

## ARTICLES

# The Metaverse as a Digital Missionary Site<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The metaverse attracts considerable attention in politics, economy, society and culture. Unfortunately, seminaries and churches are still in their early stages of missiological research and understanding the metaverse. If we understand the metaverse as a digital mission field, research on the missiological approach is required. We should pay attention to the infinitely expanding and integrating metaverse. Overseas, there is already a history of experimental challenges and settlements from decades ago on the potential for churches in virtual spaces. While online churches are famous in Korea, there is insufficient understanding of ways to meet the younger generation of non-believers in the metaverse. Since online churches are analogue enterprises, there is a massive gap between them and the digital younger generation. Paul Hiebert's critical contextualization is still valid in approaching the metaverse as a digital mission field. Heidi Campbell's study of the relationship between media and religions, "religious-social shaping approach to technology" reminds Korean churches of the value of the metaverse as a new media. Both theories show Korean churches need dialogue and patience when approaching the metaverse to contact non-believers. Missiological discussions on the metaverse should promote a holistic understanding in which the two worlds closely relate rather than a dualistic understanding. The digital living space of the MZ generation that emerged with the development of new technology does not conflict with the nature of the Christian Church. Therefore, Korean churches need to understand the metaverse as a space of mission and coexistence.

**Keywords:** Metaverse; Contextualization; Analog; Digital; MZ generation

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## Introduction

Around the world, the next generation is giving explosive attention to the metaverse. The metaverse has already grown beyond the initial stage to become a substantial IT industry for the future, drawing attention from many investors. Existing IT industries are also checking the potential of the metaverse, and companies such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, NVIDIA, Facebook, Amazon and Tesla are trying to change the direction of their business and investment. The metaverse is not just in the limelight from the industrial point of view. It is receiving much attention from politicians and artists. In the 59th US presidential election, Senator Joe Biden campaigned by creating a promotional island called Biden HQ on a metaverse platform called "Animal Crossing New Horizons". In 2016, the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton used "Pokémon Go" in her campaign. On 5 October 2020 Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA, a global company in graphics cards and artificial intelligence, delivered a keynote speech at the GTC 2020 keynote address, "The Metaverse is Coming" (NVIDIA 2020). According to metaverse users, Fortnite currently has 350 million users, Roblox has 120 million and Naver's virtual reality platform Zepeto has 200 million. In April 2020, the famous rapper Travis Scott held his concert on Fortnite, with 12.3 million people joining and 27.7 million viewers. Travis Scott's offline performance revenue was 1.8 billion Korean won in 2019, while his performance on Fortnite drew over ten times as much revenue at 21.6 billion won. There was also a showcase for BTS, the wildly popular K-pop group. Teenagers and children in the United States spend 2.5 times as much time on Roblox than YouTube and 16 times as much on Netflix. Zepeto is collaborating with Korean entertainment companies Big Hit, YG Entertainment and JYP for the next generation with investments of 17 billion won. In addition, 50 million people flocked to BLACKPINK's virtual fan signing event in 2020. It is also raising sales by collaborating with Gucci and Nike.

In Korea, actual missional cases of the metaverse are rare compared to the explosive growth trend of metaverse users. Related research papers are also quite limited in quantity and subject matter. The following results are found when searching academic journals through the Academic Research Information Service (RISS). The search term "metaverse" has seven academic publications, none in theological journals. When "virtual reality" or "virtual world" are used as search terms, there are 1,875 results, with only five published by missionary theological societies. There are 1,635 papers on "augmented reality," but only two in missionary studies. Joo Young-Min states, "The virtualization revolution changes the landscape of civilization and asks us fundamental questions. Nevertheless, it is not easy to find a philosophical consideration for this. Today's discourse on technology is thoroughly organized in the language of industry" (Joo 2019: 15). The church treats the metaverse simply as an IT industry technology and an economic issue. Kim Sang-Kyun (2020: 264) states,

“We need to think about whether we can completely break down the boundaries between the real world and the virtual world with human technology from various perspectives such as philosophy, religion, and law.” However, academic research by the Korean church still concerns the real world rather than the virtual world. Kim Dohoon (2013) deals with the histological discussion of Douglas Estes’ overseas case of Sim Church. Kye Jea-Kwang (2022) defined the metaverse as a digital mission field. Hwang Byung-Bae (2020: 447-50) hinted at metaverse missionary work through “construction and liberation from the municipal treaty” as one of the eight suggestions for the renewal of the Korean church. Still, academic research on online platforms remains in its early stages, with reviews of previous research rather than actual case studies. Nevertheless, it is consistent with the insufficient interests of the Korean church in the metaverse.

