the term *mission* as "a task, duty or a command to follow" (**Research Question # 1**).

Etymologically the word *mission* is defined as a command or duty to do. This meaning applies in the military field for missions in war times. However, it is important for IPC churches to understand the meaning of the term *mission* from Latin root *to send*.

The New Testament and Old Testament define and clarify *mission* as *being sent* for a purpose by God. Mission or being sent in the Old Testament and the New Testament has a sender, a sent one and a purpose to accomplish. It speaks of the initiative of God with nothing decided by man. It is an act of participation rather than an activity rendered by someone. The Hebrew understanding of the word *Shalach* suggests that God is the one who sends his instrument to act. The New Testament aspect of sending and participating is seen primarily with the sending of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and their roles of participation in God's eternal plan. The prayer of Jesus in John 17, John 20:21, and the Trinitarian nature of God's mission reveal mission as participation in

God’s act rather than an activity of the church. The true understanding of *mission* from its Latin root *to send* can provide a meaningful understanding to the IPC churches on *mission* as being sent to participate.

The theological framework to *missio Dei* indicates the truth that mission is not human work but the work of Triune God. Theologically, it is a reminder that mission as participation is to take part in the movement of God’s love. This is where the theology of *missio Dei* and its understanding can help the IPC churches to have a better understanding of the essence of the word *mission* as participation rather than an activity of supporting, helping, praying, and counselling.

**Table No.13. A Comparison**

<b>IPC Churches’ understanding of “mission”</b>	<b>Theology of <i>Missio Dei</i></b>
A Task, Command, Words of Jesus, “GO” With the activity of giving, praying, sharing, counselling, supporting, preaching and other spiritual and action-oriented activities.	<i>Missio Dei</i> : Mission of God Mission: Being Sent. Participating in God’s program Jn.20:21: Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you (RSV).

Bosch rightly says, that mission is a movement from God to the world and the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. The IPC churches in Kottayam can alter the understanding of mission from activity of the church to an movement from God is only by realizing *the act of sending* of the church by God. Wright’s definition reflects mission as being sent to participate. “Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.” (22-23,2006). Frost, Hirsch, Newbigin, Guder, and



Gelder declare mission as participation. They all advocate God as the initiator and we are to act based on God's plan rather than doing what we want. Recognizing this fact will enable the churches in Kottayam to realize that; God is the focus in the mission of God and mission of the church. Understanding that *mission* means *being sent*, and that the church is being sent will change the identity of the church. Rather than a duty to perform, the story of God sending is the real motivation for all the missionary activities of the church through the centuries. The biblical framework and theology of *missio Dei* advocates mission as participation rather than duty or an activity. The IPC churches in Kottayam need to be aware of this information and realize that mission of God or being sent by God is not doing what the church wants but is participating in God's program.

## **Second Finding**

**The missional understanding of the IPC churches in Kottayam was based on the organization's purpose of existence with doctrinal roots. It was framed by the pioneers of the IPC church upon inception. The understanding that the Trinitarian nature of God's mission shapes the missional church needs to be taught to IPC Churches in Kottayam, to realize and accept mission as participation in God's program.**

The second research question that guided the research was, "What factors influenced the present definition of the mission of God and the mission of the church by the IPC churches in Kottayam. This question allowed to study the reason for *what they say and affirm*. Prior to my research, whenever I heard the wrong notion on mission of the church during their mission conferences and meetings, I considered the lack of

biblical knowledge which led IPC churches in Kottayam to affirm what they believe. During interviews and discussions with lay leaders and pastors; the picture was completely different. They considered mission as a task or duty to perform along with activities rather than participation (**Research Question# 1**). The IPC churches' understanding of the word *mission* came from their pioneer leaders. The leaders' view was carried through the decades. To research question #2, when asked when they heard the word "*mission*" for the first time, the believers said that they heard it in church meetings, youth from camp meetings and Sunday schools, and the pastors and lay leaders heard it their youth, Sunday school and from pioneer leaders. Participating in the discussion with the lay leaders and pastors, they stated that the doctrine of *Parousia* or immediate coming of Jesus Christ defined their understanding of the church's nature and characteristics. The believers carried the definition from what they heard from their pastors in meetings. The youth's definition came from what they heard during camps. The pastors and lay leaders of IPC churches today define mission from what they heard from pioneer leaders in their Sunday school at the times (**Research Question #2**). Their pioneer leaders' words and organization purpose of existence defined their definition of the word *mission*.

The Trinitarian nature of God's mission is important in understanding the foundation of God's missional church. This concept was never heard in the mission meetings or conferences among IPC churches in Kottayam. The subject of pneumatology or doctrine of the Holy Spirit was taught only with regard to his personality, work, function, and ministry. However, for IPC churches in Kottayam, the role of the Holy

Spirit was limited to preaching, praying, power encounters and for manifestation of spiritual gifts by the Pentecostal church even today.

The definition of *mission* based on an organization's purpose or as stated by any leader will not define a true missional theology and practice of a missional church. A biblical foundation for a missional church is what guarantees its purpose, nature, and characteristics. Understanding the biblical and theological meaning of *mission* is important. Only God's mission shapes a missional church and not vice versa. The Triune God's community nature, of love, unity, order, and mission, better describes the shape of a missional church's nature and characteristics. The spiritual activities describing the characteristics and nature of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam do not describe a true missional church. This conclusion is evident from research question #1. The responses from the respondents were more spiritual in nature. A missional church cannot be one dimensional in approach. The Old and New Testament accounts of God's action describes a true missional church.

In the Old Testament beginning from creation, the deliverance of Israel and all prophetic passages narrate the unity, order, and mission of the Triune God. The ministry of the Triune God is more evident in the New Testament. The life and ministry of Jesus on earth narrate the Triune nature of God's mission. Jesus acknowledged the Father's mission and the role of Holy Spirit after his departure. John 17 is a good chapter to understand the true nature of the missional church from the Trinitarian nature of God's mission. The Trinitarian understanding of God's mission from the Scriptures conveys the truth that church is missional in nature and it sees mission as participation as seen in the Triune nature of God's mission.

