



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

I'm an avid bumper-sticker reader. Of course, I also read everything else — the backs of oatmeal boxes, labels on catsup bottles and even the small print in the front of the phone book. However, there's something about a bumper-sticker that draws me like a moth to fire.

My big problem is I can't remember them after reading them. (I can't remember jokes, either, which is probably just as well.) I do remember one slogan on the back of a Ford Ranch Wagon in Texas that read, "No ranch, just kids."

My neighbor has one of those "If-You-Don't-Like-Cops - The - Next - Time - You're - In - Trouble - Call - A - Hippie" stickers. But he also belongs to the Ku Klux Klan and won't speak because I didn't vote for Wallace. I started to bring out my latest "Sic 'Em Spiro" sticker but my other neighbor is a socialist and it's just not worth the trouble.

I do have two bumper stickers of my own. I've tried to get one of them off but it's easier to take off the bumper. It says, "Republicans For Askew" and is pasted over my old "In - Your - Heart - You - Know - He's - Right" sticker. The other one I'm contented to let stay. It says, "Smile, Jesus Loves You."

The other day I was trying to read the sticker on the car in front of me. The writing was so small I could barely see it. I finally got right up on the rear of the car and could make out the slogan which said, "Quit Tailgating, Stupid."

I got the message.

Recently a rash of religious stickers has been making the rounds. To interpret some of them you have to know the Zion lingo, like the one that says, "In Case Of The Rapture, This Car Will Self Destruct."

In California last week I saw a car full of the young, new-breed Christians involved in the Jesus Movement. They were barreling down the freeway near Long Beach, singing. On the bumper was a sticker that said, "If You Love Jesus, Honk!"

I passed them honking and they all raised their hands, smiling through their beards. But they weren't giving me the old two-finger "peace and love" sign. Instead, they gave the new sign of committed youth, the index finger extended up indicating the "one way" of Christ.

Yet, of all the bumper stickers I've ever seen, my favorite was on the back of an ancient Plymouth being driven south on the Sunshine State Parkway. Inside was an old couple, obviously at retirement age. The back seat of the car was piled high with material possessions and the old woman was sitting like a teenage puppy lover, snuggled up against her bespectacled husband who was peering intently over the steering wheel as the ancient car chugged south. On the rear bumper of the car (which held New York plates) was a bumper sticker. It said simply, "Hip, Hip, Hooray!"

And my day became a lot brighter.