

A Turbo Tale



What would it take to transform this . . .



. . . into this?

Turboliner Transformation



From this . . . to this



For almost 30 years, the last remaining remnant of Amtrak's 30-car, French-built RTG Turboliner fleet rested and rusted in a remote Indiana scrap yard. In the 1970s, these three cars, and their 27 siblings, were the bright hope for non-electrified, high-speed rail passenger service in the Midwestern United States. The future of these decaying and vegetation-engulfed relics seemed anything but hopeful. However, what would it have taken to completely restore these cars, and, assuming the necessary operating conditions, allowed them to fulfill the purpose for which they were created? Such a transformational process would require the direct involvement of someone with three primary qualifications.

First, the process would require someone who has the **DESIRE** to complete the task; someone with a strong passion not only for railroading and passenger trains in general, but for Turboliners in particular.

Second, the process would require someone who has the **KNOWLEDGE** to complete the task; someone with a personal understanding of every facet of the trains as originally constructed (or the direct involvement of others who do have such knowledge).

Third, the process would require someone who has the **MEANS** to complete the task; someone with unlimited resources, that could be channeled into the project.

If **any** one of these elements is missing, the transformation cannot be completed.



From this . . . to this



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Personal Transformation



In reflecting on this scenario, I was struck by how the situation of these cars illustrated the work of God in my life. As monumental as the task of transforming a railroad relic may seem, the transformation of a human life is infinitely greater. However, the principles involved are similar. If you would like to know that story, please continue reading.

The Bible teaches that every human being has been created by God, and is unconditionally loved by God. In Psalm 139:13 we read, “. . . you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

However, the Bible is also clear that **each** of us naturally chooses to think and live in a condition of rebellion and separation from the perfect God who created us. This reality is what the Bible calls sin. The result is that, **on our own**, none of us has **any** hope of knowing God, removing our guilt before God, or experiencing the joyful and purposeful life and eternity God intended. The bad news is that **none** of us has the desire, knowledge, or means necessary to bring about the supernatural, inside-out, total-life transformation needed to experience a right relationship with God. Romans 3:23 states, “. . . all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God . . .” And Romans 6:23a adds, “For the wages of sin is death . . .” Our **natural** future is even more bleak than the derelict Turboliner cars in the scrap yard.

But this is **not** the end of the story. The **GOOD NEWS** is that there is **ONE** person who **does** possess the qualities necessary to bring about our life transformation; and he has already taken the initiative to make that transformation possible. That person is God himself.

First, God passionately **DESIRES** that each of us be transformed, and experience a right relationship with him. II Peter 3:9b says that God is, “. . . not wanting *anyone* to perish, but *everyone* to come to repentance.”

Second, God has intimate, perfect **KNOWLEDGE** of each person’s life and need. The writer of Psalm 139:3 says of God, that, “. . . you are familiar with all my ways.”

Third, God has made available the one and only **MEANS** that can forgive and transform us—Jesus Christ. John 3:16 states, “For God so *loved* the world that he *gave* his one and only Son, that whoever *believes in him* shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

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Personal Transformation (continued)

Through his Son Jesus Christ, God has made our life transformation *possible*, but he has *not* made it *automatic*. Each person must *choose* to: *invite God to enter* the scrap yard of his or her life; *ask God to forgive* the sinful thoughts and actions that contributed to their separation from God and personal destruction; and, *give God complete control* within the life scrap yard; so *he* can transform the brokenness that is there. Concerning this personal choice, John 1:12 states, “. . . to all who *received* him [Jesus], to those who *believed* in his name, he gave the right to *become* children of God.” In Revelation 3:20, Jesus himself says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door; I will come in”

God desires to begin the transformation process in your life right now; and he is waiting for you to invite him in, through prayer. If the following prayer expresses the desire of your heart, then talk to God, and commit your life completely to him.

Dear Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner, and I ask your forgiveness.
I believe that you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come in and take complete control of my heart and life. I give you all that I am, and all that I have. Make me the person you want me to be. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior.
In your name, Amen.

This is the *beginning* of a new life through following Jesus. To learn more about both *knowing* Jesus, and *growing* in your relationship with him, please visit the following website: www.peacewithgod.net. To speak with someone about becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, call, toll-free, 1-888-NEED HIM.

I have chosen to follow Jesus Christ and experience his transforming work in my own life. I invite you to do the same.

Dale A. Johnson

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Transformation Opportunity Endpoint



By June 3, 2023, the date of the above photo, RTG I power car 59, likely the scrap yard car with the highest interest level and museum potential, had been cut up for scrap, and reduced to an almost unrecognizable debris field. For car 59, the opportunity for Turboliner transformation had come to an end. In light of this development, it is not unlikely to assume that a similar end will be experienced by the other two cars at the site, coaches 93 and 95. Even though many had discussed, and expressed interest in, Turboliner transformation; no action was taken, and the result was destruction. Likewise, the same reality applies to personal transformation. The life of **every** individual **will** come to an end, and that point will also mark the end of one's opportunity to accept God's offer of present and eternal transformation. If you have not already done so, receive God's gracious gift **now**, before it is too late.

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During the 1970s and 1980s, Dale did freelance photography work for Amtrak; focusing on Turboliners and early Superliners. His pictures have been used in timetables, brochures, annual reports, employee news publications, books, and general promotional distribution. He is also author of the books, *Trail of the Turbo: The Amtrak Turboliner Story*, and, *Trail of the Turbo: The Amtrak Turboliner Story—Book Supplement*.

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