

Martin Palmer Biography

Martin Palmer is a theologian, specialist in world faiths, broadcaster, author, translator of Classic Chinese, environmentalist co-founder with HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh of the world's largest civil society movement on the environment – that of the faiths – and President of FaithInvest, the first organisation founded to work with all major faiths to support them to invest in line with their values.

He is also Chair of the WWF Beliefs and Values Programme and Senior Advisor to the World Federation of Daoists and the China Daoist Association. He is Senior Advisor to the Green Climate Fund on Faiths and Arts and Advisor to Eco-Sikh as well as Eco-Islam.

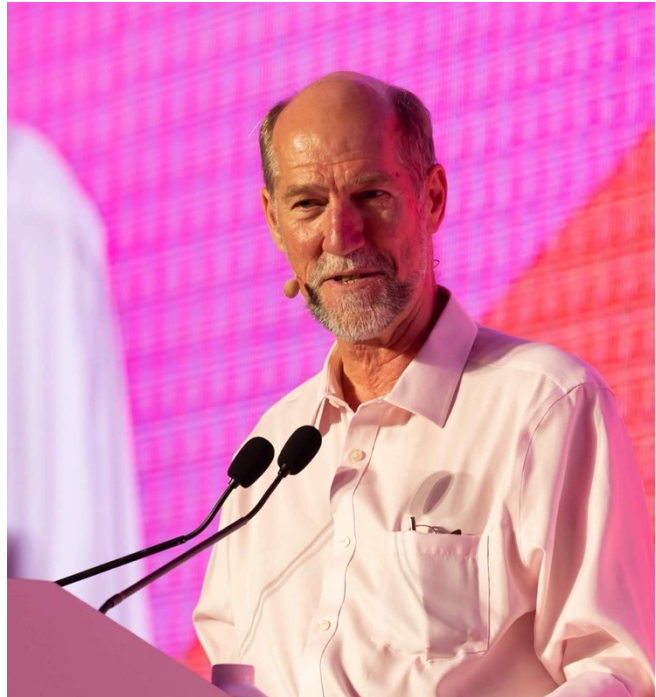
He is Visiting Professor in Religion, History and Nature at the University of Winchester and a regular broadcaster for the BBC.

Martin studied Theology, Religious Studies and Classical Chinese at Cambridge (1973-1976) after a year as a volunteer in a Chinese

Children's Home in Hong Kong from 1972-1973 where he learnt to read Classical Chinese and speak Cantonese.

After Cambridge he founded in 1978 the world's first Multi-faith Education Centre in Manchester, UK and pioneered faith and environment work in the inner city. This led WWF to ask him to write the first ever school textbook on faiths and the environment – *Worlds of Difference* published in 1983, which went into many other languages and sold over 100,000 copies in the UK.

HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, then International President of WWF, read the book and asked Martin to help him bring the faiths into the environmental movement. This led to the leaders of five major world religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism – attending the WWF



Martin Palmer

meeting at Assisi, Italy in 1986, to discuss how their faiths could help save the natural world. Martin was HRH Prince Philip's Religious Advisor on the Environment from 1985 to Prince Philip's death in 2021. They are considered the co-founders of the largest civil society movement on the environment – namely that of the world's major faiths. In 1995 they founded the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) which increased the range of faith environment programmes from around 100 to over one million globally.

In 2019 Prince Philip asked Martin to take up the challenge of helping the faiths move from statements and commitments on the environment, sustainability and climate to being active through their assets. The faiths contribute to or run 50% of all schools worldwide; a third of all universities; more than a third of all medical facilities. They manage around 8% of the habitable land of the planet ranging from cities to forests. And they are probably the fifth largest investing group. As a result, Faithinvest was established in 2019, and Martin is the Founding President of Faithinvest.

In 2023 the Green Climate Fund asked Martin to bring together the worlds of the Faiths, the Arts and of Religious Media and he co-founded Faith, Arts, Media Alliance (FAMA) which works directly with the Green Climate Fund to expand awareness of action for a sustainable planet.

Martin is a regular contributor to BBC programmes both radio and TV on topics ranging from Chinese culture, world religions, environment, history and social analysis. He also helped design the film about the Pope's Laudato Si' encyclical, *The Letter*, which was launched October 2022.

He was a member of the Pope's Covid Commission from 2020 to 2023, has written over 20 books on faiths – ranging from historic studies, to ecology and country faith profiles – and *edited The Atlas of Religion* which first documented the assets of the faiths. He is one of the foremost translators of Chinese Classics and has translated over a dozen books – ranging from the *Dao De Jing*, through the *I Jing* to the classic *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

In 2024 he was appointed as Senior Adviser to the World Federation of Daoists as well as to the China Daoist Association. He is advisor to the Hong Kong University on Chinese culture and faith and environmental action.

He is an active Anglican Lay Preacher and is married to the writer and journalist Victoria Finlay. He has two children and two grandchildren.