



Missio Alliance

Missio Alliance warmly welcomes our
2024 Writing Fellows Cohort



Amanda Hecht
Saskatoon, SK, Canada



Amber Hogan Jones
Brunswick, Maryland



Benjamin Park
Roseville, Minnesota



Bethany Becker
Fairfield, Ohio



Cheryl You
Norfolk, Virginia



Emily Beth Hill
Winston-Salem, North Carolina



Lamont Hartman
Palos Verdes, California



Liliana Reza
San Diego, California



Phyllis Myung
Bolton, Massachusetts



Rachel Varghese
Bartlett, Illinois



Sherene Joseph
Flower Mound, Texas



Vatreisha Nyemba
Cleveland, Ohio



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Amanda Hecht lives in Saskatoon, SK, Canada. In her own words, Amanda is *“an uninvited settler on the prairies of Canada, coming from a family of (mostly) European Caucasian settlers.”* She is the solo Lead Pastor at First Baptist Church, Saskatoon. Amanda has a DMin in New Testament Context from Northern Seminary.

Amber Hogan Jones lives in Brunswick, Maryland. In her own words, Amber is a *“Caucasian female from the Deep South of the United States, who was raised poverty, abuse, and chaos.”* She is the Director of Spiritual Formation at Key City Church in Frederick, MD, as well as a Spiritual Director. Amber has a DMin in Leadership & Spiritual Formation from Portland Seminary.

Benjamin Park lives in Roseville, Minnesota. In his own words, Benjamin is a *“first-generation Korean-American, a child of immigrants, raised as an outsider who has traveled extensively within insider (White) circles.”* He is a Teaching Pastor for the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota, as well as a Strategic Workforce Planner for the Office of Personnel Management. Benjamin has a MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Bethany Becker lives in Fairfield, Ohio. In her own words, Bethany's *“roots are Appalachian and as White as you can get, meaning I was raised to be loyal, loving, and hospitable, but with an ‘us vs. them’ mentality.”* She recently transitioned from an Associate Pastor role at 21st Century Church in Cincinnati, OH to focus on family and writing. Bethany has a BA in English Literature from Wright State University.

Cheryl You lives in Norfolk, Virginia. In her own words, Cheryl was *“raised in Singapore, and is someone of Chinese descent who spent most of my life as an ethnic majority person in a pluralistic nation that aspires toward social, religious, and racial harmony.”* She is the Associate Campus Pastor at Freedom Life Church in Norfolk, VA. Cheryl has a MDiv from Regent University.

Emily Beth Hill lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In her own words, Emily *“grew up in a White family from Western European descent. Growing up in the suburbs we only knew White people, insulated from people of color and issues related to race and ethnicity in the US and around the world.”* She is the Program Manager for Theological Formation for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA. Emily has a Ph.D. in Theological Ethics from the University of Aberdeen.



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Lamont Hartman lives in Palos Verdes, California. In his own words, Lamont was *“born into a biracial family, as my family is Black and my mother is White. The two never married, so my mother raised me and my 3 younger siblings in subsidized housing.”* He is the Founding Pastor of Reconcile Church in Santa Ana, CA. Lamont is currently working on his DMin degree at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Liliana Reza lives in San Diego, California. In her own words, Liliana is a *“Mexican-American woman born to immigrant parents. While many believe assimilation seems like the most logical response for 1st and 2nd generations, this wasn’t the case for me. I identify as bicultural and bilingual.”* She is a National Advocacy Specialist for World Relief, and is an Ordained Elder with the Church of the Nazarene. Liliana has a MA in Intercultural Studies from Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Phyllis Myung lives in Bolton, Massachusetts. In her own words, Phyllis is a *“first-generation Korean American whose parents began attending a first-generation Korean church to find community and affinity, which formed me, as I grew up, to do the same.”* She is an Associate Pastor of Next Gen Ministries at Great Road Church in Acton, MA. Phyllis is currently working on her MA in Christian Formation at North Park Theological Seminary.

Rachel Varghese lives in Bartlett, Illinois. In her own words, Rachel’s family *“immigrated in the 1970s from the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in India, and I was raised in a tight-knit Indian community, in an Indian immigrant church. This shaped my view of church as a family collective.”* She is the Director of Communications at Renewal Church in West Chicago, IL, and currently homeschools her children. Rachel has a MA in Curriculum & Instruction (ESL Focus) from National-Louis University.

Sherene Joseph lives in Flower Mound, Texas. In her own words, Sherene was *“born in South India, raised in the Sultanate of Oman, and now live in Dallas. I have spent the majority of my life living as an Indian immigrant in Indian Diaspora communities.”* She is a freelance writer working on a book project about South Indian Christian women in North America, and is a Deacon at Irving Bible Church in Irving, TX. Sherene has a MA in Biblical and Theological Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Vatreisha Nyemba lives in Cleveland, Ohio. In her own words, *“I identify as African American. My grandparents were both part of the great migration of Black families from the Jim Crow south into the north for both more opportunity and for refuge. One side of my family descends from Native Americans and the other from slaves and sharecroppers.”* She is the Director of Leader and Community Development for Building Hope in the City, an NPO in Cleveland, OH. Vatreisha has a Doctor of Transformational Leadership degree from Bakke Graduate University.



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Missio Alliance warmly welcomes our
2024 Cohort Faculty.



