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com**MISIOLOGI DALAM KITAB MAZMUR 96****Puisi Ibrani dan Kedaulatan Kerajaan Allah***Abstrak*

Penelitian ini mengkaji dimensi misiologis dalam Mazmur 96 dengan menempatkannya dalam konteks keberagaman agama dan kepercayaan kepada Allah, baik pada zaman kuno Israel maupun dalam realitas masa kini. Mazmur ini merepresentasikan kedaulatan Allah sebagai realitas universal yang melampaui batas etnis dan geografis, serta mengundang semua bangsa untuk mengakui dan menyembah-Nya. Permasalahan utama yang dianalisis adalah kurangnya perhatian terhadap kitab Mazmur sebagai teks yang memuat pesan misiologis, meskipun Mazmur 96 secara eksplisit menyerukan pujian kepada Allah dari seluruh bumi. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan, bagaimana Mazmur 96 sebagai nyanyian liturgis dapat dipahami sebagai bentuk misi dalam konteks keberagaman iman? Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis dan teologis dalam kajian biblika untuk menelusuri konteks religius Mazmur 96 dalam tradisi Israel dan untuk menginterpretasikan makna misiologisnya dalam kerangka *Missio Dei*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Mazmur 96 tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai doa liturgis, tetapi juga sebagai proklamasi misi yang bersifat inklusif dan universal. Puji-pujian dan penyembahan dalam Mazmur ini bukan hanya bentuk ibadah internal, tetapi juga ekspresi seni yang membawa daya tarik misiologis bagi bangsa-bangsa lain. Dengan demikian, kitab Mazmur dapat dipahami sebagai bagian integral dari narasi Misi Allah bagi seluruh dunia.

Kata-kata kunci: ibadah, Mazmur 96, *Missio Dei*, misiologi, pujian.

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International Licence.**MISSIOLOGY IN THE PSALM 96****Hebrew Poetry and God's Sovereign Kingdom***Abstract*

This study examines the missiological dimensions of Psalm 96 by situating it within the context of religious pluralism and belief in God,

both in ancient Israel and in contemporary settings. The psalm articulates God's sovereignty as a universal reality that transcends ethnic and geographical boundaries, inviting all nations to recognize and worship Him. The central issue addressed is the limited scholarly attention given to the Book of Psalms as a text bearing missiological significance, despite Psalm 96's explicit call for all the earth to praise God. This raises the guiding question: how can Psalm 96, as a liturgical hymn, be understood as a form of mission within the context of religious diversity? Employing historical and theological approaches in biblical studies, this research explores the religious context of Psalm 96 within Israel's tradition and interprets its missiological meaning within the framework of *Missio Dei*. The findings demonstrate that Psalm 96 functions not only as a liturgical prayer but also as a proclamation of mission that is both inclusive and universal. The acts of praise and worship expressed in this psalm are thus not merely inward devotional practices, but also artistic and theological expressions carrying a missional invitation to other nations. Consequently, the Book of Psalms can be understood as an integral component of the biblical narrative of God's mission to the whole world.

Keywords: worship, Psalm 96, *Missio Dei*, missiology, praise.

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Psalms, a cornerstone of the Old Testament, is widely recognized as a collection of worship texts reflecting Israel's spiritual journey and relationship with God. However, this study argues that beyond its liturgical function, the Psalms, particularly Psalm 96, offer profound insights into the concept of mission within a world characterized by a plurality of religions and beliefs. However, upon deeper examination, this book also holds broader theological themes, including a missiological dimension that is often overlooked. Psalm 96 is a compelling example, as it explicitly calls all nations to worship God. This call demonstrates that God's sovereignty is not limited to Israel but extends to all humanity under His reign. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the missiological meaning of Psalm 96 and how

this text contributes to the understanding of God's mission for the world. In this regard, clarifying the meaning of "mission" is crucial. While the term is often associated with proselytism or religious conquest, this study emphasizes that in Psalm 96, mission refers to an inclusive and invitational witness grounded in God's sovereignty. Worship and praise, as expressed in this psalm, are not confined to internal devotion but serve as artistic and theological acts of mission. By situating Psalm 96 within its historical background, linguistic-poetic features, and theological message, this article aims to uncover how worship itself can function as a form of mission in a pluralistic context.