The theological frame of *missio Dei* also conveys the truth that the mission of God is rooted deeply in the nature of the Trinity. It begins with God's own proper life as Father, Son, and Spirit and their relationship to each other. The nature of trinity reflects the missional character of God and every missional church is urged to follow it. The writings of Barrett, Newbigin, Keller, Frost and Hirsch describe being missional as a way of life. Flemming considers the missional church as a: community that is shaped by God's story, community that shares God's story and community that embodies God's story (232, 2013).

IPC churches have based their definition of mission on what they have heard from their pioneer leaders and combined it with the activities of the church to describe the mark of a church which is being sent. It was a wrong assumption and needed serious notice. The Church's foundation on the Triune God will enable the IPC churches in Kottayam and India to attest the ministry of the church to be unique in its nature. The missional nature of the church has a divine origin, the divine plan if God is the only program which a church participates in. IPC churches in Kottayam need to understand the missional nature of church and base their definition of mission on it, A complete understanding of the meaning of mission by IPC churches, biblical foundations, and missional proponents can be seen below:

**Table No. 14. A comparative reflection**

<b>IPC Churches Understanding to understanding of Mission of the church</b>	<b>Mission of the church and its Biblical Foundation.</b>	<b>Missional Proponents defining missional church</b>
<b>Definition:</b> A task to do, Evangelization <b>Source:</b> Leaders/ Pioneers <b>Purpose:</b> Involves a lot of activity and its significance <b>Motivation:</b> Immediate coming of Christ ( <i>Parousia</i> ). <b>Model:</b> Varies from church to church.	<b>Definition:</b> “God is a Missionary God” <b>Source:</b> O.T and N.T <b>Purpose:</b> Privilege to Participate <b>Motivation:</b> His love, <b>Model:</b> Mission of Trinitarian community	Lois Barrett, Lesslie Newbigin, Christopher J H Wright, Darrell Guder, Dean Flemming, Andrew Kirk. <i>“Mission is committed participation by God’s People with God’s Plan for God’s Purpose.”</i>

### Third Finding

**The disinterest of IPC churches towards community concern is because of doctrinal position and fear of losing status in the society. The story of the missional Church when sent to the world is for far reaching consequence holistically. They are supposed to be a light to the nations.**

There are Christian organizations interested in social work and the needs of society. The contribution of Christian organizations towards nation building is enormous. They have contributed a lot to community needs by establishing schools, hospitals, homes for needy individuals, and other various community developmental programs in different parts of India. The history of India narrates it. The interest of Pentecostals for such concerns were very minimal from its inception. Personally, during my post graduate theological studies, my perspective on this concern changed. It was the subject of holistic mission which altered my worldview on the Christian’s role in society and community.

Throughout my journey with the IPC churches from childhood (I was raised in a Pentecostal family), there was a marked change in my idea of spiritual and non-spiritual. Several activities linked to society's needs were non-spiritual and believers were less interested in it. I also grew up with the same understanding. At the first steps of my project, I also questioned the non-interest of IPC churches and believers in social concern and believed that it is their conviction of being non-spiritual that they are less interested. During participant observation, lay leaders said that the doctrine of *Parousia*, or the immediate coming of Jesus Christ, made Pentecostals feel less interested in community affairs. It was a new revelation to me. The political situation at present in India has also frightened believers away from being involved in social work. The missionaries of charity run by Mother Teresa was also closed by the present government because of wrong allegations.

**Table No: 15. Reasons for IPC churches less interest for community affairs.**

<b>Reasons for IPC churches to be less interested in community needs and affairs. Observed from Pastors and Lay leaders</b>	
<b>Doctrinal Reasons</b>	<p>Doctrine of <i>Parousia</i> or immediate coming of Christ.</p> <p>From the beginning, the believers were informed Christ can come anytime and many more people need to know Christ. Mission for us (believers) is all about evangelization and sharing gospel than showing concern over community or social needs.</p>
<b>Political Reasons</b>	<p>The present government is not favorable.</p> <p>Fear of persecution for wrong reasons. My accounts will be monitored.</p> <p>Cannot buy land because of being a Christian.</p> <p>Fear of not getting the proper recognition for the work done.</p> <p>Christians are minority in India, so less chance of acceptance.</p>

Taking a note from Barrett's pattern to see the missional faithfulness of IPC churches in Kottayam, the following patterns were included in the open-and closed-ended

questions to believers, youth, and pastors and lay leaders. The following were observations on three patterns and had to do with research question#3.

**Table No: 16. Responses to Barrett's Pattern**

<b>Barrett's Patterns</b>	<b>Response</b>
Practices that demonstrates God's intent for the world	Believers: By helping and listening Youth: Helping Pastors: Prayers Lay leaders Prayers
Church as a contrast community	Believers: Financial help Youth: Praying and Counselling Pastors: Evangelism/Preaching Lay leaders: Need based help
Pointing toward the reign of God	Believers: Preaching. Youth: Preaching Pastors: Preaching Lay leaders: Preaching.

When the IPC church missional patterns were considered with Barrett's pattern, it was more spiritual and not holistic in nature. The other patterns of Barrett's were vertical dimensions to which the IPC churches were better. For these three patterns which had to do with society and community, the responses were one-sided.

There were reasons for the IPC churches to be less interested with society concerns. From the 1980' when the religious fundamental groups were able to influence the Indian community through media and communication, wrong information about missionary contribution to the nation were propagated. This led to the beginning of hatred, suspicion, and rejection of the work and help of Christians. The message wrongly communicated was that Christians wanted to convert this nation from Hinduism to Christianity and that Christians receive much money from abroad for all this action. In the present scenario, when the same religious fundamental groups rule the nation, the hatred towards Christians have not decreased but increased. The lay leaders and pastors

from the focus groups mentioned fear of being attacked and being blamed for wrong reasons. Fearing this abuse, they were not interested in community affairs.

