

Question and Answer with Dr. Miguel De La Torre

Why is the Iliff Center for EcoJustice needed?

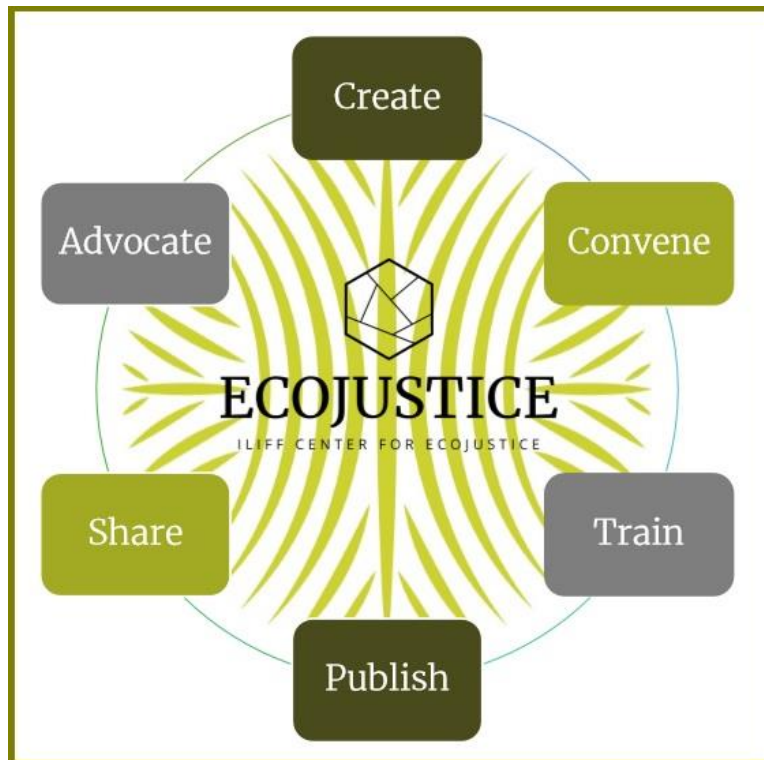
What is currently missing in discussions about the environment are the marginalized voices who are suffering the brunt consequences of the continuing environmental degradation of the planet. A strong need exists to bring these voices to the conversation.

What sets the Center apart other similar endeavors?


Institutions which deal with issues of environmental justice often approach the discourse in a one-dimensional way. Many emphasize technical or scientific solutions, or conduct single domain scholarly research. A few, which call themselves interdisciplinary, still unintentionally constrain the solutions to the same narrow subset of voices. There exists no academic institution within the United States which will approach the current environmental crises by:

- Placing marginalized and displaced peoples at the center of the environmental debate, making sure their voices are heard and their challenges addressed.
- Conducting interfaith dialogue, which includes people from across faith groups as well as those unaffiliated with any organized system of belief, to engage in the spiritual and theological questions required of true environmental justice work.
- Pairing rigorous scholarship, student and community engagement, and advocacy to act against environmental injustice.

What are the immediate priorities of the Iliff EcoJustice Center?



- Create a think-tank which researches the impact that environmental degradation has on vulnerable and marginalized communities and works to support positive change.
- Convene an annual conference bringing together scientists, policy makers, political leaders, academicians, advocates and (of course) religious scholars and spiritual leaders to explore various topics in environmental racism.


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- Educate students and community leaders on how to advocate for science-based policies which can create a more just and equitable approach to environmental justice.
 - Publish scholarly research and contribute to academic debate, including an annual book of essays on a key topic in EcoJustice.
 - Share relevant content to raise awareness about how environmental issues are negatively impacting communities of color, immigrants, poor countries, and other marginalized groups of people around the world.
 - Advocate for marginalized people by establishing a space where community activists and representatives of groups most impacted by the negative effects of climate change can connect to national scientists, scholars, political leaders, and religious and spiritual leaders can collaborate.

What impact will your Center have?

- Give voice to those currently shut out of the conversation.
- Help establish a network and grassroots' movement in our local community which can provide elected officials with science-based policies initiatives for implementation.
- Raise the consciousness about the looming environmental crises by focusing on the human aspect of those most deeply impacted.

What are the desired outcomes within five years?

- The Iliff Center for EcoJustice will become a thought leader, developing scholarship and implementing policy initiatives.

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- Expanding the environmental discourse so that “minoritized” issues raised in our yearly conference become mainstream.
 - A website which becomes a to-go address for rigorous scholarship on these issues
 - Exploring topics now which will be the issues discussed five years from now.
 - Raising funds to eventually establish a Chair in Environmental Justice
 - Becoming the to-go Center for issues concerning the environment and racism/ethnic discrimination.

What sets the Center up for growth and success?

- Iliff has an international reputation as being THE social justice school of theology.
- Iliff is the ideal progressive location to house this Center.
- The program is being led by Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre who has authored over thirty-five books on social justice and served as past president of the Society of Christian Ethics. Prior to academia, he founded and for fifteen years ran a 100-employee firm. He also holds a MPA. Dr. De La Torre has the academic credentials and practical skills to oversee and lead the Center.