Specifically, it addresses how Psalm 96, as a song of worship, can illuminate the concept of mission in a world characterized by a plurality of religions and beliefs, raising

the question of whether mission can genuinely manifest as praise or song within worship. Previous studies on the Book of Psalms have mostly focused on its liturgical aspects, the beauty of Hebrew poetry, and its covenant theology. Brueggemann (1984) explores the theology of worship in the Psalms, while Mowinckel (1962) highlights their historical background and liturgical significance in Israel's religious life. Craigie (1983) discusses how the Psalms reflect Israel's faith in God as King. However, research specifically examining the missiological dimension of the Psalms is still quite limited. Most studies on missiology tend to focus on the New Testament or other Old Testament books, such as Isaiah and Jonah, which explicitly convey God's universal call to the nations. To address this gap, this study examines Psalm 96 as a text that affirms God's invitation for all nations to worship Him.

This article offers a fresh perspective by interpreting Psalm 96 through the lens of *Missio Dei*, God's mission that embraces all of humanity across time and cultures, not limited to Israel. It acknowledges the plurality of religions and diverse beliefs in God, both in ancient Israel and in today's global context, emphasizing that the concept of "mission" here is not about religious domination, but about a divine invitation extended to all peoples to recognize God's glory and sovereignty. While Psalms are often viewed primarily as expressions of Israel's worship, this study reveals their broader missiological dimension. Psalm 96, in particular, presents worship and praise not only as internal acts of devotion, but also as forms of mission—proclamations that carry artistic, emotional, and spiritual impact

capable of drawing nations toward God. By exploring these themes, this article enriches our understanding of how the Psalms contribute to the unfolding narrative of God's mission and how they reflect the universal scope of God's Kingdom that transcends ethnic, cultural, and geographical boundaries.

This study explores how Psalm 96 reveals the missiological dimension of God's sovereignty over all nations, within a world marked by diverse religions and varied beliefs in God—both in ancient Israel and in contemporary society. It raises several key questions: What is the historical background of Psalm 96 within Israel's pluralistic religious environment? How does the structure of Hebrew poetry in Psalm 96 enhance its universal and missiological message? Importantly, how can worship and praise—as demonstrated in Psalm 96—function as a form or model of mission, especially when understood as artistic and transformative expressions that engage not only the faithful but also those beyond the boundaries of Israel's tradition? Furthermore, how can Psalm 96 be interpreted through the lens of *Missio Dei*, and what implications does it hold for the church's mission in a religiously diverse world today? By addressing these questions, this research seeks to deepen our understanding of the Psalms as instruments in God's inclusive plan of salvation for all humanity.

This study employs a historical and theological approach to biblical research in order to achieve its objectives. The historical approach investigates the background of Psalm 96 within Israel's religious tradition, including its liturgical function amid a context that was not religiously monolithic, but

shaped by interactions with various beliefs. The theological approach, on the other hand, explores how Psalm 96 proclaims God's sovereignty and extends an inclusive call to all nations to worship Him—reflecting a vision that transcends ethnic and religious boundaries. In addition, a biblical analysis is conducted to interpret the missiological significance of Psalm 96 within the framework of *Missio Dei*, highlighting how worship and praise in the psalm function not merely as acts of devotion, but also as artistic and transformative expressions of mission. Through this multifaceted approach, the study seeks to uncover new insights into how the Psalms participate in and contribute to God's global mission in a religiously diverse world.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Psalm in the Context of *Missio Dei* and Role of Prayer and Praise in God's Mission

