

Unsettling snapshot of American religion

► Photographer Carl De Keyzer says his 'God Inc.' is both an aesthetic exhibit and a warning about religion's dark side.

By Devorah L. Knaff
The Press-Enterprise

Carl De Keyzer doesn't mince words when he describes the months he spent photographing the subjects that appear in the exhibit of his work, "God Inc.," which opens today at the California Museum of Photography in Riverside.

Although he said he appreciated the hospitality of many churches he visited, some of his experiences were frightening.

He said he hopes that the exhibit, which examines how Christianity is practiced in the United States, serves as something of a warning. He wants to prod people into examining some of the darker aspects of American religious practice — specifically the intolerance and bigotry that he found.

"Most places in this country, if you are not religious, you're regarded as a criminal or as an outcast. You wouldn't be accepted socially at all — and that really frightened me," he said in an interview.

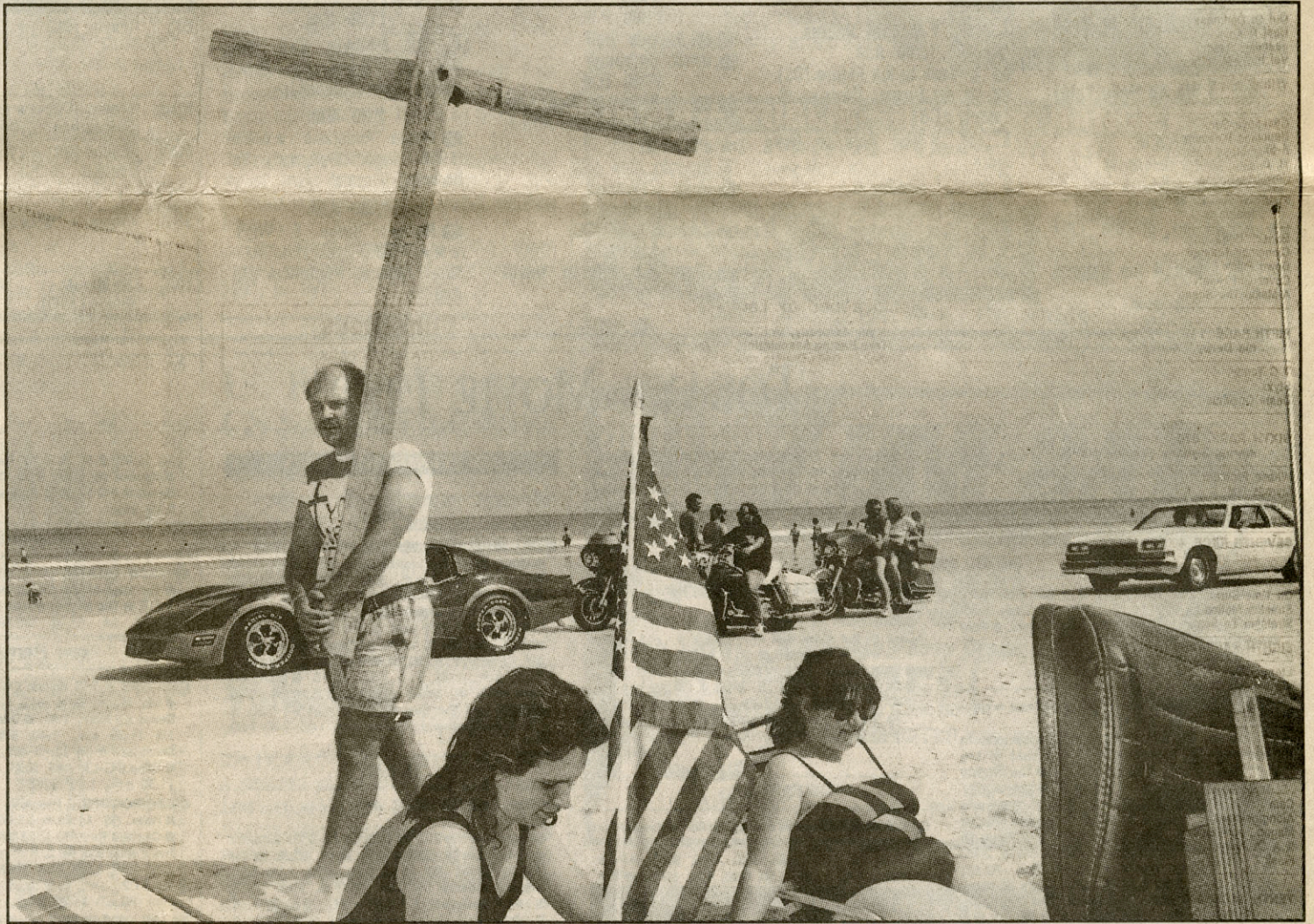
Among the subjects that the Belgian photographer examined were televangelism, an aspect of religious practice that he worries may spread in Europe as the continent unifies its economy.

"In a few years there will be a united Europe, and with that the market is going to be interesting enough for these people to come to Europe — they won't have to set up small programs in each individual country but can have a pan-European audience of 200 or 300 million people.

"I'm not saying that I'm going to stop all that, but I do hope that people look at these photographs and think about what it might mean."

The same show now at the photo museum is simultaneously touring Europe.

Despite the underlying dark tone of his work, De Keyzer's large black-and-white photographs are almost gentle. He describes the work as a blend of documentary and aesthetic concerns, and the photo-



California Museum of Photography

A man preaching on Daytona Beach is one of Carl De Keyzer's pictures on display in "God Inc."

Art Review

"God Inc."

Where: California Museum of Photography, 3824 Main St., Riverside.

When: Today through Jan. 24. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Public reception for the artist today, 5-6 p.m. For further information, call (714) 784-3686.

graphs are often lovely — marvelously balanced in line and composition and different hues of gray.

De Keyzer emphasizes that the photographs — taken from throughout the United States over more than a year — are not meant as a complete catalog of American Christianity. Moreover, he is not trying to document the churches, but rather the people who attend them and participate in religious ceremonies such as baptisms and revivals.

"So as a result you don't see pictures of buildings, you don't see a focus on the priests. What you do see is the worshipers, and even then not always in an obvious way. Sometimes you can look at two or

three of these photographs before you realize that there is a religious aspect to them."

One aspect of the show that De Keyzer didn't foresee was the inclusion of patriotism — but the Gulf War changed that.

"It was not really my idea to include patriotism and nationalism, but with the war — sometimes it was difficult to see the difference between church services and patriotism and so I felt that I should include it as well. The churches just had flags everywhere, and so I added that to the show."

A delightful concert by the B-52's ends on a classic note

By Cathy Maestri
The Press-Enterprise

UNIVERSAL CITY

It's important how a concert ends. Sometimes those last few notes can make the difference as to whether you leave a good show or a great one.

The B-52's made sure everyone went home happy from the Universal Amphitheatre on Thursday by closing with the silly classic "Rock Lobster," the "Louie Louie" of the pop generation.

It more than made up for the few slow spots. Even without "Rock Lobster" the evening would have been a delight. The

Music Review

B-52's

Laguna Hills: 8 p.m. today at Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, 8800 Irvine Center Drive, Laguna Hills. \$23.25-\$25.75. (714) 740-2000.

San Diego: 8 p.m. tomorrow at the San Diego Sports Arena, 3500 Sports Arena Blvd., San Diego. \$19.50-\$26. (714) 740-2000.

band's shows are a celebration of life disguised as a wonderfully tacky dance party: dance moves that look like campy fertility rites taking place on a funky set that was part underwater, part outer space.

For the current album, "Good Stuff," Cindy Wilson has taken a leave of absence, leaving Kate Pierson, singer Fred Schneider and drummer-turned-guitarist Keith Strickland to continue the party.

Wilson's replacement is Julee Cruise — best known as the "Twin Peaks" singer. Cruise's vocals ranged from way-off to adequate but she looked angelic in a huge honey-blond polyester wig, a short dress plastered with bright appliques and a smile that would put Barbie to shame. More important, she's a fabulous dancer.

Pierson, who wore a silvered hot pants outfit, is the one with the great voice, while Schneider provided the comic relief and

the political correctness. (He's a great dancer, too.)

The crowd — which batted around inflated condoms — was too young to recognize nuggets such as "Mesopotamia," but it bopped along merrily with the hits from the band's latest albums, "Channel Z," "Good Stuff," "Roam" and "Love Shack."

The group is touring with the Violent Femmes, another early-'80s cult favorite. The Femmes lit up the amphitheatre to give its set of excellent, electric death-folk an intimate feel for the classics "Gone Daddy Gone," "Blister in the Sun" and "American Music."