

19 June 2013



**Hello,**

In January 2003 my (now) husband, Martin Palmer, came home to the cottage we were living in in Derbyshire, northern England, and said that as part of a project ARC was doing with the World Bank, he needed to write a short book. They wanted to know how ARC worked with religions on environment programmes, what the key issues and programme areas were, and how it began. They wanted to publish it later that year.

He showed me the first draft. It was nice, I said.

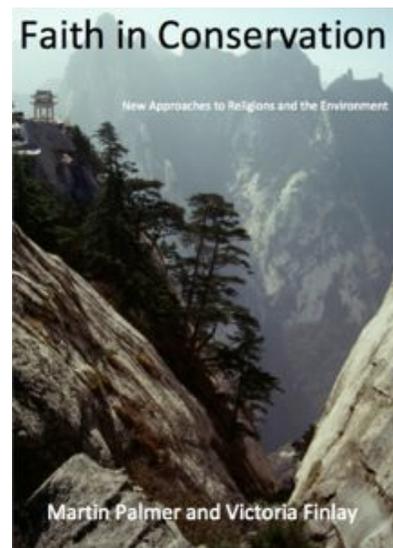
"But?" he asked.

But if the World Bank was going to use its considerable resources to edit, publish and distribute a book about the charity, shouldn't we write a better book, an engaging one, full of stories that people would actually enjoy reading?

He smiled, as if that was what he was hoping I'd say, and asked if I could spare a bit of time to improve it. "And maybe rewrite," he said hopefully.

Apparently it was a bestseller for the World Bank! It was also useful for ARC - the potential for religions to protect the environment on a massive scale is quite a complicated idea to explain, and yet the stories behind it are brilliant, and inspiring. It was also nice, over the years, to hear people working at NGOs or the UN or the World Bank, or people who just somehow discovered it while browsing around the internet, say they had read it right the way through. A couple said they had "stayed up all night" reading it. It changed my life too: after that I stopped being a full-time journalist and writer, and became ARC's part-time director of communications.

This is the tenth anniversary of *Faith in Conservation*, and to mark that, we have reissued it informally as a pdf. Originally it included faith statements about the environment from the eleven religions we work with (you can find those in the faiths section of our website) but this edition simply includes the five main chapters.



[You can download the book as a PDF file from the ARC website](#)

Rereading it, it is good to see how all the original principles held, and amazing to think of everything else that has been achieved in the past ten years.

Some of our biggest current programmes are:

- The [Green Pilgrimage Network](#) launched in Assisi 18 months ago, and with a major meeting in Trondheim this July. It started with the simple question: could the holiest towns cities in the world be the cleanest towns and cities in the world? Many of those holy towns and cities were interested in finding out the answer, and realised they could find it more quickly by working with each other, to inspire each other. Newsletters are [here](#).



- A [Wildlife, forests and faiths programme](#) in Africa and Asia, working with faiths to reduce both the demand for animal parts, as well as the poaching of animals. The Daoists in China, for example, have made a statement that using animal parts in traditional Chinese medicine is not only unethical, *it also does not work, because by putting the world out of balance it will put the body also out of balance.*



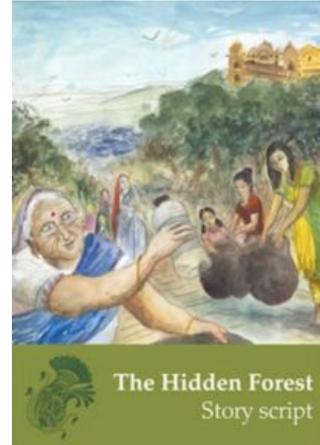
- [Farming, education and Water](#) programmes in Africa, working with Christian and Muslim communities and schools to improve life for people through taking care to protect the natural environment and agricultural land. It includes creating a new initiative called Farming Allah's Way, inspired by our partners who had already started [Farming God's Way](#). Newsletters are [here](#).



But there are many more. Including how we worked with Sikhs to establish [EcoSikh](#) and Sikh Environment Day (now with thousands of participants every March) and how we helped the Catholic organisers [think through the environmental impact](#) of having three million pilgrims and visitors arrive in Brazil for World Youth Day in July.

Next time I look forward to telling you about the latest news from Trondheim's Green Pilgrimage Network meeting and updating you on a collaboration between ARC and the Club of Rome to debate what cultural values are needed to help eight billion people live peacefully on this little planet. I'll be sharing a new book full of inspiring stories from African faiths, and also hope to point those of you who can read Chinese to the new Chinese section of the site, to be launched in August.

Oh, and for those who have daughters at school who like drama, we've just launched, with our Hindu partner [the Bhumi Project](#), a fabulous new play script called [The Hidden Forest](#) about three generations of women and girls on pilgrimage in India. Teachers will enjoy it: it teaches about Hinduism and environment and pilgrimage and families, but it's not preachy and it's particularly fun for girls. It's also completely free of copyright and available to [download from the ARC website](#).



Best wishes and, for those in the northern hemisphere, have a good summer,

Victoria

Victoria Finlay, Director of Communications  
Alliance of Religions and Conservation

*There's plenty of news on our website, [www.arcworld.org](http://www.arcworld.org)  
Do follow us on [twitter](#) and Like us on [Facebook](#) to get more news more often*



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION

launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT