

77-Foot Cross Raised to 'Lift Up Christ'

Charismatic artist Max Greiner wants to draw people to Christ. That's why he's created huge bronze sculptures of Jesus that sit outside megachurches and even the Trinity Broadcasting Network studios. And he says that's why he built a \$2 million, 77-foot cross that was raised last week along Interstate 10 in Kerrville, Texas.

"I'm trying to use the gifts and talents He gave me to lift up Jesus Christ before the world," Greiner said. "Nobody complains when millions of dollars are spent on sports stadiums and movies and things like that, but everybody seems to have a problem when you want to lift up Jesus."

The cross is part of a 23-acre Sculpture Prayer Garden Greiner is building near Kerrville. The garden will include picnic areas and walking trails but will also present the gospel through donated artwork, including a replica of Greiner's 18-foot *The Coming King* sculpture, which sits outside Trinity Broadcasting Network's headquarters in Costa Mesa, California.

The sculptures will lead to *The Empty Cross*, which is hollow and made to rust to resemble blood. The gospel will be presented in multiple languages on tiles leading up to the cross, Greiner said. And on the walls in the center of the cross, visitors can read the sinner's prayer and instructions on how to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

"Literally, someone can go into the cross lost, and they can come out of there saved and full of the Holy Spirit," Greiner said.

Greiner, who was trained in architecture, admits the garden has been built backward. Typically, the roads would have been constructed first and the smaller items put in place before

the 70-ton cross was erected. But he says God told him to raise the cross first.

"As soon as we tried to raise the cross, that's when all hell broke loose," Greiner said.

Greiner's Coming King Foundation, which is building the garden, was sued by area residents who claimed the lighted cross would invade their privacy. The foundation settled the suit in March by agreeing to build a fence to block area residents' view of the cross.

Greiner said the flap has brought unexpected publicity to the cross, which he sees as a good thing. He said a Minnesota church is preparing to build a similar sculpture garden along Interstate 35 near Minneapolis, and he hopes to construct other sculpture gardens across the country.

In Kerrville, Greiner is still raising the more than \$2 million needed to build an entrance for the garden and roads. None of the sculptures, donated by Greiner and Texas artists David Broussard and Beverly Paddleford, are in place. But when it is complete, Greiner expects the evangelistic garden to draw as many as 1,000 visitors a day.

"We think this is going to be a place, this garden, where people will experience God and find God and be blessed by God," Greiner said. "That's what we're hoping."