Missio Dei, or God's mission, is a theological concept that affirms God's initiative in carrying out His redemptive plan for humanity. Mission is not merely a human endeavor but originates from God Himself, reflecting His desire to bring salvation to all people. In this context, the Book of Psalms holds a crucial place, not only as a collection of Israel's worship songs but also as a revelation of God's universal plan for the nations. One of the most compelling examples of this is Psalm 96, which extends a call to all nations to worship the Lord. The psalmist does not limit this invitation to Israel alone but urges every people group to recognize God's glory and

proclaim His marvelous deeds. This universal appeal highlights an important truth: God's redemptive mission was never restricted to Israel but has always been intended for the entire world. Psalm 96 also demonstrates the deep connection between worship and mission. The act of praising God is not merely a personal or communal devotion; it serves as a non-coercive and poetic witness to God's greatness, inviting all peoples—regardless of their religious backgrounds—to encounter His majesty through worship. In this way, worship functions as both proclamation and participation in God's mission. Through music, poetry, and liturgical artistry, Psalm 96 demonstrates that the artistic elements of praise can embody a missional force—drawing people into divine truth not through argument, but through beauty and awe. Through the Psalms, particularly Psalm 96, we see that *Missio Dei* is woven into the fabric of Scripture. Worship and prayer are not merely acts of devotion but essential elements of God's mission, drawing all people into His divine plan of salvation.

Missio Dei teaches that God is the source of all mission, and He invites humanity to take part in His work of salvation (Thinane 2024). In the Old Testament, God's mission is often viewed through the lens of Israel's election as His chosen people. However, the Book of Psalms makes it clear that from the very beginning, God's plan was never limited to one nation, it was always meant for all people. Throughout the Psalms, there are repeated calls to praise the Lord, not just for Israel but for every nation. Many of these songs reflect a universal vision, showing that worshipping God is not an exclusive privilege

for Israel but an invitation for the entire world (Sonea 2017). Psalm 96 is one of the clearest examples of this theme, emphasizing God's desire for all nations to recognize His glory and join in worship.

Psalm 96 is a powerful song of praise that calls all nations and the whole earth to worship the Lord. This psalm reflects key aspects of *Missio Dei*, emphasizing God's mission to all people. First, Psalm 96:1-3 urges: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people." (King James Version). These verses make it clear that worship is not just Israel's responsibility, it is a calling for all humanity (Coetsee and Viljoen 2023). The phrase "proclaim His salvation day after day" highlights that mission and worship go hand in hand. God's people are called to share His salvation with the world, making worship a witness to His greatness. Second, Psalm 96:10 proclaims: "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously" (King James Version)

This verse affirms that God's rule extends beyond Israel to all nations. His reign is universal, and His justice is for everyone, reinforcing the idea that salvation is meant for all people, not just one group. Finally, Psalm 96:13 describes God's coming judgment, which will be carried out with righteousness and truth. This presents an eschatological vision, where God restores creation and gathers all nations to Himself. In *Missio Dei*, God's judgment is not merely about punishment, it is

about setting things right, bringing justice, and restoring His divine order in the world (Buys 2020).

The Book of Psalms reveals how prayer and praise play a crucial role in God's mission. Prayer is more than just a way for people to communicate with God, it is a means through which His will is made known and carried out. Likewise, praise as seen in Psalm 96, is not just a response to God's greatness but also an invitation for the nations to come and know Him (Raya 2019). Many of the prayers in Psalms reflect a deep missionary purpose. Psalm 67, for example, asks for God's blessing on His people so that His ways may be known throughout the world. This shows that prayer is not only personal or communal but also a way for God's plan of salvation to unfold. Similarly, praise in the Psalms goes beyond individual worship, it becomes a proclamation of God's reign to all people. In Psalm 96, praise does more than glorify God, it calls the nations to recognize His authority and worship Him (Harold 2019). Because of this, the Book of Psalms carries a strong missionary theme. It reminds us that both prayer and praise are not just acts of devotion but essential parts of God's mission. This message was important in the Old Testament and continues to be relevant in today's discussions on theology and mission.

Psalm 96 and the Book of Psalms as a whole play a vital role in *Missio Dei*. While the Psalms were an essential part of Israel's worship, they also reveal God's plan of salvation for all nations. Through prayer and praise, God's people are called to take part in His mission by proclaiming His greatness to the world. In this way, the Book of Psalms is

more than just a collection of songs, it carries a strong missionary message, declaring God as the sovereign King over all creation and inviting every nation to worship Him (Ndona et al. 2023). This artistic dimension of worship suggests that mission is not limited to preaching or doctrinal persuasion. Instead, the beauty of liturgical expression—like singing, poetry, and communal praise—can serve as a powerful form of mission, communicating God's glory in ways that transcend linguistic, cultural, and religious boundaries.