The Bible never advocated an isolated life. The Abrahamic covenant is very clear: be a blessing to the nations. The command for Israel even in captivity was to associate and mingle with the people, pray, and identify with the society. The man missional message to the people of Israel was to be a light to the nations. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus taught his disciples and followers to be the salt and light of the earth. This command still stands true to his church. A theology for social concerns is there and there are valuable social organizations doing it without fail. The weak, hungry, and downtrodden were not rejected or left alone by Jesus in his earthly ministry. This Trinitarian community reflected the character of love and help while carrying out their specific ministry on the earth. In similar manner, the church being “sent” with Trinitarian nature also needs to show and practice love and concern for the society. IPC churches in Kottayam and India need to learn, practice and be community contributors.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

This research revealed valuable thoughts, ideas and mis-understanding on missional theology and practice of the IPC churches in Kottayam. The IPC churches in Kottayam needs a clear understanding of missional theology and its practices. This research/ study revealed the mission passion of IPC churches by evangelism, praying, counselling, supporting a missionary or mission field.

There is a need for concrete teaching on the Trinitarian nature of God’s mission, *missio Dei* and mission of the church. It will empower them with a better knowledge of



the missional God and his missional word and allow them to be missional in nature.

Adopting new strategies is not the solution to be missional in nature. There is a need to teach the churches what is missional and how to be truly missional in nature. The best approachable method is to reach the Pastors of IPC churches in Kottayam and present the Trinitarian nature of the missional church. It is better to start with the Pastors. The Gospel of John, chapter 17 is a good foundational text to start with. John.17 was also the foundational basis for this research. It better describes the Mission of God the Father, the Mission of Jesus as *sent one* and *sender*, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It will enable the IPC churches to define *missio Dei* and make *missio Dei* more visible to the outside world than their inside activities.

A true understanding of *missio Dei* will strengthen the churches spiritually, financially, and encourage them to impact the community in a better way. A true understanding of the missional church will encourage the churches to be a better missionary in the market place and enable them to adopt a “*go and reach*” approach rather than their “*come and see*” approach of today.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was only limited to the IPC churches in Kottayam. Yes, I had the occasion to talk to sisters, youngsters, lay leaders and pastors of IPC Churches in Kottayam. It was a meaningful time with the participants in sharing the subject of my project. It was a learning experience to see their innocence and the limitation of their knowledge and enabled me to realize the importance of a concrete teaching on missional theology and the role church can play in a better way.

This research would be more beneficial in the future when the top leaders of the IPC Church as an organization are also involved. It will enable them to impact a lot with all the IPC churches in India being driven together with the same theology and practice.

### **Unexpected Observations**

The project was very beneficial for me as a student and instructor of God's word with IPC Theological Seminary, Kottayam. Some observations were expected. The unexpected observations were as follows:

1. *Definition on Mission.* I had the notion that the definition of mission that the IPC churches held, was based on the Great Commission. When looking at the history of IPC churches and its formation, it was evident to me that the IPC churches in Kottayam's definition was based on the resolution IPC churches upon formation way back in 1926. The impact and influence of the IPC churches' leaders/pioneers in defining mission and purpose of the church was unexpected. The leaders' words were more important than God's word. This was also unexpected.

2. *Community Concerns.* I held the notion that IPC churches and Pentecostal believers were not interested in the affairs of society because they considered it worldly and secular. I personally struggled to accept this notion. The dimension of mission is incomplete without community concerns. It was a new insight when the lay leaders in participant observation and pastors from the focus groups mentioned that it was the doctrine of *Parousia* or imminent coming of Jesus Christ, which made the believers and IPC churches to be less interested in the affairs of society and the community. This reason for not being interested in social concern was unexpected.

3. *Full time Missionaries and Pastors:* The number of individuals interested in being full-time ministers of the gospel or as missionaries are very minimal from the IPC churches in Kottayam today. The slow interest of early IPC pastors' children in being missional was unexpected. At present they are all settled abroad and are more interested in supporting ministry in India, than being themselves missional in nature.

### **Recommendations**

The research led me to suggest the following recommendations. To enable the IPC churches in Kottayam to be more meaningful in their missional theology and practice. The recommendations were based on what they were doing and what was to be done to keep the passion of being missional.

1. IPC churches in Kottayam need to be educated on *missional theology/missional ecclesiology*. It must be more than an information shared and should rather be a concrete planned study with a proper curriculum.

Analysis in Chapter 4 describes the definition and understanding that the IPC churches in Kottayam had on mission, missional church, and mark of a missional church. The need is for a concrete understanding of missional theology and its practices. It is where God is enthroned rather than the activity of the church. It encourages one another, empowers people, and engages people in the world for a cause and not for a name or fame. The study must clear the wrong assumptions that IPC Churches have on the words *mission* and *church*.

**Table No.17. Understanding mission and understanding church**

IPC Churches understanding of “Mission”	IPC churches understanding of “church”
A Duty to Perform, A task to Do or “Go” Mission as Evangelization, or doing something for reaching and winning people	Church is of God’s. It must have life. There must be activities all the week. A place of worship and people <i>must come in</i> or let people be <i>attracted</i> to the church by the activities. A place to experience God.

