



Halloween

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The Truth About Halloween



The Truth About Halloween

PAGES 6-9

- 3 WATCHING THE WORLD
- 4 THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT
Premarital Sex
- 10 HELP FOR THE FAMILY
How to Forgive
- 12 INTERVIEW
A Kidney Specialist Explains Her Faith
- 14 PORTRAITS FROM THE PAST
Zheng He
- 16 WAS IT DESIGNED?
The Emperor Penguin's Feather Coat

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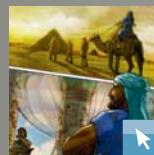
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ARCTIC

“The volume of ice in the summer is only a quarter of what it was 30 years ago,” says Peter Wadhams, professor of ocean physics at the University of Cambridge, Britain. In 2012, some 50 ships made use of the Northern Sea Route that has opened up as a result of global warming.

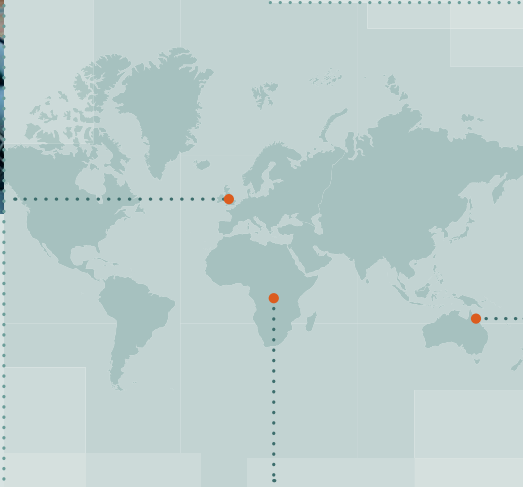
WORLD

Breast milk produced by mothers in the days following childbirth has been found to contain over 700 varieties of bacteria—more than experts expected. Researchers are still working to determine the beneficial biological function of these bacteria in the newborn’s digestive and immune systems.



BRITAIN

In a simulated-driving study conducted by British scientists, drivers suffering from the common cold had slower reaction times than alcohol-impaired drivers.



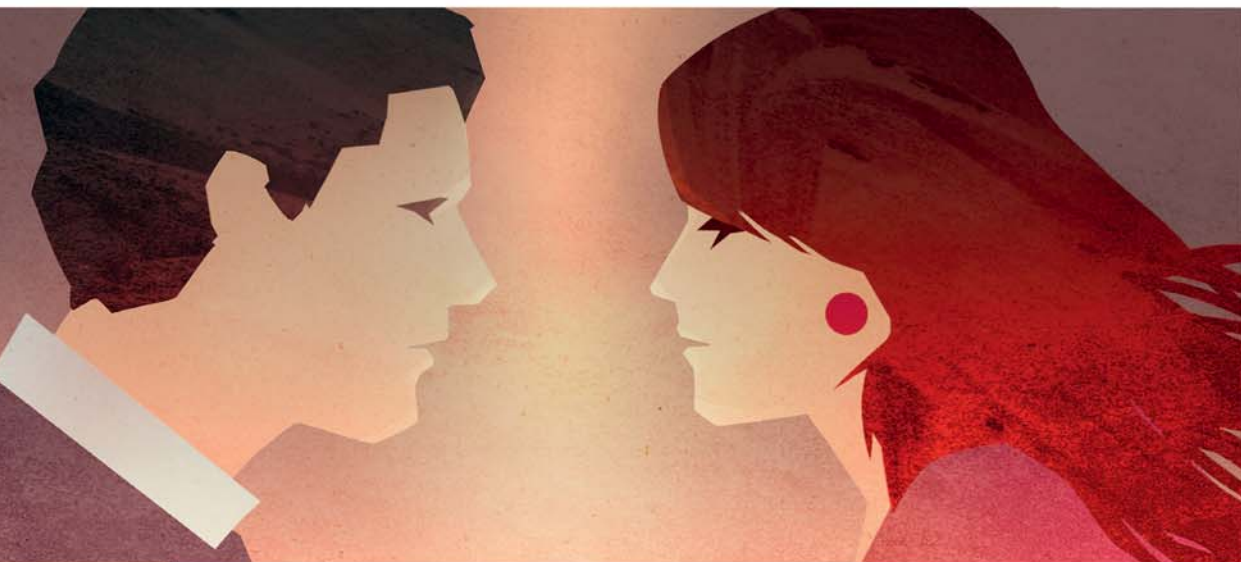
AUSTRALIA

The Great Barrier Reef has lost half of its live coral over the past 27 years. Scientists blame most of the damage on tropical cyclones, infestation of crown-of-thorns starfish [*Acanthaster planci*], and coral bleaching triggered by higher ocean temperatures.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Africa is undergoing what some call an “unprecedented” slaughter of tens of thousands of elephants every year for their ivory. In one incident, several elephants were shot in the top of the head, apparently from a helicopter.