2. The Missiological Dimensions of Psalms Based on a Historical-Critical Approach

Psalm 96 is a song of praise that celebrates God's glory and majesty. It describes God as the supreme ruler over the whole earth and calls all nations to worship Him (Rao 2024). From a historical-critical perspective, this psalm is fascinating because of its connection to Israel's liturgical traditions and its possible links to other biblical texts. This approach examines the psalm's origins, historical background, theological significance, and its relationship with other parts of the Old Testament. Many scholars believe that Psalm 96 was written during the post-exilic period, although some sections may have existed earlier. After 538 Before Common Era (BCE), when the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon, they began rebuilding their religious life, including restoring the Temple (Assis 2011). This psalm reflects a universal perspective, emphasizing that God is not only the Lord of Israel but the Lord of all nations.

Psalm 96 is divided into three main sections: A Call to Sing a New Song (Verses

1-3): The call to sing a new song suggests that something significant has happened, inspiring fresh worship and praise. God's Greatness Above All Other Gods (Verses 4-9): This part emphasizes God's supreme power over the gods of other nations and invites the whole world to worship Him. A Proclamation of God's Coming Judgment (Verses 10-13): It declares that God will judge the world with righteousness, and all creation will rejoice because of His just rule. The way this psalm is structured suggests that it was likely used in temple worship, reinforcing its liturgical character (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

One fascinating aspect of studying Psalm 96 from a historical-critical perspective is its resemblance to 1 Chronicles 16:23-33. In Chronicles, this passage is part of a song of praise sung when King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (Asumbi 2023). This connection suggests that Psalm 96 may have come from an older liturgical tradition, which was later repurposed and expanded during the post exilic period.

Psalm 96 introduces Israel to the idea of God's universality, which became especially important after the exile when they began interacting with other nations. This psalm highlights several key themes: God's uniqueness (verses 4-5): He is greater than all other gods, showing that only He is worthy of worship. Righteous judgment (verses 10-13): God will judge the world with justice and truth, ensuring that everything follows His perfect order. The psalm 96 invites all people to know and worship God, emphasizing that His love and sovereignty are not just for Israel but for the whole world (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

Psalm 96 is filled with poetic beauty and uses parallelism, a signature feature of Hebrew literature. Synonymous Parallelism: A writing style in Hebrew poetry where different lines express the same idea in slightly different words. This repetition helps reinforce and emphasize the message. Climactic Parallelism: A poetic pattern where each line builds on the previous one, creating a sense of progression until it reaches a climax. This technique makes the message more powerful and dramatic (Prabowo 2022). Personification: A literary device that gives human traits or actions to non human things, such as nature or abstract ideas. In Hebrew poetry, it's often used to show creation responding to God's presence. Some examples of parallelism in this psalm include: Synonymous parallelism: "O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!" (verse 1), where the second line reinforces the first. Climactic parallelism: "For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods." (verse 4), building up the idea of God's greatness. Personification: Nature itself is described as rejoicing under God's reign (verses 11–12). These literary elements show that the psalm was written for worship, meant to be sung or recited in a liturgical setting.

Psalm 96 powerfully conveys a missiological message, declaring that God is the sovereign King over the whole world and calling all nations to worship Him. Through a historical-critical perspective, we can see how this text took shape throughout Israel's history and why its message remains relevant today. More than just a song of praise, Psalm 96 is a bold proclamation of God's universal reign and an invitation for all people to know and worship Him.