To clarify the wrong notion of mission of the church, the study must include what the missional church is not and what the missional church is. Existing mega trends as stated by Boren and Roxburgh must be presented. It will present what missional church is not, and Darrell Guder description on the essential nature and vocation of the church will highlight what a missional church is.? It will clear lot of assumptions and challenge the belief and convictions of IPC Churches regarding mission of the church. When describing the true mark of the church in research question# 2, the common response was living holy life, being guided by holy spirit, praying, worshipping, preaching, giving church, and worshipping church. These marks are what IPC churches describes the true nature of church. A church with spiritual activities for them describes a missional church. From the trends stated by Roxburgh and Boren, the following four trends relevant to IPC churches in Kottayam must be addressed. These four trends represent the aspects of activities of the church, church effectiveness, cross-cultural missions, and the very being of the church.

The four trends of Roxburgh and Boren (31-33, 2009) relevant to IPC churches are:

- a. Missional church is not described by its emphasis on cross-cultural missions.

The missional church is not another way to describe cross-cultural missions. The IPC churches must be happy with their love for cross-cultural mission. It does not certify or define the missional church. The missional church aims to engage people by sending them as missionaries. It is not a new way of doing, but a biblical perspective on mission and it is what missional theology advocates.

Being focused on outreach is not the criterion to describe that a church is missional in nature. There are IPC churches which are good in supporting cross cultural missions. The IPC churches in Kottayam supports more than fifty churches in north India. Owing to security reasons there is no printed document to acknowledge this source. This act does not certify them as a missional church. A missional church is described by how *insiders minister to outsiders* as a way of being the church. IPC churches need to be taught on the aspect of mission as a way of being the church than having activity alone.

- b. Missional church is not another label for church growth and church effectiveness.

The missional church is not about attracting or bringing people to the church. The attractional nature of church growth is very evident in the life of IPC churches in Kottayam. Several IPC churches in Kottayam compete in attracting people to their churches by different programs and by their building. Missional church is much more than that. It may not have a building but rather reach people by *going out* rather than *bringing them in*. An apt education on this will enable the IPC churches in Kottayam to use their financial resources for noble and eternal values.

c. Missional church is not a label for churches that are effective at evangelistic activities.

Missional church is not about attracting people to churches but an entry to the kingdom of God. More evangelism activities do not confirm a missional nature. The evangelistic activities of IPC churches are preaching to win souls, praying for deliverance, counselling for distracted ones, visiting hospitals to pray for the sick and needy, social work for the poor, camps for youngsters to teach the Word of God, special meetings, visiting the mission station, supporting, and praying for missionaries. These activities were presented in Research Question # 1. IPC churches must understand the truth that evangelistic activities do not certify them as a missional church.

d. Missional church is not a label that points to a primitive or ancient way of being the church.

Being missional is not another attempt to define an ideal path of being the church. History is full of accounts of successful patterns of IPC churches in Kerala and beyond. Being missional is an every-day affair. IPC churches need a correction to the pattern of mission and its theology they follow. The old models and patterns have yielded results and still claim to be authentic but lack meaningful engagement with society. Missional church does not stay on yesterday's grace but advocates for meaningful engagement. The worship patterns followed by IPC churches in Kottayam is what they have learned from their contemporaries. Being missional is different.

These four trends from Roxburgh and Boren can be used to educate IPC churches in Kottayam on what a missional church is not. Their cross-cultural mission interest, the church growth mechanism of attracting believers, evangelistic activity, and the traditional

approach followed in the way of church practice will not define them as a missional church. Therefore, along with this it is also important to describe to IPC churches what a true missional church is. Darrell Guder best describes the essential vocation and nature of Church as God's called and sent people (*Missional Church* 11-12). They are as follows:

a. A missional church is biblical: Missional church is not a new coined thought. It is scriptural and the Old Testament and New Testament's "sent" aspect defines and emphasizes it.

b. A missional church is historical: Missional churches accept all expressions without any restrictions. Even IPC churches can also be missional by being in their cultural context with their own expressions.

c. A missional church is contextual: The gospel is a universal principle applicable universally. A missional church in any context follows the incarnational approach. It is a reminder to the IPC churches to avoid the traditional approach and be contextual.

d. A missional church is eschatological: God is the initiator of and guide to the mission of the church. It has a beginning and moves forward to its consummation. The missional church has a hope and a future.

e. A missional church is practical in nature. The teachings and patterns of a missional church are practical and equip and shape people to be faithful in their witness to God. IPC churches need to avoid their fundamental traditional approach and follow the praxis nature of a missional church.

2. Develop a missional curriculum for the cell groups and those in leadership teams.

There is a need for a better missional curriculum for cell groups and those in leadership teams in the IPC churches. These IPC churches have structured cell groups and meet regularly every week. It is a small group gathering and I believe that a missional curriculum needs to be developed.

Those in the core leadership team, must understand what needs to be changed in a local church to be missional in nature. Roxburgh and Boren sets the framework to understand the nature of a local church in terms of its patterns, practices, desires, and strength. He says there are four ways. They are: *reactive, developmental, transitional, or transformational* (125-132).

*Reactive* churches are those which begin with high energy and dreams. In the course of their growth, they live close to each other in community. They are more focused on their internal life and their relation to the society is minimal.

*Developmental* church is more of an attractional model. They believe in what they do and hope they can attract others by their programs. They are aimed at improving their approach and building to attract people.

*Transitional* describes a church trying to get out beyond its own walls. It has nothing to do with the structure and programs; it lays emphasis on knowing people in their world, before inviting them to the church.

*Transformational* is about being missionaries in their neighborhood and sharing the gospel in their own forms and language. To be transformational is a huge challenge



and that is why the attractional approach to church is preferred. Both reactive and developmental are attractional in approach.

When I look at the IPC churches in Kottayam from these four perspectives, they are in reactive and development mode. They need to be transformational in approach. This complete information can be taught to the leadership team through a practical exercise. Guder's practical exercise, which is apt and will enable the leaders to learn is attached in the appendix.