While Korean churches’ studies focus on online activities for their members, the overseas church in the metaverse has attracted unbelievers outside the church. Therefore, missiological research on the metaverse is necessary to help the Korean church convert its perspective from self-centered to others. However, the scope of this research is limited to understanding the metaverse as a missionary sphere. It examines the convergence of missionary studies and the metaverse. It raises key theological issues to serve as a foundation for further research on specific cases of virtual church and missionary contact with nonbelievers on the metaverse.

## The metaverse

The metaverse is a combination of “meta” and “universe,” which means transcendence of the real world and refers to a three-dimensional virtual world. However, beyond the technical scope of the commonly used term “virtual reality,” the metaverse is fluid and evolving to include a wide variety of synthetic realities. Still, the technical research group Acceleration Studies Foundations (ASF) categorizes four expressions of the metaverse: augmented reality, lifelogging, mirror world, and virtual world. “Metaverse” was the first used in Neil Stephenson’s science fiction novel *Snow Crash* (1992), to mean a virtual world that can only be entered through an avatar. A good visualization of this metaverse is in Steven Spielberg’s 2018 film *Ready Player One*. As can be guessed from the movie’s content, the metaverse platform does not end up as a space for entertainment for young people. It includes economic and political power. In Netflix’s 2019 earnings announcement, Reed Hastings (Netflix 2019) pointed to the virtual game *Fortnite*, not HBO, in the same streaming industry, as a competitor. In the competition to occupy users’ time, the infinitely expanding and integrating metaverse has become a competitor for other businesses in the real world.

Douglas Estes (2009: 28–31) distinguishes the virtual world, the real world, the fictional world, the imaginary world, the augmented world and the virtual world. Since the virtual world is in its infancy, there is generally much confusion and no simple definition. As a result, there are misunderstandings when people try to describe a virtual world using real or imaginary concepts. To explain the virtual world, Estes argues that we must contrast the virtual world with other worlds. First, the real world is where we are reading this article. The virtual world is as real as the real world in its core and essence, though both worlds are different. Second, the fictional world is created in the reader's mind by reading books, watching movies or exercising the imagination. The fictional world is the way of possibility, while the virtual world is the way of reality. Third, the imaginary world is another kind of world cut off from the real world. A virtual world may or may not be an imaginary world. In particular, Christians equating the virtual world with the imaginary world may lead to inaccurate conclusions about faith and church in the virtual world. Finally, the augmented world is a mix of real and virtual worlds developed through technology. The virtual world is different from the augmented world because it occurs only in the virtual world. On the other hand, the augmented world comes from the real world.

As such, the virtual and augmented worlds belonging to the metaverse can be correctly understood when they deviate from the stereotype of disconnection from reality or from false worlds, such as fictional and imaginary worlds. We live in the real world and can access the metaverse through a digital interface. We can live in a composite space and interact with others in the real world. Augmented reality allows more contact points with churches in the real world, but the virtual world as a synthetic space is not likely to be a form of the natural world.

## **The metaverse and Korean churches**

Compared to the continued increase in people's interest in the metaverse, the virtual church is now germinating among Korean Christians. Although there are many examples of online worship due to the Covid-19 pandemic, churches with analog sensibilities are still hesitant to access the online world. Reactions and opinions of church members to the online church are various and divided. In the church, there are the analog, the digital retard and the digital generation. However, even it is still lacking in understanding this category. There is a negative and minimal recognition of the more technologically advanced metaverse. Kim Seung-Hwan (2021) of the Urban Culture Community Research Institute classifies churches into online church and church online. Church online is where the existing analog church establishes an online presence. It is the type of online ministry that many churches are practising during Covid-19. Church online only uses digital platforms as tools while maintaining

the existing analog system and tends to recognize online ministry as a temporary measure for existing believers. Church online receives hardly any attention from nonbelievers. The online church refers to a form of church that is not just a part of analog churches and independently begins within the metaverse world. This church has been entirely digital from the beginning. It is challenging because it does not mimic an analog church. It establishes new church theology, that is to say, a digital ecclesiology.

