YEAR IN REVIEW - 2015

Looking Back at 2015, the word that comes to mind to describe what I’ve seen as a wonderful year of the Lord’s favor is DESTINY.

Over the last 21 years in walking with the Lord and stewarding the vision of Life in Abundance, 2015 became a year where many of our dreams and hopes for this ministry were tangibly realized and consolidated.

One of those realizations—the opening of the LIA Training Center in Kenya where we have already trained over 150 pastors, social workers, and professionals in the transformational development model—stands as a visible record of God’s faithfulness and a profound piece of LIA’s mission.

And the LIA leadership team formation cannot go unmentioned. Dr. Girma Begashaw and Carley Buckingham joined the LIA team to take on the newly-created positions of Chief Operating Officer and LIA U.S. Executive Director respectively. LIA’s work continued to grow, especially as 2015 saw us expand into the Great Lakes Region (Rwanda, Burundi, and DR Congo). And the leadership provided by our Senior Management Team has reached a remarkable stage. Their continued wisdom and guidance to the country teams have allowed us to reach a performance level that now executes our model with excellence.

The most distinct accomplishment in 2015 was the implementation of a Community Impact Study. In June and July of 2015, LIA bravely invited an independent researcher, the Institute for Urban Initiatives, to carry out a focused study to examine the impact of LIA’s model of development on communities that LIA has served and exited. Prior to this study LIA had only anecdotal evidence showing that after departing from a community, the work we had done was sustained in the long term by members of the community as they continued to work towards increased transformation. Ultimately this report served to answer one simple question: Is there supporting evidence, beyond-doubt, that LIA’s model for sustained transformational development actually works?

Six former LIA program sites in Kenya and Ethiopia were randomly selected and the research was carried out. To our great encouragement, this independent report showed that the community work established by LIA continues to flourish even after LIA is no longer present in the community. As the Institute for Urban Initiatives continued to travel from community to community, over and over the testimony they heard from beneficiaries of LIA work was “our eyes have been opened.” The greatest win for us, however, is that the report showed the impact of LIA’s work continues to grow over time. In the words of the researchers, “At several of the sites, we noticed that the ripple effect of impact within the community actually increased over time rather than dissipated.” This crowned our joint heritage in the years to come.

We credit this impact to several factors, the greatest of which is prayer. Breaking the chains of injustice, setting people free, and equipping them to accomplish their God-given destiny is the foundation of LIA’s mission. We exist to serve the poor and vulnerable for this lasting hope. LIA’s model has been implemented now in 14 countries across Africa and the Caribbean to empower the local church to transform communities. This study confirmed our model works.

In 2015 we not only saw the affirmation of our model, but also the growth of our organizational capacity to advance God’s work in the areas He has called us. We give the glory to whom it is due as we celebrate the 86,953 beneficiaries served in 2015 alone by LIA, who will never be the same again. Indeed, the year 2015 was a year of walking in our destiny. Thank you for being part of LIA as we, together, steward this vision the Lord has laid on our hearts.

Dr. Florence Muindi
CEO & President
WHO WE ARE
Life In Abundance International (LIA) is an African-founded, faith-based community development organization. We exist to mobilize the local Church to restore health, renew hope, and inspire lasting transformation for the world’s most vulnerable families.

Walking with 230+ churches and 30 communities in 14 countries throughout Africa and the Caribbean, we serve all people—regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

This is achieved through LIA’s transformational development approach that requires community ownership and sustainable solutions. LIA, in partnership with local Church and civic leadership, determines communities’ most significant needs and then trains, supports, and works alongside community members to meet those needs for the long term.

WHERE WE SERVE
We reference our work in three ways: New Territory, Active Territory, and Ongoing Impact. Each represents multiple countries and communities, but distinctive to time served, programs launched, and community ownership.

NEW TERRITORY
Countries of the Lakes Region—including DR Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda—have recently been opened to us in God’s timing.