3. Educate the IPC churches on the different characteristics of being missional.

The term missional describes the very heart of the church's existence, a Christian life's identity, the nature of the gospel, and the focus of God's mission. The IPC churches in Kottayam should understand the essence of missional church. It will challenge their basic assumption on the nature and purpose of the church. Different missional proponents describe the characteristics of a missional church. The meaningful proponents of a missional church must be presented to make the IPC churches understand the various dimensions of a missional church which are contextually relevant and biblically authentic. I prefer that the following missional descriptions by Lesslie Newbigin, Darrell Guder, Allen Hirsch and Michael Frost, Lois Barrett and Milfred Minatrea be taught and explained to the IPC churches in Kottayam. Newbigin's characteristics will enable IPC Churches to see the missional church as a church with distinctive discipleship patterns. Guder's description of the missional church will enable IPC churches to describe the holistic dimension of the missional church. Frost and Hirsch's principles will help the leadership team of the IPC churches. Barrett's pattern and Minatrea practices will enable IPC churches to understand the passion of God's community.

Lesslie Newbigin lists six *characteristics* of a missional church. They are: Praising God, standing true to Christian faith, engage with Secular community, empowering to disperse, models exemplary community; grounded in Christian history (*The Open Secret: An Introduction to Theology of Mission*)

Darrell Guder describes it as *indicators* of a missional church. They are as follows: Engage in celebrative worship, proclaim the gospel, discern God's specific missional vocation, practice hospitality, visible impact of community, growth in discipleship, bible informs community, distinctively Christian, Christian behavior, loving accountability, diverse community, and community in process (Darrell Guder (ed) *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the church in North America*).

Allan Hirsch and Michael Frost describes *principles* for a missional church. They are as follows: Messianic, Incarnational and Apostolic (*The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church*). Milfred Minatrea describes *practices* of a missional church. They are as follows: Rewrite worship, live apostolically, expect to change the world, mission sending, teach to obey, good aspect of membership, authentically Christian, orders and actions describing kingdom concerns (*Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Church*).

All these characteristics, patterns, practices, and indicators will describe missional churches in a better way to IPC churches. The leadership team be aware of this information on missional churches the common cause of being missional.

4. Explain the Barretts Patterns to the IPC churches in Kottayam to help them understand missional faithfulness.

The church as a community seeking to be missional in nature should know the patterns laid down by Barrett. The three patterns of Barrett were used as a checklist to understand the missional faithfulness of IPC churches in Research question #3. The responses were one-dimensional in approach. The believers' and youth's response were one-sided, the lay leaders voiced that churches can contribute to social concerns. The patterns laid by Barrett are:

- a. Missional vocation: To this every individual in the church discovers the missional vocation as a vocation for every-one rather than for clergy alone.
- b. Biblical formation and discipleship: The aspect of *being, doing, and telling* as disciple of Jesus is reflected from every member. This mandate is not from the church, but from God and for the church to participate in it.
- c. Taking risk as a contrast community: This characteristic is very important for IPC Churches. The fear of the government and religious fundamental groups have led churches to refrain from taking risks as a contrast community. It is a command to live and associate in this world by taking risks and presenting ourselves as a contrast community. By this pattern, the church will reflect the aspect of distinctive discipleship.
- d. Practice that demonstrates God's intent for the world: A church is supposed to reflect all practices that God intends. It is not only preaching. The IPC churches are more inclined to preaching and spiritual exercise than being missional in practice. A true missional church is a true demonstration of what God intends for the life of the whole world.

e. Worship as Public witness: Worship is also an act of witness. For IPC churches, worship is limited to Sundays only. It must remain strong from Monday to Saturday. If it is not so, the impact for community development will be minimal.

f. Dependence on the Holy Spirit: There is a need for dependence on the Holy Spirit for missional church growth and influence. IPC churches' dependence on Holy Spirit is not a matter of concern.

g. Pointing toward the reign of God: Participating in *missio Dei* is not entry in or joining any church, rather it is knowing about the kingdom of God. The missional church allows or makes Kingdom of God be known to all creation. IPC churches must learn to point people toward the reign of God rather than attracting one to any church.

h. Missional authority: The role of the Holy Spirit is intentional in the missional church and it helps one to discern his/her act in community life. The Holy Spirit guides the missional church in a variety of ways with diverse roles and practices.

For a better description of the missional church to new-comers and for the church to be missionary in nature, the missional principles proposed by Minatrea will be an ideal one. It is a four-dimensional approach and all the four dimensions have two characteristics each.

The four dimensions of Minatrea drives one with a concrete passion to live missionally and faithfully. These four dimensions address the whole dimensions of a missional church. I have preached and shared this insight with my co-workers and in a pastors' seminar and do believe this insight and information will inform IPC churches in Kottayam toward a concrete missional theology and practice.

a. Dimension One: Love God: Combined with the characteristics of worship and obedience.

An individual's love for God is known by act of worship and obedience to his commandment. As object of his love, missional Christians express their love for God through worship and obedience. Worship is important, the dynamic aspect of a missional church. Those disciples who love God will obey Him also. Missional Christians respond to the teaching of the word in obedience. This dimension is important for IPC Kottayam churches. It is not that they lack but can be strengthened.

b. Dimension two: Live His Mission: Combined with the characteristics of Serve and Share.