For example, finding Korean churches on various metaverse platforms is difficult. Roblox has about 150 virtual churches, all founded overseas. Roblox Community Church (2022) has 110,000 members, and Faith Church has 27,000 members. Meanwhile, in Korean churches, there is no awareness of the metaverse. Instead, there is an understanding of the online church as the extensional device level of the real church. Even if some churches promote online ministry earnestly for its members, it appears different from the missionary intention of online ministry for the unchurched. Many churches transplant analog ecclesiology onto the digital world, failing to reach the unchurched digital generation. Instead, only people who attend or have attended local churches visit the digital churches (Hutchings 2017: 229). The inability to communicate between the younger generation in the metaverse and the Korean online church is evident.

It is also statistically proven that the decline of Sunday school membership in Korean churches has surpassed the decline in Korean society's youth and young adult population. In Korean churches, Sunday Schools have decreased since the 1990s, with more than 50% of churches without Sunday Schools and only 3% of churches with Pre-K classes (Nam 2019). As such, the Korean church is becoming super-aged and unable to prepare for the younger generation. Yet the Korean church, stuck in the analog perspective, regards life in the real world through the paradigm of exclusion resulting in a lack of communication with others in the digital world. Since the metaverse is in its early stages, gaming is the first genre through which the next generation forms elements of the new society. But the analog generation is resistant to the changes and perceives the metaverse as merely a game or entertainment. As a result, these traditional churches put off the tensions between the virtual and real world as a matter of the distant future rather than a present reality.

In addition to the fact that the Korean church has an analog ecclesiology as opposed to the digital generation that utilizes the metaverse, there are various reasons why the Korean church is still hesitant to understand and engage with the metaverse as a mission field. First, church activities in the metaverse are still very early, so theological discussions such as sacraments are lacking. Second, the Korean church member-

ship is aging. They are unwilling to familiarize themselves with the digital worldview and utilize the metaverse. Furthermore, senior church leaders are more interested in ministering to the old than utilizing the metaverse for the younger generation. Third, there is a lack of missional purpose and practice for young metaverse residents. Fourth, there is mistrust and anxiety about the anonymity of metaverse activities. By perceiving the metaverse as a virtual space, the understanding that it is fake is too strong. It causes the Korean church to reject the metaverse as a mission field. In addition, there is a reluctance to leak personal information through online activities. Lastly, the church's past experiences with online activities (homepage, online cafe) have not been positive.

## **Nnon-Korean cases of metaverse church**

Religious activities in the metaverse world have already been studied for a long time. The first virtual church was founded in 1985, before the advent of the World Wide Web. The members worshipped together through a text-only interface. Since then, other pioneers have gradually founded more churches amid rapid changes in the virtual world. According to some estimates, there were about 30 virtual churches by 2000 (Hutchings 2017: 245).

Then the virtual church underwent a significant change in 2004. The metaverse platform called Second Life was launched in 2003, and in the following year, the British Methodist Church started the Church of Fools to experiment with virtual churches in the metaverse. The church decided to experiment only for four months. The number of people attending its service reached 41,000 at one point. Participants were able to attend in the form of 3D avatars. This church is designed to operate independently, not to expand the online service of the real church only for its members. Another church, St Pixel, officially started in 2006 and survived past the end date of the experiment due to continuous requests from participants. As a parish of the Church of England, I-Church started cultivating Benedictine spirituality. Anglicans of Second Life (AoSL) was also founded in 2006, and Sunshine Cathedral in 2009. Currently, there are about 15 virtual Christian churches in Second Life, and about 70% of the category of Spirituality & Beliefs are Christian churches. In these churches, participants can worship by typing their prayers and sharing their meditations on blogs and forums. In particular, the Second Life Episcopal Church has appealed to Anglicans who are already familiar with their traditions by recreating cathedral architecture and using Anglican etiquette. These Anglican virtual churches have grown to worship seven times a week.

