Put your faith in a greener future

Getting the world’s religions involved in environmental projects provides a powerful force for change.

SUSIE WELDON reports on the work of a unique group based near Bath

THE setting for Arc – the Alliance of Religions and Conservation – is almost as lofty and splendid as its far-sighted organisation’s aims.

Settled high up in a hilltop church, with a rocking bell tower and panoramic views across the Cotswolds, this setting is a far cry from the one that prompted Arc to come into being.

Three years ago, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, was thinking of ways to mark the Queen’s Golden Jubilee – and started to invite religious leaders from around the world to his “Jubilee 2000” celebration.

Prince Philip’s vision was for Arc to act as a bridge between the two worlds. “Our two goals were to get the pull of faith into work with the environmentally aware and to get the environmentally aware to think about their religion,” says Martin. “Religion acts as a bridge between the two worlds.”

Martin is already looking ahead to the day when Arc shuts up shop for good – “probably in 2014”. He invited leaders of five major religious groups to attend: Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

One reason for getting the faiths involved in environmental projects was “the outcome of such lobbying is the UN agreement, but Arc would not have succeeded if it had not already demonstrated how powerful such an alliance can be”, explains Martin.

An indication of how influential Arc has become in the Jubilee 2000 celebration was the way it was received at the UN. There it was given a state banquet, which marked something of a homecoming for Martin, who was born in London.

Arc’s Martin is already looking ahead to the day when Arc shuts up shop for good – “probably in 2014”. He invites leaders of five major religious groups to attend: Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

One reason for getting the faiths involved in environmental projects was “the outcome of such lobbying is the UN agreement, but Arc would not have succeeded if it had not already demonstrated how powerful such an alliance can be”, explains Martin.

An indication of how influential Arc has become in the Jubilee 2000 celebration was the way it was received at the UN. There it was given a state banquet, which marked something of a homecoming for Martin, who was born in London.

Arc’s Martin is already looking ahead to the day when Arc shuts up shop for good – “probably in 2014”. He invites leaders of five major religious groups to attend: Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

One reason for getting the faiths involved in environmental projects was “the outcome of such lobbying is the UN agreement, but Arc would not have succeeded if it had not already demonstrated how powerful such an alliance can be”, explains Martin.

An indication of how influential Arc has become in the Jubilee 2000 celebration was the way it was received at the UN. There it was given a state banquet, which marked something of a homecoming for Martin, who was born in London.