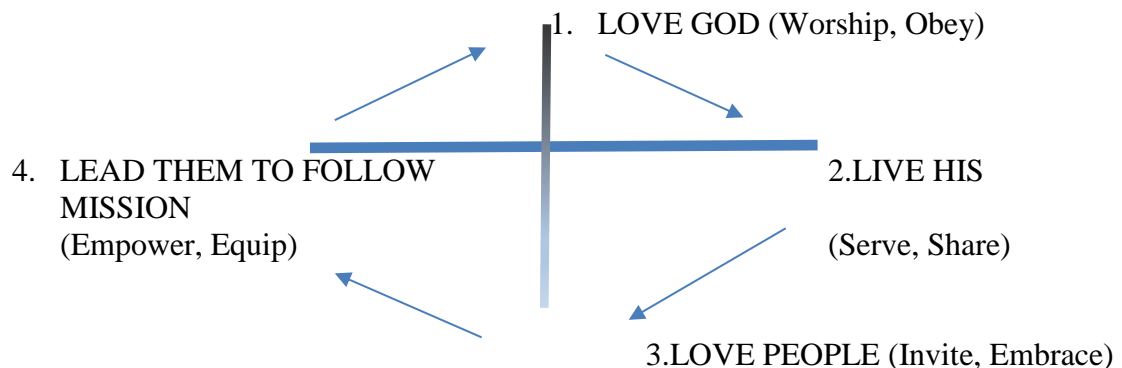
Live his mission is the true essence to the definition of being missional. Living his mission every-day is the challenge for IPC church members in Kottayam. A true understanding to Live His Mission will enable the IPC churches in Kottayam to avoid the disparity of spirituality practiced on Sunday and other days. The characteristics of Serve and Share is also seen from John 17. A missional church lives his (Jesus)mission of serving and sharing and influencing people. The lesson to be taught to IPC churches from this dimension is this: the ministries of the missional church follow the leadership pattern of Christ, provide compassionate care to persons in need, provide physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs to people in communities. Living his mission is more than preaching.

c. Dimension three: Love People: Combined with the characteristics of Embrace and Invite.

God's heart shapes a missional church. The life of the missional church reflects God's love by loving people irrespective of their position or status or identity. The missional churches will *Love God, Live His Mission* and *Love People*. Embracing and inviting individuals as they are is the true act of the missional church as seen from the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. This dimension is needed for IPC churches in Kottayam. They give importance to preaching, loving God, and serving him. This dimension is a reminder that the missional church has multiple entry points to meet and embrace individuals other than preaching.

d. Dimension four: Lead them (disciples) to follow: Combined with the characteristics of Equip and Empower.

A missional church's ministry starts from the day one accepts Christ. It attempts to see everyone as an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. The aspect is reciprocal in nature than mere relational in practice and approach. Members of a missional church encourage and empower people and wish to see everyone be the salt and light of the earth. This aspect is also missing from IPC churches in Kottayam. Living and leading others to his mission is a call for everyone rather than limited to clergy. Minatrea's four dimensions of developing passion for missional church is in graphic form below:



Barrett's pattern and Milfred's four-dimension passion for missional faithfulness are meaningful, and extensive. A continuous study of existing believers and new-comers can help the IPC churches in Kottayam to understand the definition of *missio Dei* and mission of the church in "sent" perspective.

#### 5. Future Area of Research

This present research is only a fraction of the whole aspect of being missional. IPC churches in Kottayam are only the tip of the iceberg to all the IPC churches in India. IPC churches carry the tag of being the biggest indigenous Pentecostal church in India.

The needed subject for future research is *IPC churches Response/Contribution in Community Development or Nation building: A Retrospect and Prospect*. It will be an ideal project with a meaningful study explaining to believers the scope of God's church in community development. It will make Pentecostal churches and believers to be like the Kwangliam community church in Seoul, South Korea. To my knowledge, no one has done a research on it. A project on this aspect will inspire Pentecostal believers and churches in India to contribute toward nation building. The IPC churches have enough resources and finances across the globe. If time and resources permit, I will be happy to undertake this research in future.

#### **Postscript**

After my M.Th (Missiology) studies from SAIACS, joined IPCTSK (Indian Pentecostal Church Theological Seminary Kottayam) as faculty member for Mission and Evangelism in 2004. I was interested in IPCTSK because of its mission and vision for

reaching villages in north India. I was attracted by their purpose statement of “transforming the saints for transforming the world.”

There were some churches (IPC Philadelphia, Kanjikuzhy and IPC Tabernacle, Kottayam) who were institutional founder members of IPCTSK, and their support in terms of prayer and finance were great blessings from the beginning. The college (IPCTSK) and these two institutional members have good rapport and share the ministry of faculty members and pastors of the church regularly. The faculty members participate in all their important meetings and conferences still today.

The subject of this research was formed when the definition of the word *mission* was misquoted and misunderstood in their mission conference and when it was uttered at meetings. I started interacting with leaders, pastors and even started visiting the mission fields which IPC churches supported. Graduates of IPCTSK are supported by the IPC churches in Kottayam and their members regularly visits their mission station. The understanding, concept and affirmation on *Our mission, or our church mission* was objectionable to me and I was constantly reminding my students that the mission of the church has God as the initiator and controller and the church is only participating. The statement of Jurgen Moltmann that “*church does not have mission, but mission has a church*” triggered my thinking and John 17 gave me a base to think, state, and do a study on this project.



**APPENDIXES**

**A. Closed and Open-Ended Questionnaire**

**A. Closed ended questionnaires**

**1. Personal Details/ വ്യക്തിഗത വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ**

**a. Responsibility in the church/ സഭയിലെ ചുമതല**

- Lay leader/ മൂപ്പൻ
- Evangelism Coordinator/ സുവിശേഷസംവിധാന കോർഡിനേറ്റർ
- Mission Director/ മിഷൻ ടയറക്ടർ
- Believer/ വിശ്വാസി

**b. Age group/ പ്രായ വിഭാഗം**

- 30-40
- 41-50
- 51-60

**c. Gender/ ലിംഗഭേദം**

- Male/ പുരുഷൻ
- Female/ സ്ത്രീ

**2. What are the different activities in the church? (you are free to tick as many as**

you feel)/ സഭയിലെ വിവിധ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ എന്തെല്ലാമാണ്? (നിങ്ങളു്കു

ഒന്നിലധികം ഉത്തരങ്ങളു്കിക്ക് ചെയ്യാം)

