

ON WORKING WITH RELIGIONS

“If information is all that is needed, then the environmental crisis would be over. We need more than facts and figures. We need to inspire people – to make them look at their way of living, to make them change. Who is able to do this? The faiths. So why don't we work with the faiths?”

With these thoughts HRH The Duke of Edinburgh invited the faiths to a meeting in Assisi in 1986 to explore how they could work with conservation groups to protect the environment. The discussions led Prince Philip to launch the Alliance of Religions and Conservation in 1995 to help religions realise their potential in working with the natural world. ARC's role is also to link the faiths with appropriate secular partners to work together to develop practical programmes that make a real difference.

In 1986 many people, including some from the faiths themselves, were sceptical about the religions playing a significant role. Now they are increasingly recognised as major partners and the participation of the religions has become part of the way many programmes on the environment are conceived.

So much so that in 2009, after 31 major faith traditions launched long-term action plans on the environment, Olav Kjørven of the UNDP described them as “potentially the biggest civil society movement on climate change we have ever seen”. We are honoured to be part of making this happen.

Martin Palmer, ARC Secretary-General



WHAT IS ARC?

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) is a secular organisation founded by HRH Prince Philip in 1995. It works with the world's major religions to help them develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. It also helps secular environment organisations work with the faiths to protect the natural world. ARC receives no funding from any faith.



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION
launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

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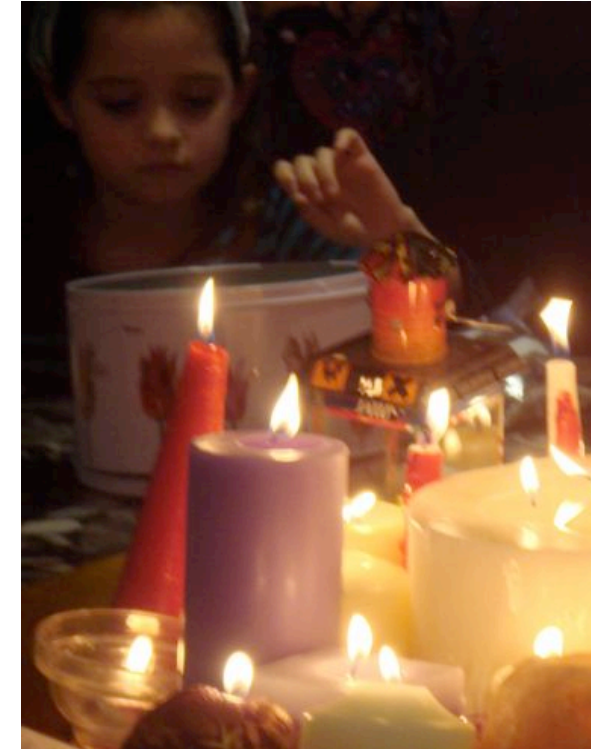
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ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION



*A vision of people, through
their beliefs, treading more
gently upon the Earth*

ARC works with 11 major faiths around the world. Here are some of our programmes.

FAITH LONG-TERM PLANS TO PROTECT THE LIVING PLANET

'Potentially the biggest civil society movement on climate change we have ever seen'
- Olav Kjørven, UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme asked ARC to work with the faiths to create long-term action plans to protect the living planet. The resulting 31 plans were launched at Windsor, UK, in November 2009. Faiths pledged to 'green' their places of worships, plant millions of trees, embed environmental education in their schools and youth clubs, protect sacred forests, and promote lifestyles that do not cost the Earth.

Now, with funding from the World Bank, the Norwegian Government and USAID, over 20 Christian, Muslim and Hindu faith groups in sub-Saharan Africa are developing their own long-term plans, focusing on sustainable land and water management, to be launched in 2012. The faiths have huge outreach: 90% of Africans say they are Christian or Muslim.

CHINA

The Daoists have protected China's sacred mountains for millennia. With ARC, they have created Daoist environmental projects across China. In 2011, the Chinese Government, the Daoists and ARC agreed to work together to protect China's environment and develop a stronger civil society. A major new programme is the protection of endangered species threatened by traditional Chinese medicine.



GREENING PILGRIMAGE

More than 150 million people go on pilgrimage every year. The Green Pilgrimage Network, launched in November 2011, helps the faiths make their holy sites more sustainable and encourages the faithful to 'tread lightly' upon the Earth, both on pilgrimage and at home.

WATER & EDUCATION

Faiths are major providers of education; in some parts of Africa, 70% of schools are faith-run. ARC is working with UNICEF and the New Psalmist Baptist Church, Baltimore, USA, to help faith schools provide safer water, good sanitation and hygiene education, starting with an online mapping tool launched in 2012.

SACRED LAND

ARC works with all the major faiths to protect sacred sites such as mountains, forests and rivers. Joint research with WWF International has shown they have high levels of biodiversity – protected by being sacred.



WHY WORK WITH THE FAITHS?

- The faiths reach 85% of the world's people. There are 2.1 billion Christians; 1.34 billion Muslims; 950 million Hindus; 50-70 million Daoists; 24 million Sikhs; 13 million Jews.
- They own 7-8% of the habitable land surface of the planet;
- They own 5% of the world's forests and have influence over 15%;
- They are involved in more than half of all schools worldwide;
- They are the third largest investment block on the global stock market;
- They are often trusted where politicians, governments and military leaders are not.