Life Church (virtualchurches.tv) differs from the previous churches in that it emphasizes conversation or communication rather than only broadcasting church activities to participants. Life Church is a virtual church based in Edmund, Oklahoma, in the United States. They purchased real estate on Second Life, hired developers, built church buildings, and created seats for avatars to attend church every week. One week in 2007, more than 1,400 people attended the online campus of Life Church. It measures attendance by the number of logged-on IP addresses. The virtual church did not limit itself to meetings within the metaverse but began its first mission trip to the real world in 2007. People who previously met only in the virtual world joined to establish the kingdom of God in the real world. Recently, new metaverse platforms such as Altspace (Altvr.com) and Roblox are evolving to host more sophisticated 3D virtual churches. Estes describes the emergence of these virtual churches as follows:

*At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the church is beginning to be different not in style, venue, feel, or volume but in the world in which it exists. A new gathering of believers is emerging, a church not in the real world of bricks and mortar but in the virtual world of IP addresses and shared experiences. This type of church is unlike any church the world has ever seen. It has the power to break down social barriers, unite believers from all over the world, and build the kingdom of God with a widow's mite of financing. It is a completely different type of church from any the world has ever seen (Estes 2009: 17–18).*

## The emergence of the metaverse as new media and church

The traditional church's analog standards will make its future uncertain and helpless, and its members' practices will erode the metaverse world. Leonard Sweet's EPIC theory, which presents a framework for analysing the characteristics of the post-modern generation, helps to grasp the features of the metaverse (Sweet 2000). First, the experience in the metaverse is utterly different from the real world. Suppose haptic technology, which may soon enable the sense of touch in addition to the visual and the auditory in the virtual world, the metaverse experience will further expand. The metaverse will allow experiences that are impossible in reality. Second, the metaverse enables infinite creative participation by users producing user-generated content (UGC). Users are not just consumers but may simultaneously be producers. Since Minecraft and Roblox are sandbox-type platforms, metaverse users can create and use virtual worlds as much as they want, just as children make their shapes with sand on the beach. This autonomy stimulates participants to be more active and creative. Third, the metaverse emphasizes virtual visualization. Users create avatars as personas, giving users another identity in the virtual world. The metaverse, full

of images (image-driven), is especially effective for the younger generation, which is more familiar with images than letters. Fourth, the world is connected simultaneously online. Tesla uses Neuralink to connect human brains and computers and installs small satellites in the earth's orbit to enable Starlink, aiming for a life that can always be connected through autonomous driving and artificial intelligence. Big data collected through Google Maps connects everything in human life.

This metaverse is not satisfied with a world separated from reality like the virtual world but is evolving into an augmented world connected to the real world. Metaverse-related companies such as Tesla, NVIDIA, Epic Games, Facebook, Apple, Kakao, Naver, and Microsoft face numerous challenges to win this metaverse business competition. Korean church seldom has leaders interested in or participating in technology conferences, annual events, or CES (Consumer Electronics Show), which introduces new technologies and products. There is no mention of religion in Kim Sang-Kyun's book (2020), which discusses the metaverse as a digital district. In the secular world, the metaverse is very developed and has hundreds of millions of young users, yet the church is still only struggling with issues of churches in the physical world.

Throughout Christian history, the church has used various means such as letters, print media, TV and radio to reach people and invite them to be Jesus' followers. With the advent of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, the Internet became the foundational platform for relationships in many aspects of society. Many churches also began to pay attention to cyberspace as a space to practice faith in prayer, worship, and sacrament. In contrast to radio and television ministry, virtual churches in the metaverse are the products of two infinite torrents leading to the development of humankind in the twenty-first century: the exponential pace of technological growth and postmodernism. The confluence of these two massive flows is creating a fertile delta for virtual churches to grow. These churches are entirely new, not the shadow of the real church recorded and podcast. Radio and television in church ministry are non-mutual communicational means. In other words, they are simple unidirectional monologues. It is similar to the vertical relationships in traditional churches reproducing tremendous power for churches and pastors. Nevertheless, modern people will never confuse the church with TV programmes or radio shows. Modern-day people may hear their favorite pastor on TV or the radio more often than attending a brick-and-mortar church, but Christians still consider attending a physical church as a sign of true faith. However, with the advent of postmodernism, the definition of the church is expanding, and its borders are fading. Unlike monologues on radio and TV, virtual world experiences are interactive and immersive. Residents of the virtual world are not just consumers but participants who worship with pastors in a genuinely collaborative experience. The analog generation, which is now the majority of

real-world church members, may be unfamiliar with the virtual world. Still, virtual interactions can be much more authentic and less awkward for the MZ generation than real-world relationships. As in-person education became impossible due to Covid-19, Soonchunhyang University held the 2021 freshman entrance ceremony on the metaverse platform Zepeto operated by Naver. Using virtual reality experience tools supported by the university, the first-year students made an avatar of themselves and participated in the school event.