- Worship service/ ആരാധന
- Sunday school/ സൺഡേ സ്കൂൾ
- Fasting prayer / ഉപവാസ പ്രാർഥന
- Small/care group meeting / ചെറിയ കൂട്ടായ്മകളു്കു
- Mission support / മിഷൻ പിന്തുണ
- Hospital visitation / ആശുപത്രി സന്ദർശനം
- Counseling / കൗൺസിലിംഗ്
- Evangelism / സുവിശേഷവത്കരണം

3. The different characteristics of your church are: / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭയുടെ

വ്യത്യസ്ത സ്വഭാവഗുണങ്ങൾ

- Worshipping church / ആരാധനക്രമപ്രാധാന്യം നൽകുന്ന സഭ
- Missionary supporting church / മിഷനറിയെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്ന സഭ
- Giving church / കൊടുക്കുന്നതിൽ മുൻകൈ എടുക്കുന്ന സഭ
- Praying church / പ്രാർത്ഥനയ്ക്ക് പ്രാധാന്യം നൽകുന്ന സഭ
- Evangelizing church / സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണ സഭ

4. How often do you hear the word mission in the meeting? / "മിഷൻ" എന്ന

വാക്ക് ഏതു കൂട്ടായ്മയിലാണ് പലപ്പോഴും കേൾക്കുന്നത്?

- At every Sunday meeting / എല്ലാ ഞായറാഴ്ചയും സഭായോഗത്തിൽ
- At Friday fasting prayer / വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച ഉപവാസ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ
- At special meetings / പ്രത്യേക പ്രാർത്ഥനകളിൽ
- At monthly meetings / മാസയോഗങ്ങളിൽ
- At mission offering / മിഷനുവേണ്ടി സ്തോത്രകാഴ്ച അർപ്പിക്കുമ്പോൾ

5. How does your church define mission? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭ എങ്ങനെയാണ്

ദൗത്യത്തെ അഥവാ മിഷനെ നിർവ്വചിക്കുന്നത്?

- Supporting mission field / മിഷൻ ഫീൽഡിനെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നു
- Supporting missionary / മിഷനറിയെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നു
- Activity of the church / സഭയുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ
- Participating with God / ദൈവവുമായി പങ്കുചേരുക
- Giving to God / ദൈവത്തിനു കൊടുക്കുക

6. What do you think about the ministry of the church? / സഭയുടെ

വേലയെക്കുറിച്ച് നിങ്ങൾ എന്താണ് ചിന്തിക്കുന്നത്?

- Being / ആയിത്തീരുക
- Telling / പറയുക
- Doing / പ്രവർത്തിക്കുക
- Giving / കൊടുക്കുക

7. What are the programs of the church that benefit the residential community? /

പാർപ്പിട സമുദായത്തിന് പ്രയോജനം ചെയ്യുന്ന സഭയുടെ പരിപാടികളിൽ

എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

- Evangelism / സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണം
- Counseling / കൗൺസിലിംഗ്
- Health Clinic / ആരോഗ്യ ചികിത്സാകേന്ദ്രം
- Educational helps / വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സഹായം
- Financial helps / സാമ്പത്തിക സഹായം

8. What are the practices that demonstrate God’s intent for the world? /

ലോകത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശ്യം പ്രകടമാക്കുന്ന നടപടികൾ

എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?

- Listening to one another / അന്യോന്യം മനസിലാക്കുക
- Active helpfulness / സജീവമായ സഹായകത
- Bearing with one another / അന്യോന്യം സഹിക്കുക
- Crossing boundaries / അതിർവരമ്പുകളുടേടിക്കുക
- Welcoming the others / മറ്റുള്ളവരെ സ്വാഗതം ചെയ്യുക

9. What are the risks the church takes as a contrast community? (You can have

more than one answer). / ഒരു വൈരുദ്ധ്യമായ സമുച്ചയം എന്നനിലയിൽ സഭ

എന്തെല്ലാം റിസ്ക് ആണ് എടുക്കുന്നത്? (നിങ്ങളു്ക്കു ഒന്നിലധികം ഉത്തരങ്ങളു്ടീക്ക്

ചെയ്യാം)

- Materialism versus being present with the poor / ഭൌതികവാദമോ ദരിദ്രന്മാരുമായുള്ള സാന്നിധ്യമോ
- Creative Generosity/ വ്യത്യസ്തതയാർന്ന ഔദാര്യത
- Individualism versus commitment to community /സ്വാശ്രയമോ സമുദായത്തോടുള്ള പ്രതിബദ്ധതയോ
- Ministry to those on the edges of society / സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അരികുകളിൽ ഉള്ളവർക്ക് സേവനം നൽകുക
- Sharing in the suffering of Christ / ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കഷ്ടതയിൽ പങ്കുചേരുക
- Nonconformity as witness / വൈചിത്ര്യമായ തരത്തിൽ സാക്ഷിയാവുക

**10. How is your church pointing community towards the “Reign of God”?** /

"ദൈവരാജ്യം" സംബന്ധിച്ച് നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭ സമൂഹത്തെ എങ്ങനെ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടുന്നു?