ACTIVE TERRITORY
Communities that we currently serve—where programs are in process to bring wholistic transformation include—Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Somaliland, Egypt, Jamaica, and Haiti.

ONGOING IMPACT
Kibera, Kisumu, Makuene (Kenya), Adama and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) are just a small list of communities that we have exited that continue to thrive and take ownership of their transformation.
**COMMUNITY HEALTH**
Health is the basis for life. Each and every community that LIA serves has a specific emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion and care. The community plays a vital role in identifying the area(s) of greatest need and in implementing health programs that build upon existing assets, capacity, and the established health network (when possible).

**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**
Earning capacity and savings are the basis for alleviating physical poverty. When one can provide for his/her family, he/she has more dignity and a better understanding of self-worth. LIA focuses on economic empowerment opportunities that promote self-sufficiency and innovation to create value in a given economy.

**EDUCATION**
Education is the basis for development. All LIA initiatives include community-wide seminars and targeted educational interventions—depending upon the identified needs, assets, and capacity within a community. Specific attention is always given to developing the practical theology of our church partners within the community.

**TRANSFORMATION MODEL**
Transformation is the theological concept that the Gospel should bring about changes within the spiritual, social, and material dimensions of a community. Development is the process of improving the human condition.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
Social engagement is the basis for breaking the poverty cycle. Nothing changes when nothing is changed. LIA works to equip and walk alongside communities as they identify the structural evil that perpetuates their circumstances. Furthermore, LIA encourages its local church partners to fully utilize their unique role in the community by advocating for its most vulnerable members.
In 1998 the Lord granted clear vision to our founder Dr. Florence Muindi on how we enter communities. Partner in prayer with us that we would continue to steward this way and this vision well.

We begin by asking the Lord to reveal the most poor and vulnerable places in the world and follow His direction prayerfully. As we enter a community we ask that He reveal “men and women of peace” within the local church. We gather local pastors and pray the Lord will LIFT THEIR GAZE as we cast vision together for their communities.

We work through the local church and commit to walk with the churches and communities for three years. During the three years, we equip and empower the churches to be the change agents in their community. As we partner with the Lord in lifting the gaze of the community, we launch programs.

We believe the church is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD and as we phase out after our three-year commitment, the local church remains positioned, trained, and equipped to see COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION.

Churches are EQUIPPED and MOBILIZED, individual gazes are LIFTED, and communities are TRANSFORMED for HIS GLORY.

HOW WE ENTER A COMMUNITY
Several years ago, the Lord confirmed our assignment to serve the Great Lakes Region. This was a frequent prayer item, that God would lead and orchestrate the “when” and “how” we were to enter the Lakes Region.

In 2015, I accompanied my husband to a training seminar taking place in a small town called Cyangugu on the banks of Lake Kivu, very close to the Rwanda/DR Congo border. My intentions in going were not to serve, but only to encourage my spouse, and while there, hear God and prayer-walk over this future LIA region.

On the first day of the week-long training, my husband and I sat down with a friend for breakfast. A beautiful Rwandese woman who was attending the training decided to join us at our table. She couldn’t speak English or Swahili, so we quickly realized a conversation beyond a warm smile and “good morning” was all we could manage. At least, so we thought. But, all of a sudden, things took a different turn. As one of the servers came to our table, he tripped and dropped the serving tray on the floor. It slapped the wet floor with a loud bang that echoed through the small dining area. With a scream, the lady sitting at our table shot up from her seat and started having a panic attack. Though we couldn’t really talk to her, we did our best to support her and try to calm her down.

When she eventually controlled her shaking, tears, and fright, we were able to understand through a translator what was wrong. Her name was Sarah and she, like so many other Rwandese, lived through the horrors of the 1994 genocide. As the tray slapped the floor, it brought back painful memories of the day she lost her husband and her children, who were taken by attackers whose machetes made similar sounds.

That incident with Sarah weighed heavily on my heart. As I sought some more understanding from the pastors attending the training, I realized what I saw was extremely common. I realized this was a felt but unmet need.