3. God's Sovereignty in Psalms and Its Relationship to Missiology

Psalm 96 powerfully proclaims that God is the King over all the earth. In verses 1-3, the psalmist calls on all nations to sing a new song to the Lord and declare His greatness among every people group. This reveals that God's sovereignty is not limited to Israel but extends to the entire world. It underscores that God is not only the Creator but also the supreme ruler who governs and sustains all things (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

In verses 4-6, the psalmist contrasts the Lord's majesty with the gods of other nations. "For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens" (Ps. 96:5). Here, the psalm makes a bold theological statement: only the Lord is truly God, while all other so called gods are powerless. Because He alone is the Creator and sovereign over everything, He alone is worthy of worship (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

Verses 7-9 extend an invitation to all peoples to come before the Lord in reverence and worship. This call to worship is not just a religious ritual but a response to the reality of God's rule. When nations acknowledge God as King, they affirm that He is not just the God of Israel but the God of all humanity (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

The psalm reaches its climax in verses 10-13, declaring: "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously." (Ps. 96:10). This is a bold proclamation that God rules with justice and righteousness, and that the world is secure under His reign. The imagery

in verses 11-12 is striking, all creation rejoices at God's rule. The heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything within them celebrate, showing that His sovereignty extends over all things. Finally, verse 13 announces that God will come to judge the world with fairness and truth. This introduces an eschatological perspective, emphasizing that God will one day bring justice to all nations (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

Beyond affirming God's kingship, Psalm 96 also carries a missionary message. In the Old Testament, the nations outside of Israel were often seen as outsiders to God's covenant. But Psalm 96 reveals that from the very beginning, God's plan was to bring all nations to Himself (Miller, Moffitt, and Allen 2005). This aligns with God's promise to Abraham, where He declared that through Abraham's descendants, all nations on earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

The psalm's invitation for all nations to worship God foreshadows Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Just as Psalm 96 calls the nations to recognize the Lord's kingship, Jesus commands His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Kgatle 2018). In this way, Psalm 96 is more than a call to worship, it is a declaration of God's mission, affirming that salvation is not only for Israel but for the entire world.

Moreover, verse 10 of Psalm 96 proclaims: "Say among the nations, the Lord reigneth!" This is not just a present reality but a future, eschatological truth. God reigns now, but He will also one day judge the world, calling all nations to account according to His perfect

justice and righteousness (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014). This closely aligns with the New Testament vision of God's kingdom, where Christ as the rightful King, will return to establish His reign in ultimate justice and truth.

4. Psalm 96 and the Universality of Worship for All Nations

From a literary standpoint, Psalm 96 is clearly structured into three main parts: (1) a call to sing praises to God (verses 1-6), (2) an invitation for the nations to bring their offerings to Him (verses 7-10), and (3) a call for all creation to rejoice in God's righteous rule (verses 11-13). This structure shows a gradual expansion of worship, starting with God's people, then reaching the nations, and finally including all of creation (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014).

One of the most striking themes in Psalm 96 is the call for all nations to worship God. This idea is powerfully expressed in the opening verses: "O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!" (Psalm 96:1-3) These verses show that worshipping God isn't just for Israel, it's for the entire world. The phrases "all nations" and "all peoples" in verse 3 highlight that God's worship is meant to be universal, extending to every group of people on earth (Jones 2024).

The Old Testament often speaks about nations taking part in worshipping God. Isaiah 56:7, for instance, says, "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples"

showing that God's plan of salvation is meant for everyone, calling all people to know and worship Him (Belnap 2018). Psalm 96 also has a strong missionary theme, where God's people are told to "declare His glory among the nations." This isn't just a passive invitation for others to come, it's an active call to share God's glory with the world (Miller, Moffitt, and Allen 2005). In this way, the psalm closely connects to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, where Jesus commands His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

One of the main reasons why worshipping God should be for everyone is that He rules over the whole world. Psalm 96:10 says: "Say among the nations, The Lord reigns! Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity" This verse makes it clear that God isn't just the God of Israel, He is the King of all creation (Crouch 2016). His authority isn't limited to one nation but extends to every people on earth. In the Old Testament, God's kingship is often linked to justice and righteousness. Psalm 96 emphasizes that He will judge the nations fairly, showing that His rule is just, impartial, and meant for all humanity, not just one specific group.