Dr. Oneya Okuwobi
Lead Mentor
Cincinnati, Ohio



Dr. Chris Kamalski
Cohort Director
Jeffreys Bay, EC, South Africa

Dr. Oneya Fennell Okuwobi is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati. Her research interrogates how diverse organizations (including churches) affect racial inequality. Oneya serves as teaching pastor at 21st Century Church, a church plant in Cincinnati, OH. She has co-authored *Multiethnic Conversations: An Eight-Week Journey Toward Unity in Your Church* (2016) and *Multiethnic Conversations for Kids* (2022). Oneya's work has appeared in *American Sociological Review*, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, and *Sociology of Religion*, among other venues. Prior to joining the University of Cincinnati, Oneya served as a Rice University Academy Postdoctoral Fellow with the Religion and Public Life Program. Oneya is married to Dele and has one daughter, Cadence.

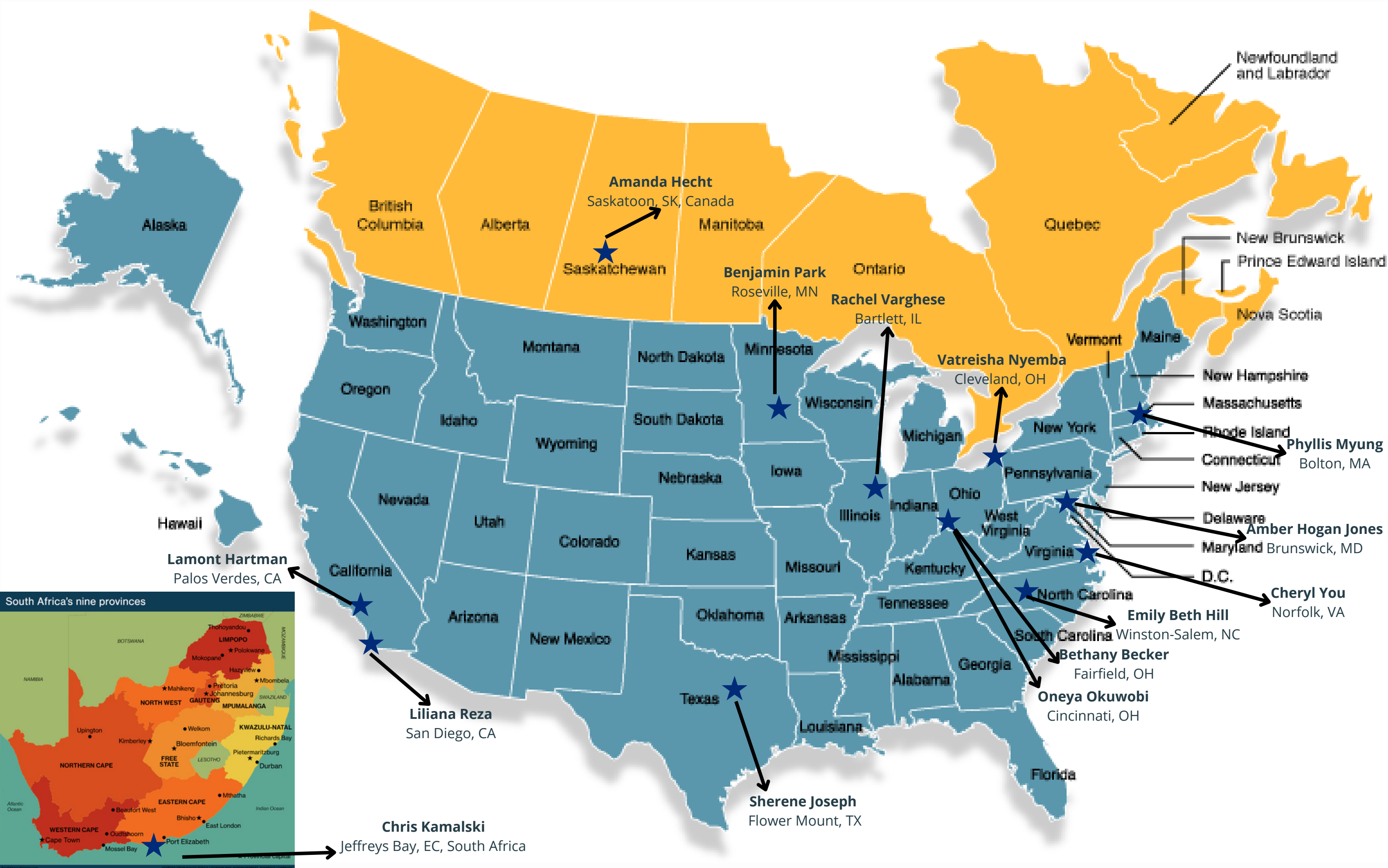
Dr. Chris Kamalski facilitates space for Missio's Writing Collectives to thrive as Editorial Director, shaping both words and ideas to help our writers find and use their unique voice within the global Church. Born in the Bay Area, he has lived in South Africa since 2009, married to Maxie, an Afrikaner. They live in Jeffreys Bay with their two girls, Mia and Clara, and their Scottish terrier, Wally. Chris's work and calling lies at the intersection of the holistic spiritual formation and leadership development of Christian leaders, particularly under-resourced leaders from the global south. As a Gallup certified strengths coach and spiritual director, the creation of initiatives that mature a leader's formation is a thrilling part of his work. Chris is a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership & Spiritual Formation, a proud graduate of Portland Seminary.



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Anchored by a diverse group of Leading Voices and a featured Writing Team, Missio Alliance is proud to launch our 2024 Writing Fellows Cohort, expanding our Writing Collective to three integrated teams.



The vision of the Missio Alliance Writing Fellows Cohort is to create a brave space for historically marginalized voices within the Church to develop, mature, and flourish as writers exploring their vocational callings within this cultural moment.