As “coincidence” would have it, that same week, while still in Rwanda, I received communication from one of LIA’s partners, all the way in America whose inquiry could not have come at a better moment. He asked, “Florence, when is LIA going to start doing work in Rwanda? If you find out, let me know because I would like to provide funding for that.” He had no idea I was in Rwanda and had just witnessed a great need.

A few days later on the flight back home to Kenya, I sat next to a woman who was a UK missionary in the neighboring country of Burundi. In our conversation, she told me of a curriculum her team had just finalized. This curriculum facilitated trauma healing through the local church. Yet another “coincidence.”

As we parted ways, I shared my email address and requested this missionary share the curriculum with me. By the time I arrived home from the airport, the curriculum was in my inbox. I was in awe of God’s leading. It could not have been clearer. He indeed wanted to invite LIA to partner with Him to facilitate healing through the church in this region. We found our open door.

Today, LIA has a staff team on the ground and is engaged in a fast-growing program with churches in both Rwanda and DR Congo in that same region for transformational development. This has also led into a partnership in Burundi. LIA is very encouraged to serve in this region, God’s way, in this set time.
Beatrice is 38 years of age and lives in Rwanda with her three beautiful daughters, 11-year-old Gloriose, 9-year-old Jeanne, and 8-year-old Rachel. Though hopeful for her future and encouraged by the community around her, Beatrice’s situation was not so great or hope-filled until intervention came through the Lord’s timing.

Beatrice was married in 2005 to her husband Mugirwanake Denny and they lived in Gihundwe Sector, Muhari Sub-county. She is a Roman Catholic Christian. Soon after, in 2007 her husband was imprisoned for life because of the genocide that took place during the 90’s.

Stunned at life’s new challenge, Beatrice was faced with the heavy burden of being the sole provider for her family with only a grade school education. Able to only earn occasional income, she quickly realized that she did not have the means to make ends meet for her family. To make things worse, due to her poverty, she did not have the extra money to visit her husband. Support from her in-laws was much appreciated but only went so far, as they, too, were poor and did not have the means to fully support her family. Ashamed of her situation, the only way Beatrice knew to respond was to isolate herself from her community.

In this poor and desperate condition, Beatrice was visited by Mrs. Odette, a CHE (Community Health Evangelist) from the Assemblies of God Church, one of the churches that attended the LIA Training of Trainers last September 2015. Mrs. Odette is also Beatrice’s neighbor. It is key to understand the way CHEs work in this church. Every CHE has a zone of operation where they will identify the needs of that zone and report to the committee meeting. That is exactly what Mrs. Odette did, thus becoming Beatrice’s advocate.

During the church members’ first home visit, they came to realize how dire Beatrice’s condition was, especially morally and spiritually. As Beatrice began to share her story, she broke down in tears. She was simply overwhelmed by the fact that so many people came to spend time with her.

When asked what the biggest challenges she faced were, she explained that the lack of health insurance for her family prevented her from being able to afford medical treatment. In Rwanda, if you don’t have health insurance you have to pay 100% of the cost as opposed to paying 10% of the cost if you are insured. Beatrice went on to explain her need for a farm animal that would help generate income to allow her to buy clothes and food for her children. Lastly, she explained the need to repair her house that was collapsing.

The church provided money for health insurance, repaired her house, and provided a piglet to generate income for her family. Beatrice now attends church and is looking to be confirmed and have her children baptized. The hopelessness, despair, loneliness, discouragement, and financial limitations that she once felt are now replaced with hope, courage, and spiritual uplifting. She is happy and hopeful for the future and plans to support her family and husband.
Life in Abundance has partnered with hundreds of churches across countries in Africa and the Caribbean. We recently launched projects in Rwanda and DR Congo and are currently cultivating a Burundi entry. We intend to expand into Uganda in our next strategic plan and that will mark the end of LIA’s country expansion. God has called us to specifically serve in 12 countries in Africa and 2 countries in the Caribbean. In addition, we will be continually developing partnerships in North America and Europe. Moving forward, LIA’s direct work will grow within these countries, expanding to new communities and partnerships only within this spread. However, this is but just a tip of LIA’s global impact.

