

**“Desert Christ - Church moves 3-ton statue” (*Life*: April 23, 1951)**

*Photo 1:* As an act of faith which he hoped would outlast even atomic blasts, Antone Martin, a Los Angeles bomber plant worker, molded a 10-foot-tall statue of Christ out of three tons of cement. The Yucca Valley Church, out in the desert, came forward with an offer to erect it where men of all faiths could see it. Martin gave it to them. Too poor to hire the work done, Pastor Eddie Garver and his flock trucked the statue out to Yucca Valley, labored in broiling sun to build a ramp and pedestal, then hoisted the statue (pp. 68, 71) atop a 90-foot hill, overlooking the desert. The next Sunday, Pastor Garver delivered the first sermon beneath the desert Christ.

*Photo 2:* On desert highway, statue towers above Pastor Garver’s patched-up truck during 135-mile trip from Martin’s Los Angeles home to Yucca Valley.

*Photo 3:* At gas station local residents get close-up of statue. Later, in moonlight, one youth, not seeing the truck, thought he “saw Christ come walking back.”

*Photo 4:* Pastor Garver tightens a tow chain used to help hoist statue up hill.

*Photo 5:* Sculptor Martin repairs finger of statue broken during rough ascent.

*Photo 6:* At bottom of hill, statue stands waiting as volunteers from church finish clearing rocks and building skidway to pedestal atop 90-foot slope.

*Photo 7:* Half way up, statue inches along under combined efforts of men (above) and truck using pulley and cable. Wooden cradle was used to protect concrete.

*Photo 8:* Safely on top, the concrete Christ - damaged right hand patched and wrapped - is guided onto the pedestal as Garver (right) signals to stop heaving.