The idea of God's sovereignty is closely linked to biblical monotheism. In ancient times, many nations believed in gods who ruled over specific regions or aspects of life (Wells 2022). But Psalm 96 makes it clear that only God is worthy of worship because He alone is the true King over all creation. This directly challenges polytheistic beliefs that see multiple gods as having control over different parts of the world.

God's sovereignty is also connected to the idea of ultimate justice. The final verse

of Psalm 96 (verse 13) says that the Lord will come to judge the world with righteousness and the nations with His faithfulness. This shows that worshipping God isn't just about recognizing His power, it's also about trusting in His justice and unfailing love are evident (Marga 2021). He is not only a ruler but a fair and righteous Judge, giving hope to all nations as they look forward to His perfect justice.

Psalm 96 highlights Israel's role in God's plan of salvation for the world. As God's chosen people, Israel wasn't just called to worship Him but also to be a witness to other nations (Inbari and Bumin 2024). From the time God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:3, He had already promised that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's descendants. This shows that God's plan was never limited to one people, it was always meant for everyone (Alexander, Pakpahan, and Suprandono 2022). Psalm 96 continues this theme by calling Israel to proclaim His glory to all nations.

Throughout Israel's history, there were moments when other nations came to know God because of Israel's testimony. One example is the Queen of Sheba, who traveled from a distant land to seek Solomon's wisdom and ended up praising God (1 Kings 10:1-9). This shows how Israel was meant to be a light to the nations. But Israel didn't always fulfill this mission. At times, they became more focused on themselves and less open to others (Kozlova 2021). That's why Psalm 96 serves as a reminder that worshipping God was never meant to be exclusive. Instead, His people are called to invite all nations to know and worship Him.

This discussion makes it clear that Psalm 96 isn't just a regular song of praise,

it has a deep theological message about the universal nature of worshipping God. This worship is rooted in His sovereignty and justice, as well as in Israel's (and the Church's) mission to spread the message of salvation to the whole world. Psalm 96 strongly affirms that God is the Lord of all nations.

The concept of mission in Psalm 96 must be interpreted with sensitivity to the religious plurality of both ancient times and the modern world. Rather than presenting a message of religious domination, the psalm expresses a theological invitation grounded in God's universal sovereignty. In ancient Israel, the presence of many neighboring belief systems did not negate Israel's call to proclaim the greatness of YHWH; rather, it highlighted the distinctiveness of Israel's witness. Psalm 96 reflects this reality by inviting all peoples—not just Israel—to acknowledge God's glory. This approach resonates with the inclusive spirit of *Missio Dei*, which affirms God's redemptive purpose for all nations. In today's context, such an understanding of mission encourages respectful engagement with diverse faith communities, where the focus lies not on conversion by compulsion, but on bearing witness to God's majesty through word, worship, and action.

5. The Relevance of Psalm 96 for the Church's Mission in a Religiously Plural World

Psalm 96 is a hymn of praise that highlights the importance of proclaiming God's greatness to all nations. In this psalm, God's people are called to "declare His salvation day after day" (Ps. 96:2) and "tell of His glory among the

nations" (Ps. 96:3), showing that spreading His majesty is not just for Israel but for everyone. The proclamation of "His salvation" in Psalm 96 reflects a poetic and theological affirmation of God's universal grace and sovereignty. Rather than suggesting a mandate for conversion, it reveals a vision where all peoples are invited into the joy of recognizing God's redemptive presence. It conveys the idea of announcing God's victories and mighty works, which, in the Christian faith, points to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Psalm 96 also makes it clear that God deserves to be worshiped by all nations, reinforcing the truth that salvation is for all people, not just one group. In this way, its message reflects the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, where Jesus instructs His disciples to go and share the Good News with the whole world.

Psalm 96 highlights God's plan for the whole world, showing that His worship is not meant for just one nation or ethnic group. The phrase "all nations" appears multiple times, emphasizing that everyone is invited to honor God. In verses 7-10, for example, all nations are called to give glory to God and recognize Him as the just and sovereign King. This idea connects with the New Testament's vision of the church as a diverse community made up of people from different backgrounds. Paul, in Romans 15:9-11, quotes Psalm 96 to show that even non Jews are called to worship God (Fredriksen 2024). While Psalm 96 arises from a pre-Christian context, its theological vision of global worship offers deep insight into the foundations of God's inclusive mission. Its language resonates with later Christian missional reflection without collapsing the two contexts. But Psalm 96 isn't just about

spreading a message, it's about inviting people into a real experience of worshipping the living God. The church, then, should be a welcoming and inclusive place where people from every culture and background can come to know God's love and salvation.

