



# A Parable

rcif

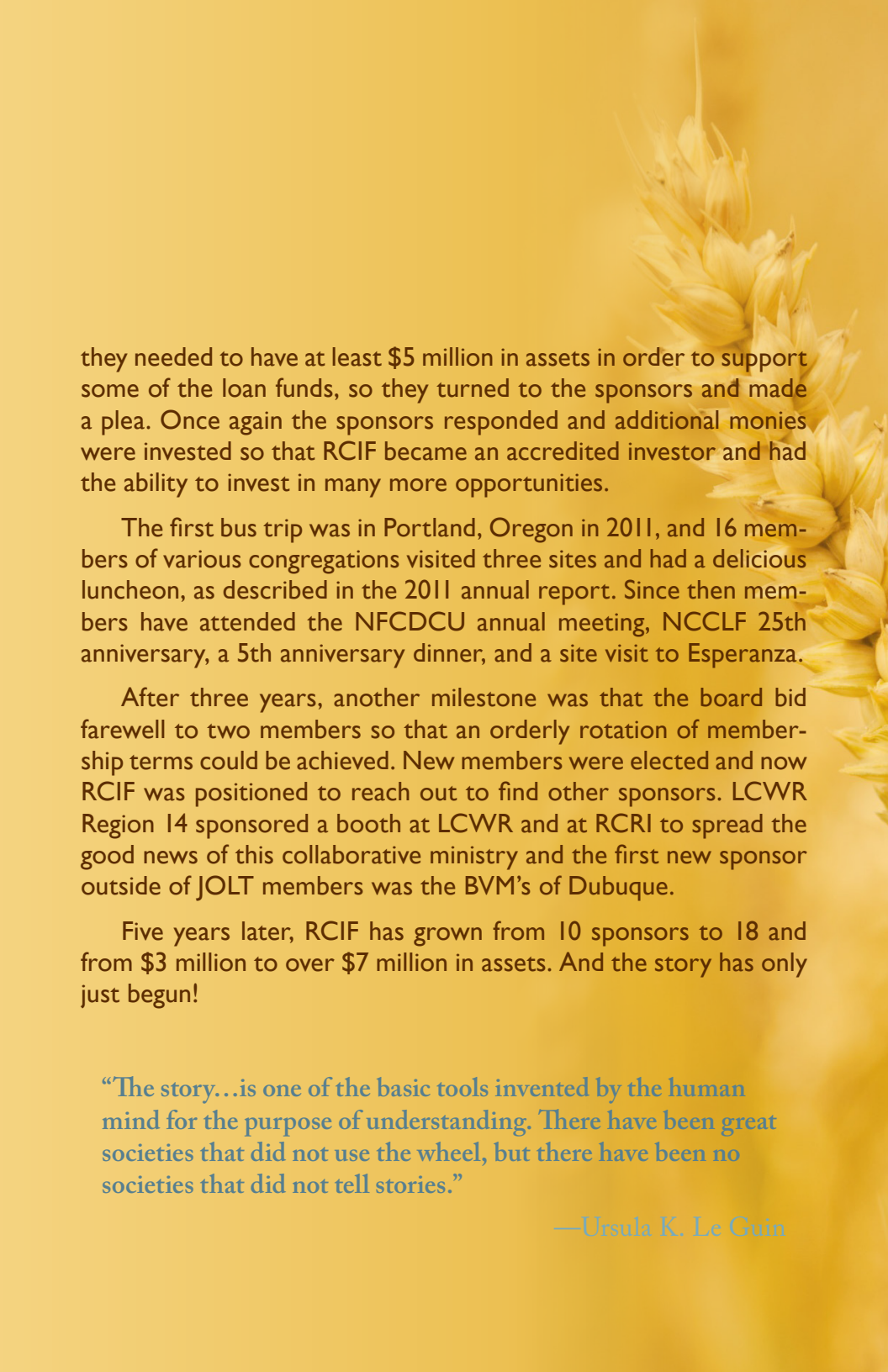
“All human beings have an innate need to hear and tell stories and to have a story to live by ... religion, whatever else it has done, has provided one of the main ways of meeting this abiding need.”

—Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit*

Once upon a time (the parables were all “once upon a time stories”) there was a sister who treasured her community’s investments in low-income communities. She saw that her congregation was having trouble continuing this ministry and she wanted to do something to preserve it, so she called upon others she knew in a coalition called JOLT and asked the question, “How might we collaborate to invest in low-income communities for the future?” She garnered their support to explore the idea and an ad hoc committee was formed to further the conversation. Over the course of a year, many discussions were held, many ideas were examined, and finally the members of JOLT agreed that a fund would be the best solution! They labored through developing incorporation papers and tax exempt issues and in September 2008 RCIF was a legal entity!

Then they had to face the reality of what it would cost. “We need no less than \$3 million” the committee proclaimed. Who will step up and commit? All the members went back to their congregations to consult their leadership (sisters always have to consult) and behold! Ten congregations pooled their current community investments and cash to reach the magic \$3 million and in January 2009 the assets were transferred and the cash received and RCIF was in operation!

Thanks to the generosity of the first seven board members elected by the congregations, many policies and procedures were put into place and investments were made. After the first year, as the Board tried to make new investments, they discovered that



they needed to have at least \$5 million in assets in order to support some of the loan funds, so they turned to the sponsors and made a plea. Once again the sponsors responded and additional monies were invested so that RCIF became an accredited investor and had the ability to invest in many more opportunities.

The first bus trip was in Portland, Oregon in 2011, and 16 members of various congregations visited three sites and had a delicious luncheon, as described in the 2011 annual report. Since then members have attended the NFCDCU annual meeting, NCCLF 25th anniversary, a 5th anniversary dinner, and a site visit to Esperanza.

After three years, another milestone was that the board bid farewell to two members so that an orderly rotation of membership terms could be achieved. New members were elected and now RCIF was positioned to reach out to find other sponsors. LCWR Region 14 sponsored a booth at LCWR and at RCRI to spread the good news of this collaborative ministry and the first new sponsor outside of JOLT members was the BVM's of Dubuque.

Five years later, RCIF has grown from 10 sponsors to 18 and from \$3 million to over \$7 million in assets. And the story has only just begun!

**“The story...is one of the basic tools invented by the human mind for the purpose of understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.”**

—Ursula K. Le Guin

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# Our Mission

The Fund is a coordinated effort of various Catholic Religious Congregations who believe, as Gospel people, that they are called to use their financial resources as a ministry to assist in overcoming social and environmental inequities. The Congregations pool their individual assets to support the mission of promoting economic justice through investments in low-income communities worldwide. By investing in nonprofit organizations that address the economic inequalities in low-income communities, the Fund seeks to promote an economy of solidarity and reflect the Gospel values of economic justice, compassion, human dignity and environmental stewardship.

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Religious Communities Investment Fund  
462 Elwood Avenue Suite 2  
Oakland, CA 94610  
(510) 836-7556 | [rcif.org](http://rcif.org)