The recent LIA Impact Assessment Study confirmed that the communities where we serve for three years and exit become independent sites of expansion to neighboring communities. This is happening through community-wide steering committees that are established to take over the responsibility as LIA exits. Additionally, Pastors’ Fellowships that are formed with LIA local partner churches are in turn forming new Pastors’ Fellowships and targeting training others poor communities where LIA has not worked. They are taking new teams through trainings and beginning work in these new communities, without LIA’s push or direct involvement.

“We are doing this work not only for us,” said one pastor from Nyalenda in Kisumu, Kenya, “we do this for all of Kenya, all of Africa, and indeed the whole world.” He added with great conviction, “This is the gospel being preached to the poor. It’s Isaiah 61.”

Again, LIA is intentionally equipping other ministries to use the LIA transformational development model in countries, regions, and continents where LIA does not work. This is facilitated through the LIA Training Centers based in Jamaica and Kenya. Trainees get a chance to visit LIA communities near the Training Centers where these principles are working. Recently we have trained teams from Italy, Germany, and India, as well as the U.S., and these teams are reporting the implementation of this LIA model in their locations.

Our desire is to also teach transformation in countries that are not open to the church. In 2015 LIA facilitated a training for those who serve in limited access countries. This was held at the LIA’s Training Center in Kenya and the impact of that training is already being reported. People are finding truth, experiencing salvation, learning new skills, and helping transform the lives of their families and communities.

In addition, we are becoming a strong voice in how development is done through what has now become an annual global health conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Here, leaders get to learn, network, and get inspired. Participants from all over Africa join others from Europe and North America to share best practices in the health and development sectors. This conference is expected to advance to a whole new level in 2016.

All this affirms LIA’s strategic direction in this season. Our administrative institution will not expand beyond the 14 countries the Lord has given us charge over. However, as we serve in these countries, we steward a broader reach and therefore declare God’s glory to the nations.
This barbershop is no more than 10 by 10 feet. Simply constructed out of plywood and metal sheet roofing, its walls were papered with images from magazines and calendars, demonstrating to customers the hope that a similar haircut will give them a new look, a new lease on life. Muamush is sitting in his own barber chair, telling his story. He quietly narrates that poverty drove him away from his family and home more than 100 miles to Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. He felt he would have a better chance. His “chance” came initially on the streets of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and then on to the smaller city of Adama, which is where he is now.

Ethiopia has an estimated 4.5 million orphans within the city’s population of 90 million, one of the largest populations of these children in the world (UNICEF report: March 2014). In Ethiopia, orphans are defined as children under 18 who have lost both parents, mostly from AIDS, untreated illnesses, hunger, drought, and war. Many other children and teenagers become desperate and leave destitute parents in search of opportunities to provide for themselves.

Addis Ababa gathers many of these children who find themselves joining countless others like Muamush on its streets, struggling to survive. Often these children work to earn an income and are exposed to various forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

Muamush tells how hard it was to survive. The abuse and deprivation crushed any sense of hope he had for the future. To escape from this hardship, like many of the children, he turned to drugs and sniffing benzene and glue. And then he met someone who began to talk to him and to other children like him, with an invitation to be part of a program that would give them training and a support structure to enable them to develop and own a means of income. This “someone” was a staff member of Life in Abundance. After a 3-year journey, this hope was established.

Today, Muamush is rehabilitated and proudly owns the little barbershop and has a team around him. After going through the 3-year LIA program for orphans and vulnerable children that targeted 150 children from this town, he now finds himself, years later, dreaming about future growth and influencing others. He is currently attending college and his dream is to grow his business so that he can train and hire many others who are in need. He says “LIA educated us and this has changed our mind-set, helped us to think about ourselves in a new way; how to live in a community, how to be accepted and influence others.” He has joined a church fellowship and sees the church as his larger family.