Psalm 96 is still highly relevant to the church today because it calls believers to actively declare God's glory in a world that is becoming more secular and diverse. This psalm contains valuable lessons that the modern church can apply in its daily life. One of the key messages of Psalm 96 is that worship is not just an internal church practice, it also has a powerful evangelistic impact. When the church truly glorifies God in its worship, it becomes a living testimony to those around it. That's why worship should not be seen as just a routine, but as an opportunity to inspire and draw people closer to Christ (Kgatle 2018). The psalm also reminds us in verses 10-13 that God will judge the world with justice and righteousness. This means that evangelism isn't just about sharing the good news of salvation, but also about living out God's kingdom values justice, love, and truth (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014). The church today can reflect this by actively serving the community, standing up for the oppressed, and demonstrating Christ's love through real, tangible actions.

In today's digital age, the church has an amazing opportunity to "proclaim His salvation day after day" (Ps. 96:2) through platforms like social media, podcasts, and online videos (Ronda, Gumelar, and Wijaya 2024). By embracing the heart of Psalm 96, the church can creatively and effectively preach God's glory to a broader audience in ways that are relevant to the modern world.

To truly live out the message of Psalm 96 in the church's mission, there are some practical steps that can be taken. First, church worship should genuinely reflect God's greatness and glory. When worship becomes a true expression of devotion, it can be a powerful testimony to those who have yet to believe. Second, every believer needs to understand that sharing the message of salvation is part of their daily life. This can happen through personal conversations, their work, or even through digital media, which reaches more people than ever before. Third, the church should be a welcoming place for people from all backgrounds and cultures, reflecting the inclusive nature of God's mission, as emphasized in Psalm 96. Fourth, social media, podcasts, and other digital platforms are great tools for spreading God's glory to a broader audience. Finally, the church should follow God's example by standing for justice and love. This means actively helping those in need, engaging in social ministry, and advocating for human rights as part of its mission in the world (Panjaitan 2021; Verster 2022).

When the church puts these principles into action, it can be even more effective in fulfilling its mission today. Psalm 96 reminds us that evangelism isn't just a duty, it's a calling to invite all people to know and worship the one true God.

6. Mission, Religious Plurality, and Worship as Missional Praxis in Psalm 96

Contrary to interpretations that reduce mission to evangelistic conversion or theological conquest, Psalm 96 articulates a vision of Missio

Dei that is inclusive, invitational, and grounded in divine sovereignty rather than human strategy. The psalm does not advocate coercion or religious domination (Boot 2024). Instead, it affirms a theological truth: YHWH reigns over all creation and is worthy of recognition by all nations. In the ancient Near Eastern context—where polytheism was prevalent—such a declaration did not aim to erase religious diversity but served as a counter-witness to dominant theological frameworks (Susila and Risvan 2022). Rather than calling for the eradication of other religious expressions, the psalm functions as a liturgical affirmation that God's sovereignty transcends ethnic, cultural, and geographical boundaries.

In today's context of religious plurality, Psalm 96 invites a reimagining of mission—not as proselytism or enforced conversion, but as faithful, humble testimony to God's presence and reign. The tone of the psalmist is not triumphalist but worshipful (Gabriele G. Braun 2020). It suggests that all peoples are welcomed into an encounter with the living God, not through polemics or doctrinal debate, but through the revelation of divine majesty expressed in worship, justice, and beauty. This theological posture aligns with a mature understanding of *Missio Dei*, emphasizing participation in God's redemptive work, respect for human freedom, and openness to interreligious dialogue and mutual recognition.