As the virtual world becomes more and more of a reality in the coming decade, more and more people will turn to the virtual world for everyday interactions and meet their spiritual needs. It does not mean that the metaverse church will replace the real-world church. The virtual world is an independent operation method from reality, but the activities of the real church can further expand by connecting with the virtual world through augmented reality. The metaverse receives much attention from the younger generation because of its flexibility, transparency, diversity, and other innate strengths. The younger generation who had difficulty participating in the traditional church prefers to worship in the virtual world. The phenomenon will also influence and change churches in the real world.

Still, church members of the analog generation are unfamiliar with and adverse to virtual churches. When face-to-face worship has become impossible due to Covid-19, most Korean churches gathered through Zoom, Google Chat and Kakao Live. Ten years ago, no one expected the Korean church to conduct religious activities in these forms. However, technological advances have changed them despite the resistance of the analog generation. People first exchanged messages on Kakao Talk. Then they sent electronic gift coupons on the same messaging app. They now conduct financial activities through Kakao Bank. Eventually, the metaverse will become more than just an online phenomenon limited to funds and games and into a technology that changes our lives.

## **The metaverse as a digital mission field**

The Korean church's response and research on the metaverse are in an extremely early stage. For the next generation of Korean society and the Korean church to form a healthy relationship, it is necessary to understand the metaverse as a digital mission field and take a missional approach. Using new media such as metaverse can initiate dialogue for the unchurched. The metaverse may be beneficial to church members, but it may also challenge the authority or control of the church. Encouraging openness can boost church community networking and relationships but poses a threat if it appears to encourage excessive or prohibited behavior. There-

fore, a critical contextualization approach that enables cultural dialogue between the digital mission field and Christian churches is essential (Hiebert 1985: 171–92).

Technological changes have been of great help in the missiological history, while the resistance from the existing church's traditions has also been. In the second century, scroll-type scriptures developed into codexes. In the sixteenth century, the development of printing supported the Reformation. Since then, oceanography has significantly contributed to changing the missionary paradigm for coastal missions, communication techniques for inland missions, and computers for the evangelism of unreached tribes. The virtual world is not where the analog generations must physically move. However, considering the future of the Korean church's mission and evangelism, the church must recognize that the metaverse is where the younger generation resides and communicate with its residents in this space.

The metaverse as a missionary field has many advantages. In other words, it can overcome various obstacles a real church has faced. First, it breaks down religious and cultural barriers. The unchurched who are reluctant to visit a real church can have a place to encounter God in the metaverse. Second, it removes the barrier of physical distance. It provides opportunities for those who need help to participate in faith community activities due to foreign missions or long-distance travel. It allows the church to provide various church education programmes and theological education without needing leaders to visit the mission field physically. Third, it can bridge generational barriers. It can overcome the culture of traditional Christian adults with limited play and fun in their religious activities and actualize Christian education through interest and fun for the next generation. Fourth, religious activities in the metaverse erase social barriers. It provides opportunities for the marginalized to participate in faith activities. For example, disabled or older people with limited mobility can participate in activities. People restricted from participating due to social rejection, such as ex-offenders and refugees, can become active. Sixth, the metaverse eliminates spatial constraints. Especially for small churches with limited financial resources, it is possible to provide a space for various small group activities at little cost.