Inspired by the new found hope, Muamush reconnected with his nuclear family whom he now supports with earnings from his barbershop. After completing college classes, he dreams of owning a larger business. This ongoing impact by the transformed in the areas where LIA serves is the ripple effect we have witnessed in communities where we serve, using the LIA transformational development model.
We bounced in the back of the van, our heads nearly hitting the roof, as we drove over the dry, bumpy road to Makueni from Nairobi. We had been in route for over three hours and the sun was beating brightly upon the car.

We passed through the small town of Makueni and then veered off the road to park alongside a church. We squinted to shield the sun from our eyes as we got out to meet our hosts. A focus group had been organized with the members of the Beulah Savings and Credit Association. As we entered the church, the temperature immediately cooled. The roof and mason walls of the church were in place, but the doors and glass windows were still under construction, letting the air flow freely.

Pastor Titus and the members of Beulah greeted us with warm handshakes and a meal of chicken stew and rice. Men and women were present; some were elderly and others were young. English was limited so Shadrack, our community researcher, translated for us.

The members were eager for us to know the meaning of Beulah, which comes from the book of Isaiah and stands for “The land will not be desolate again.”

Makueni, a region prone to severe poverty and drought, had challenges that differed from other communities we have walked with before. When we initially met with 11 community pastors, they expressed their most pressing issues in the community were food and water security.

This was evident as stories were shared about famine and plague. When the rains came, much of the excess harvest was sold off for extra income. When the rains failed to come, farmers would buy back their entire harvest during the dry season to feed their families for double or triple the cost. As a result, many in the community suffered from malnutrition and severe poverty.

In partnership with the participating churches, a plan was developed to install water tanks to collect water during the rainy season and distribute freely during the dry season. In addition, table-banking groups were provided seed capital as well as financial management and business training to pursue income-generating activities.

Beulah Savings and Credit Association used its seed capital to purchase materials to build three silos to store grain during the dry season. They are now able to store their own grain and also purchase grain from their neighbors at low cost during the abundant season. This provides a source of both food and income during the dry season.

To date, the Beulah group has an equivalent of $10,000 in their bank account and have started mentoring a total of 12 additional groups. Members and friends are able to take out loans to purchase household necessities and goods to start their own small businesses.

The transformed community of Makueni now stands as a pillar of hope as they provide training and materials to surrounding communities who want to start similar ventures. What once was an impoverished community is now thriving and has dreams for their future. Dreams, as a member said, “to educate our children and for all families to receive Jesus!”

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**ONGOING IMPACT**

**BENEFICIARY STORY**

**Empowering Change in Makueni**

*by Jay Muindi*

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Kingdom plans do not always make logical sense, neither would their timing even look realistic. Such things make LIA’s vision inspirational—a Spirit-led ministry. Only by the Spirit are the secrets of the kingdom revealed. Some well-thought-out organizational plans are credible and would be ideal, but they would miss the bigger adventure God invites us to and the opportunity to give Him the glory. The LIA vision has traveled a non-conventional journey and God continues to reveal the direction we are going. And He surprises us along the way by who He brings on board to fulfill His purpose.

For many years we have felt the Lord calling us to serve the Great Lakes Region. As we prayerfully gathered information and prepared ourselves logistically and strategically, we indeed were not caught by surprise when the Lord opened up the door. The work is developing fast and gaining momentum to be fully established in this strategic plan period. Staff and structures are established in Rwanda and church partners have committed to serve with us in DR Congo. In 2015, we envisioned the pastors in Burundi and are now looking forward to having our first training there. In the next three years, we are poised to be thriving and serving well in Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, and Uganda in the Lakes Region. The Lord’s zeal will accomplish this.

