

The use of the fish symbol

I was very interested in Brother Trevor Maher's article "The symbol of the cross" ([Oct. 2002, p. 365](#)) and I thank him for a very useful study. Recently I did some research on another symbol that is used worldwide in the name of Christianity, the fish. The reason I did this research was because there also seems to be an ever-increasing number of brethren and sisters using the fish symbol in the form of lapel badges or stickers on their cars—just two of the common ways it is used. In fact the fish symbol is now so popular that it is used on everything from business cards to the yellow pages. The symbol is not new; it has been around for many thousands of years. So why this increase in its use amongst Christians?

The church teaches that this symbol has existed for centuries, representing the concept of Jesus as the fisher of men.* Today its origin and meanings are clouded by a vague tradition, but the antiquity of this symbol was enough to make it accepted without question by modern Christians who are striving for a closer identity with their roots.

Is this a good thing? Because many Christian groups have adopted this symbol to identify themselves to others, should we do the same?

Unknown to 'moderns', however, the fish symbol is not unique to Christianity, but was in use long before that era. For example, the fish symbol was used to represent Seva, in the Hindu religion, and also Oannes, who in Mesopotamian mythology was an amphibious being who taught mankind wisdom. The fish is also in use as a representative of Pisces in astrology. Finally, Darwinists also use the fish symbol, but their symbol has little feet attached in a direct attack on the Christian symbol!

With this in mind, I think we should exercise caution when using this symbol and other symbolism and gimmicks used by modern-day Christians. The Bible is quite clear when it talks about identity: "Ye shall know them by their fruits [works]" (Mt. 7:16). Therefore "let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay" (Jas. 5:12), and leave the modern day 'Christian' to his badges and emblems.

Tim Evans
Southampton

* Brian Moynihan, in *The Faith: A History of Christianity*, says of the meaning of the fish symbol: "The fish was a secret sign; the first letter of the Greek words *Iesou CHristos THEou Uios Soter*, Jesus Christ God's Son and Savior, spell *Ichthus*, Greek for fish".—*T.B.*