- Considering Reign of God as missional challenge / ദൈവ ഭരണം ഒരു ദൗത്യപരമായ വെല്ലുവിളിയായി കണക്കാക്കുക
- By preaching on the kingdom of God / ദൈവരാജ്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നതിനാൽ
- By our conviction and modesty / നമ്മുടെ ദൃഢനിശ്ചയവും എളിമയും കൊണ്ട്
- Local witness to global reign / ആഗോള ഭരണത്തിന് പ്രാദേശിക സാക്ഷ്യയാകുക

**Open- ended questionnaire**

1. How do you define the word mission? / "മിഷൻ" എന്ന വാക്ക് നിങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ നിർവചിക്കുന്നു?
2. When did you hear the definition of the word “mission” for the first time in the church? / "മിഷൻ" എന്ന വാക്കിന്റെ നിർവ്വചനം ആദ്യമായി സഭയിൽ നിങ്ങൾ എപ്പോഴാണ് കേൾക്കുന്നത്?
3. What is the understanding of the mission of the church? / സഭയുടെ ദൗത്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള നിങ്ങളുടെ ധാരണ എന്താണ്?
4. What is the true mark of the church? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭയുടെ യഥാർത്ഥ മുദ്ര എന്താണ്?
5. Is your church missionary in nature? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭാ ദൗത്യനിർവഹണം ഉള്ളതാണോ?
6. How is your church sensitive to the needs of the community? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്ക് എത്രത്തോളം പ്രാധാന്യം കൊടുക്കുന്നു?
7. What are the different missional marks of your church? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭയുടെ ദൗത്യബോധം മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാനുള്ള വ്യത്യസ്ത അടയാളങ്ങളെ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്?
8. Which is the most important part of your activities in the church? / സഭയിലെ നിങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ഭാഗം ഏതാണ്?
9. How are you missionary by nature in the church? / സഭയിൽ നിങ്ങൾ ഒരു മിഷനറി ആയിരിക്കുന്നത് എങ്ങനെയാണ്?
10. Is your church missionary by nature and how? / നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭാ മിഷനറി പ്രകൃതമാണോ? ആണെങ്കിൽ എങ്ങനെ?

- 11.** Who takes the lead in evangelism and discipleship in the church? / സഭയിൽ സുവിശേഷപ്രവർത്തിക്കും ശിഷ്യത്വത്തിനും നേതൃത്വം വഹിക്കുന്നത് ആരാണ്?
- 12.** How is your church missional in nature? / എങ്ങനെയാണു നിങ്ങളുടെ സഭ ദൗത്യബോധത്തിന്റെ പ്രകൃതം വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്?

## **B. Permission Letter**

### **Letter for Permission**

Dear Pastors

Pastor Sunny George (District Minister IPC Kottayam North)

Pastor K.E Thomas (District Minister IPC Kottayam South)

Subject: Letter seeking permission to allow selected Pastors, Believers, Lay leaders, Mission/Evangelism directors from IPC Churches in Kottayam North and South to participate in research.

In partial requirement of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA, I am presently undertaking a research study of the missional theology and practices of IPC churches in Kottayam North and South.

In view of this, may I request you to provide the response to my study and to permit the church pastors, believers, lay leaders, and mission directors to be the respondents. Rest assured that the data I will gather will be held in strict confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

I believe, you will consider and extend your cooperation.

With Grace and Peace.

Together in His Vineyard,

Thomas Thoppil Varghese  
Researcher

### C. Informed Consent Letter

#### ***Missio Dei determines Missiones Ecclesia: A Study on the Missional Theology and Practice among IPC Churches in Kottayam, Kerala, India.***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Thomas Thoppil Varghese from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA. You are invited because you are the Pastor, Believer, Mission/Evangelism Director or Lay leader of the church.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to answer some of the questions related to your church's mission theology and practice. The duration of participation will be thirty minutes. You need to study the questionnaire and please answer as per your understanding and experience. I will come to the church twice to meet you in person to give and collect the questionnaire. There will not be any payment for involvement in this study. It is done for the betterment of the churches' missional understanding and for the glory of God.

Your family will know that you are in the study. If anybody else is given information about you, they will not know your name. A number or initial will be used instead of your name. If something makes you feel bad while you are in the study, please tell **Thomas Thoppil Varghese**. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want. You can ask **Thomas Thoppil Varghese** questions any time about anything in this study.

Signing this paper means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you and no one will be annoyed if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

---

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

---

Date Signed

### **D. Consent Form for Questionnaire**

My name is Thomas Thoppil Varghese and I am a Student at Asbury Theological Seminary (Asbury Theological Seminary, 204 N.Lexington Ave, Wilmore, KY 40390. USA), conducting a study for my dissertation on Missional theology and Practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. My contact number is +918086117570, +918301025972. My research supervisor is Dr. Jay Moon, Asbury Theological Seminary, USA. You may contact me at any time if you have questions about this study.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the current missional theology and practice of Pentecostal churches in Kottayam. The questionnaire will take approximately half an hour of your time. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. There are no risks associated in filling the questionnaire. If ever you feel that way, please inform me promptly.

While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible that you will enjoy sharing your answers to these questions. This study is intended to benefit the understanding of missional theology to a wider community at large. Your name will not be used in any of the reporting and writing related to this study. I will be the only person present while you answer the questionnaire.

I plan to develop a dissertation based on the questionnaires along with my reading and historical research. This dissertation will be shared with my cohort colleagues and Asbury Theological Seminary faculty on Asbury's Kentucky Campus. I also plan to share some of my finding with the IPC churches' District Minister in Charge of North and South and the Mission/Evangelism coordinators from North and South IPC Churches. There is a possibility that I will publish portions of this dissertation as an article. In this event, I may alter some identifying details to further project your anonymity.

By signing below, you are agreeing to fill out the questionnaire for this research study. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**E. Photo of Mission Field Visits by a Lay leader and Pastor**



### **F. Roxburgh and Boren's Framework to Understand the nature of a Local Church**

The tool mentioned by Roxburgh and Boren will enable one to understand the nature of the church. Following is the method. The four understood elements of the nature of a church according to them are *reactive, development, transitional and transformational*.

1. It is important to explain each of these four elements to the complete groups.
2. Divide the meeting room into four quadrants representing each of these four elements.
3. Ask the individuals to go and stand in the quadrant that best describes where they see their church at this moment.

Invite the participant to look at where they have all placed themselves and then find someone from another quadrant and discuss why that person chose that element/group. Thereafter, bring the group and ask them what they experienced and learned.

This helps one to talk with each other and see the church. This ability to talk with one another is critical to the process of listening and discerning what the Spirit might be about in your church.

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