

# Highlights of Our First Five Years

## 🌿 2005

**January:** Driving through the saguaro cactus in Arizona's Sonoran Desert, Tessa and Fr. Dave name and begin to imagine the Desert Foundation

**June:** The Desert Foundation is certified as a non-profit by the Colorado Secretary of State; we apply to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status as a non-profit

**July:** Conversations about the Abrahamic traditions in Taos, New Mexico with a Jewish rabbi, Muslim sheikh and Maronite Christian

**September:** We launch the Desert Foundation web site

**December:** First *Caravans* newsletter



*Fr. Dave and Tessa celebrate the birth of the Desert Foundation in June 2005.*

## 🌿 2006

**January:** We revisit Arizona's Sonoran Desert for renewed inspiration

**March:** Conversations with Rabbi Zalman Schachter and Murshid Netanel Miles-Yepes on the role of the desert in the Abrahamic traditions

**April:** Conversations with Episcopal friends about the relationship between the early Christian desert and Celtic spirituality

**May:** "The Garden of the Soul," music and reading of Rumi's poetry; conversations with Jennifer Heath, author of *The Scimitar and the Veil*; we learn about the Abrahamic Path, tracing the route of Abraham, father of the Peoples of the Book, from Ur of the Chaldees into Israel

**June:** First meeting of the Desert Foundation Board of Directors

*With Israeli Bedouin feminist Elsana Alh'jooj, director of the Arab Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation in the Negev.*



*Wearing Desert Foundation t-shirts: board members Judy Maselli, Pegge Bernecker, Dennis Brown and Paul Baynham. Missing from photo: Laura Keim and Kiki Kauffman.*

**July:** Tessa and Fr. Dave receive a Helen Hunt Jackson Grant to research a course on Desert Spirituality for Colorado College

**September:** We redesign the Desert Foundation web site with Lisa Micklin; Tessa speaks at the Spanish Peaks Celtic Festival on the relationship of the desert to Celtic spirituality

**October:** The Desert Foundation receives its letter of determination from the IRS confirming our tax-exempt status; Fr. Dave speaks on the role of the Desert Foundation in interreligious dialogue at the first Sacred Peaks Enlightenment Conference



## 🌵 2007

**March-April:** Tessa and Fr. Dave teach a course at Colorado College entitled *Sand and Sky: Desert Spirituality from the Middle East to the American Southwest*

**May:** Tessa and Fr. Dave make Colorado Friends of Sabeel fact-finding trip to Israel-Palestine: [http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges\\_jerusalem.html](http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges_jerusalem.html) and [http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges\\_rooftopoasis.html](http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges_rooftopoasis.html)

**August:** The Desert Foundation co-sponsors the Glen Workshop in Santa Fe on “God of the Desert: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through the Prism of Art”

**September:** Tessa facilitates another workshop entitled “From the Desert to Celtic Spirituality”; Fr. Dave named Artist of the Month by *Image Update* web site

**October:** Tessa and Fr. Dave attend lecture by Anna Baltzer, author of *Witness in Palestine: A Jewish-American Woman in the Occupied Territories*

**November:** Tessa and Fr. Dave meet Israeli Bedouin feminist Elsana Alh’jooj in Denver, where she was honored by Seeking Common Ground at their second annual Circles of Change Awards Breakfast: [http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges\\_bedouinfem.html](http://www.desertfound.org/wallsbridges/wallsbridges_bedouinfem.html)

## 🌵 2008

**January:** *Christian Century* publishes Fr. Dave’s article, “Grief Work,” describing encounters between bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1058/is\\_125/ai\\_n24256343/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_125/ai_n24256343/)

**March:** Fr. Dave gives talks on “The Wisdom of the Abrahamic Desert” in Victoria, British Columbia

**September:** Tessa speaks on the role of the desert at Spiritual Transformation conference in Hamburg, Germany; *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* publishes Tessa’s summary of Denver talk by Ramzy Baroud, editor-in-chief of the *Palestinian Chronicle*: [http://wrmea.com/archives/August\\_2008/0808054.html](http://wrmea.com/archives/August_2008/0808054.html)

**September-October:** Tessa and Fr. Dave again teach *Sand and Sky: Desert Spirituality from the Middle East to the American Southwest*

## 🌵 2009

**January-February:** Reorganize *Sand and Sky* from college course into a personal retreat; apply to Teachers’ Institute at Dar al-Islam in Abiquiu, New Mexico

**March:** Set up *Desert Tracks* so that readers may easily access Desert Foundation web site updates

**April-May:** Host Colorado College classes at our desert hermitages

**June:** Fr. Dave attends “Weathering the Storm,” seminar to help non-profits survive the current economic crisis; *Living Fully, Dying Well* published, with Tessa’s contributions

**August:** Film presentation and discussion, “Holy Land: Common Ground”

**September:** First Desert Foundation retreat at Casa del Sol, Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, New Mexico

**October:** Tessa and Fr. Dave accepted at Teachers’ Institute, Dar al-Islam for July 2010

**November:** Special appeal for funds in this current economic crisis

**December:** Generous responses from Desert Foundation supporters

Life nowhere appears so brave, so  
bright, so full of oracle and miracle  
as in the desert.

Edward Abbey (1927–1989)