In 2015, we reached a milestone that is but a dream for many organizations our size and age. We moved into our own development center that houses the international office, the Kenya country office, and a spacious training wing fitted with a resource room, kitchen, and dining room. What a gift! Great is our Father’s faithfulness! This facility has brought stability and has given us opportunities to host trainings and meetings. We began planning for our accommodation wing, commonly known as “Phase-Three.” We hoped to eventually develop this in due time as a sustainable part of the center, but God’s plan was to equip us to host residential trainings sooner than we imagined! As we came to the close of 2015, 45% of the needed building funds were provided by two significant gifts. We therefore moved forward with His plan. The LIA Center Accommodation Block will be completed within two years and LIA is poised to have 21 rooms of double occupancy as well as an adjoining apartment, completing our LIA Center in Nairobi, Kenya.

Another faith initiative we have been praying through for many years was to one day have a small plane (a Caravan) to serve the marginalized in Northern Kenya, Horn Region, and Lakes Region. This will not only support the LIA work in these countries, but also serve as a partner for charter flights with like-minded organizations. In 2015, the Lord advanced this vision further. We now have a business plan as well as a team of resource persons who are shaping this dream. We continue to watch that space to be filled—in His time.

As we come to the end of our current three-year strategic plan (2014-2016), we will be engaged in a discernment process to paint a picture of LIA 2027. We want to be clear about what we will look like and what we will be doing in 10 years, so that we can set goals and be involved in efforts that are taking us there. In 2016, we will discern and articulate this. What a joy to ask the Lord, who has these plans, to reveal them to us. Understanding comes easy to the discerning. We know God will amaze us as we seek His ways.
Proper stewardship, management, and accountability of resources entrusted to LIA by our partners is both a responsibility and honor. The following financial information is the practical outcome of LIA’s dedication to financial transparency.

Annually, our organization undertakes a comprehensive audit by an independent accounting firm. Further, LIA has reached the highest obtainable rating by the Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability (ECFA).

Both of these achievements require stringent discipline to accomplish and are executed with a spirit of accountability and openness that our partners deserve.

What you won’t find in these figures is the true impact on the communities we serve together. The numbers simply cannot do justice to the local church positioned to bring the life and hope of Jesus Christ, dignity restored, communities that were found dry, dark, and hopeless—walking in life and hope, with a vision for themselves, their community, and neighboring communities. We are honored to walk with you, to walk together. May we continually steward well together in which He’s entrusted to us, all for His glory.

Carley Buckingham
Executive Director

“For a social sector organization, performance must be assessed relative to mission, not financial returns. In the social sectors, the critical question is not ‘How much money do we make per dollar of invested capital?’ But ‘How effectively do we deliver on our mission and make a distinctive impact, relative to our resources?’

JIM COLLINS
Good to Great for the Social Sector
## Statements of Financial Position

### Assets

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
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### Liabilities and Net Assets

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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>3,362,742</td>
<td>831,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted Net Assets</td>
<td>2,044,120</td>
<td>3,740,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently Restricted Net Assets</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>5,656,862</td>
<td>4,571,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$5,767,907</td>
<td>$4,701,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Program vs. Non-Program

**Fiscal Year 2015**

- **Programs**: 81.1%
- **Fundraising**: 7.4%
- **Administration**: 11.5%

**Fiscal Year 2014**

- **Programs**: 84.6%
- **Fundraising**: 5.6%
- **Administration**: 9.8%

Life In Abundance is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.
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CONTACT
LIFE IN ABUNDANCE HEADQUARTERS:
P.O. BOX 76185-00508
LIA CENTER, KENYA
SILANGA ROAD (OFF LANGATA ROAD)
NAIROBI, KENYA
T +254 702 522 502

USA OFFICE:
211 TOWNEPARK CIRCLE, SUITE 201,
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40243
GIVING ADDRESS:
PO BOX 660367,
DALLAS, TEXAS 75266-0367
T 502 749 7691
F 866 LIA 3336

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MATT WHEATLEY
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JON MELOT