The four stages of critical contextualization applied to the metaverse are as follows. First, it is necessary to investigate the metaverse as a digital mission field. For the church to respond appropriately to the metaverse culture, unbiased information on the space is required. Because the church's online activities have been very church-centred, collecting objective data on the digital mission field is necessary. In particular, it needs social and scientific explorations in the metaverse characterized by anonymity and autonomy. Second, the evangelist and the recipient exegete

Scripture with the collected information in the first stage. Third, based on the analysis of the metaverse context, possible church activities may be proposed. Fourth, the church needs to re-discuss from the perspective of the digital native. It should not uncritically apply the newly proposed church activities to the metaverse. Some discussion topics may be the relationship between online and offline activities, the validity of online communities, the form and effect of online ceremonies, the design of virtual architecture and sacred spaces, and the impact of digital media on religious authority. The nature, purpose, potential and limitations of virtual churches should be investigated, and discussions on the role of avatars, virtual spirituality, virtual ministry and the development of virtual church communities are necessary. Finally, problems such as virtual identity, individual spirituality and the risks and limitations of niche ministry should not be neglected on a personal level. In this critical contextualization process, the Anglican pastor Mark Brown's response to the question of who is in charge of the Anglican Cathedral of Second Life is meaningful. He said, "church has only about 3 percent of it figured out; 97 percent is continual trial and error. 'We don't have the answers'" (Estes 2009: 38). Estes confesses that considering the long debate over the nature and practices of the church and the differences between traditional churches in North America, Europe, and Asia, it seems almost impossible to create the theology of the virtual church (Estes 2009: 28). Under the critical contextualization process, finding new practices for the Korean church to understand the metaverse as a digital mission site will take time. Through this, the evangelist and the recipient of the gospel may respect each other, and balanced and unbiased missionary communication may be possible.

Heidi Campbell, who studied the relationship between media and religion, naturally rejects the stereotype that deeply religious people are necessarily anti-technical (Campbell 2010). Nevertheless, she argues, many devout people are "constrained by many social and faith-based factors that inform and guide their responses to the possibilities and challenges that new forms of media offer" (Campbell 2010: 6). Campbell's concept of the 'religious-social shaping approach to technology' allows religious organizations to systematize the development of media use and prospects based on a four-step process. First, it is essential to understand how certain religious groups have historically dealt with technological innovation and precedents. The second step deals with the group's core beliefs, religious values, and interpretation in light of the development of new media. Third, the negotiation process on the nature of innovation and authority that determines its position within the religious framework of the group follows. The process decides the usefulness of specific new media devices and their ideological and symbolic components. Finally, the ensuing joint discourse helps to examine how the use of new media will cooperate with the norms of the group, resulting in problem-solving. Campbell supports a "construc-

tive” approach rather than a “deterministic” approach to studying how religious communities respond to the emergence of new communication technologies. Her argument refutes the earlier perception of religious groups as passive respondents merely accepting or rejecting new technologies. Heidi Campbell’s constructivist approach has similarities with Paul Hiebert’s critical contextualization. Therefore, the complementary dialogue between the two theories will require the Christian church to naturally settle in the metaverse and seek ways to preach the gospel to its digital residents.

## Conclusion

The metaverse, a new missionary destination, should not be an object of fear but a new opportunity for the gospel. For example, in Roblox, user access time during September 2020 was 22.1 billion hours. The Christian church still meets far less than one per cent of the population residing in the virtual world. It means that the virtual world is the largest unreached group on earth. Simon Jenkins, one of the founders of the Stupid Church, said, “Someone has created a new town, and it’s like no one is thinking of building a church there. It’s very shameful” (Estes 2009: 39). Real churches in Korea tend to understand the online format forced by the Covid-19 pandemic as a temporary measure. In this situation, missiological research on the metaverse residents is urgently needed to inspire the church to see new missional possibilities.

The missional discussion of the metaverse should promote a holistic understanding in which the real and the virtual worlds are intimately connected rather than taking a dualistic approach where the generation is forced to choose between the two. The MZ generation emerged with the development of new technologies, and their digital space does not conflict with the nature of the Christian church. With the efforts to understand the metaverse as a place of mission and its digital residents, the Korean church can coexist with them for the Kingdom of God.

Ed Stetzer, a church futurist, said, “many say they think the church will never be the same again. Some wonder, for instance, if the day of the large church is over. I’m more concerned the church will be the same again” (Stetzer 2020: 14). It shows concern for the church’s future. The Korean IT company Naver has created the metaverse platform Zepeto, named after the character who brought life to Pinocchio, a lifeless wooden doll. People who do not know God think they have gained a new life in this virtual world. God made humans out of clay to steward the created world. So then, shouldn’t we be prepared so that the metaverse does not end up as a world of lies? This study raises more questions than answers. However, it goes beyond the assess-

ment of the present situation to begin a new conversation about a digital missional field called metaverse.

## About the author

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