Psalm 96, as a hymn, represents a poetic and artistic expression of devotion. At first glance, its liturgical form may appear disconnected from conventional notions of mission, often associated with preaching, teaching, or evangelistic outreach (Hays

2023). However, the psalm's literary structure, language, and purpose point to an intrinsic link between worship and mission. Repeated imperatives such as “sing,” “declare,” “proclaim,” and “ascribe” are not restricted to Israel's cultic setting but are directed toward the nations and the whole of creation. Worship in Psalm 96 is characterized by an outward orientation, inherently expansive in its theological scope.

This outward-facing dimension of worship reframes it as a missional act. Worship is no longer confined to internal communal practice but becomes performative and proclamatory—conveying theological truths that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. The poetic and aesthetic dimensions of the psalm embody Hans Urs von Balthasar's concept of theological aesthetics, wherein beauty serves as a mode of divine revelation (Potter 2022). Within this framework, liturgy and artistic expression function as effective instruments of mission. The beauty and majesty found in worship have the capacity to attract and invite, offering an experiential encounter with God that is accessible beyond doctrinal or institutional boundaries.

Moreover, the imagery in verses 11–13—where the heavens rejoice, the seas resound, and the fields exult—depicts a cosmic liturgy in which all creation participates in the glorification of God. This vision is both ecological and eschatological, extending the concept of mission beyond human relationships to encompass the entirety of the created order (Dames 2020). Worship, in this light, is not only an act of praise but a prophetic enactment of God's justice, sovereignty, and cosmic restoration.

In contemporary theological and missiological discourse, the interrelation between worship and mission is receiving renewed emphasis. Missional ecclesiology, for instance, asserts that liturgy should not be inward-looking alone but should project the redemptive message of God outwardly. Worship becomes a space of divine encounter, where God's truth is made manifest not only to believers but also to spiritual seekers across diverse religious and cultural contexts.

Psalm 96 thus provides a compelling theological framework in which worship and praise are not merely devotional acts but essential components of the Church's missional identity. It offers a model of mission that is poetic rather than polemical, invitational rather than confrontational, and artistic rather than argumentative. Mission, in this context, is not reduced to the goal of conversion alone; it encompasses witness, beauty, proclamation, and hospitality.

By embracing the liturgical and artistic dimensions of Psalm 96, the Church is called to embody a form of missiology that resonates within a pluralistic society—one that honors religious and cultural diversity while bearing faithful witness to the universal reign of God. In this way, the Church participates in the *Missio Dei* through aesthetic expression, and the joy of divine presence made known among the nations.

CONCLUSION

Psalm 96 emerges not simply as a liturgical song of ancient Israel, but as a profound theological declaration of the *Missio Dei*—God's mission

that, from the outset, was intended for all nations, transcending ethnic and religious boundaries. Through historical, theological, and literary analysis, this study demonstrates that the psalm's call to worship functions as more than a devotional expression; it is a form of mission—an invitation to encounter God through beauty and glory. These findings challenge the long-standing dichotomy between worship and mission, revealing that liturgy itself can serve as a dynamic and transformative vehicle for God's redemptive work. Psalm 96 offers a compelling model of mission that is both artistic and participatory, where praise becomes a witness to God's sovereignty and an open door for all people to join in the acknowledgment of His reign. In a world marked by religious plurality, Psalm 96 envisions mission not as conquest or coercion, but as a poetic and invitational act. Its proclamation is not delivered through debate or dominance, but through the embodied witness of worship—through lives that reflect the beauty and justice of God's Kingdom. In this way, the psalm provides a theological framework for mission that is deeply relevant to the Church today: humble in tone, yet bold in its universal scope. Thus, Psalm 96 invites us to see mission not primarily as a strategy of expansion, but as the joyful proclamation of God's reign through worship. Its poetic form, rooted in Israel's liturgical life yet oriented toward the nations, demonstrates that liturgy itself can serve as missional praxis. Such an understanding bridges historical, linguistic, and theological insights with contemporary missiology, offering the church a model of mission that is both faithful to Scripture and responsive to religious plurality today.

This study encourages further exploration into the role of Old Testament poetry and worship in shaping a contextual, inclusive, and worship-centered approach to missiology—one that honors diversity while remaining rooted in the universal calling to proclaim God's glory among the nations.

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