PREMARITAL SEX

Is premarital sex wrong?

“For this is what God wills, . . . that you abstain from fornication.”

—1 Thessalonians 4:3.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Some cultures tolerate sexual activity between consenting unmarried adult individuals. In some areas it is viewed as acceptable for unmarried adolescents to engage in some forms of sexual intimacy.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible uses the word “fornication” for some forms of sexual activity outside marriage. God expects his worshippers to “abstain from fornication.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3) Fornication is listed as a serious sin, as are adultery, spiritism, drunkenness, idolatry, murder, and thievery.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:8.

WHY IT MATTERS For one thing, the Bible warns that “God will judge fornicators.” (Hebrews 13:4) More important, by obeying God’s laws about sexual morality, we prove our love for Jehovah God. (1 John 5:3) He in turn blesses those who observe his commandments.—Isaiah 48:18.



Is it immoral for unmarried people to engage in any form of sexual intimacy?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY Many people believe that apart from sexual intercourse, there is nothing wrong with sexual intimacies between unmarried partners.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS When discussing immoral sexual practices, the Bible mentions not only fornication but also sexual “uncleanness” and “loose conduct.” (2 Corinthians 12:21) Clearly, there are various forms of sexual intimacy that are offensive to God when performed outside marriage, even when there is no intercourse.

“Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you.”

—Ephesians 5:3.

The overall message of the Bible regarding sex is that sexual intimacies are restricted to a man and a woman who are married to each other. The Bible also disapproves of “covetous sexual appetite.” (1 Thessalonians 4:5) What does that mean? Consider an example that could apply equally to a man or a woman: A woman might be determined not to have intercourse with her boyfriend. Still, she engages in other forms of sexual intimacy with him. By doing so, they are coveting or lusting after something that does not belong to them. Hence, they are guilty of “covetous sexual appetite.” Such sexual greed is condemned in the Bible.—Ephesians 5:3-5.

How can you avoid sexual immorality?

WHY IT MATTERS According to the Bible, those who engage in premarital sex are in danger of losing their friendship with God.—Colossians 3:5, 6.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The Bible advises people to “flee from fornication.” (1 Corinthians 6:18) This means that a person needs to stay as far away as possible from anything that could lure him or her into sexual immorality. (Proverbs 22:3) For instance, in order to remain morally clean, it is vital for one to avoid close association with people who ignore God’s principles related to sex. The Bible warns: “He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly.”—Proverbs 13:20.

“Flee from fornication.”

—1 Corinthians 6:18.

Feeding the mind with immoral thoughts can also lead to sexual misconduct. (Romans 8:5, 6) Thus, it is wise to avoid music, videos, printed material, and anything else that improperly portrays sexual activity or that in any way promotes sexual conduct that offends God.—Psalm 101:3. ■



The Truth About Halloween

Is Halloween celebrated where you live? In the United States and Canada, Halloween is widely known and celebrated every year on October 31. Halloween customs, though, can be found in many other parts of the globe. In some places holidays are celebrated that, although named differently, share similar themes: contact with the spirit world involving the spirits of the dead, fairies, witches, and even the devil and demon angels.—See the box “Celebrations Like Halloween Worldwide.”

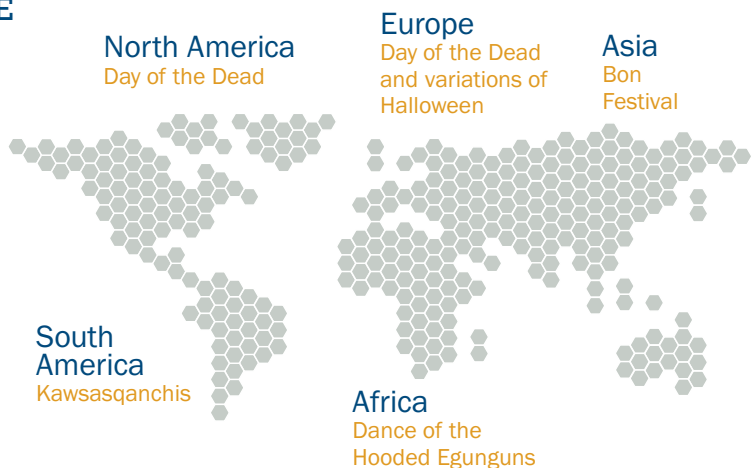
PERSONALLY, you may not believe in supernatural spirits. You might simply view taking part in Halloween and similar celebrations as a way to have fun and teach your children to explore their imagination. Many people, though, regard

these celebrations as harmful for the following reasons:

1. “Halloween,” explains the *Encyclopedia of American Folklore*, “is integrally related to the prospect of contact with spiritual forces, many of which threaten

CELEBRATIONS LIKE HALLOWEEN WORLDWIDE

Halloween has generally been regarded as an American holiday. Yet this celebration has become popular in many parts of the world. Additionally, there are other festivities that are like Halloween in that they celebrate the existence and activity of spirit creatures. Shown here are some of the popular holidays like Halloween around the globe.



WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

The Origin of Some Halloween Customs and Symbols

VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES, WITCHES, ZOMBIES:

These creatures have long been associated with the evil spirit world.

COSTUMES: The Celts wore frightening masks so that evil spirits would mistakenly think the wearers were spirits and would leave them alone. The church gradually amalgamated pagan customs with the feasts of All Souls and All Saints. Later, celebrants went from house to house wearing costumes of saints, angels, and devils.



CANDY: The ancient Celts tried to appease wicked spirits with sweets. The church later encouraged celebrants to go from house to house on All Hallows' Eve, asking for food in return for a prayer for the dead. This custom eventually became Halloween's trick or treat.

PUMPKINS:

Carved, candlelit turnips were displayed to repel evil spirits. To some, the candle in the turnip represented a soul trapped in purgatory. Later, carved pumpkins were more commonly used.

“Christians ‘don’t realize it, but they’re celebrating our holiday with us. . . . We like it.”—The newspaper *USA Today*, quoting a professed witch

or frighten.” (See the box “Halloween Time Line.”) Likewise, many celebrations like Halloween have pagan origins and are deeply rooted in ancestor worship. Even today, people around the world use these days to make contact with supposed spirits of the dead.

2. Although Halloween has been viewed mainly as an American holiday, each year

people in more and more countries have been adopting it. Many newcomers to the celebration, however, are unaware of the pagan origins of Halloween symbols, decorations, and customs, most of which are related to supernatural beings and occult forces.—See the box “Where Did It Come From?”

3. Thousands of Wiccans, who follow ancient Celtic rituals, still call Halloween by the ancient name Samhain and consider it to be the most sacred night of the year. “Christians ‘don’t realize it, but they’re celebrating our holiday with us. . . . We like it,” stated the newspaper *USA Today* when quoting a professed witch.

HALLOWEEN TIME LINE



FIFTH CENTURY B.C.E.

The Celts observe the festival of Samhain at the end of October, when they believe ghosts and demons roam the earth more so than at other times.



FIRST CENTURY C.E.

The Romans conquer the Celts and adopt the spiritistic rituals of Samhain.



SEVENTH CENTURY C.E.

Pope Boniface IV is said to have established the annual celebration of All Saints’ Day to honor martyrs.*

* Hallow is an old word meaning “saint.” All Hallows’ Day (also known as All Saints’ Day) is a holiday to honor dead saints. The evening before All Hallows’ Day was called All Hallow Even, later shortened to Halloween.



ELEVENTH CENTURY C.E.

The second of November is designated as All Souls’ Day to commemorate the dead. Observances surrounding All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day are collectively called All Hallows’ Eve.



4. Celebrations like Halloween are in conflict with Bible teachings. The Bible warns: “There must never be anyone among you who . . . practices divination, who is soothsayer, augur or sorcerer, who uses charms, consults ghosts or spirits, or calls up the dead.”—Deuteronomy 18: 10, 11, *The Jerusalem Bible*; see also Leviticus 19:31; Galatians 5:19-21.

In view of the foregoing, it is wise for you to know about the dark origins of Halloween and similar celebrations. Having this fuller understanding may move you to join many others who do not participate in these holidays. ■



Families can enjoy good times without sharing in sinister celebrations



EIGHTEENTH CENTURY C.E.

The name of the holiday, Hallowe'en (Hallow Evening) appears in print as Halloween.



NINETEENTH CENTURY C.E.

Thousands of people who move from Ireland to the United States bring with them Halloween customs that, in time, combined with similar customs of emigrants from Britain and Germany, as well as Africa and other parts of the world.



TWENTIETH CENTURY C.E.

Halloween becomes a popular nationwide holiday in the United States.



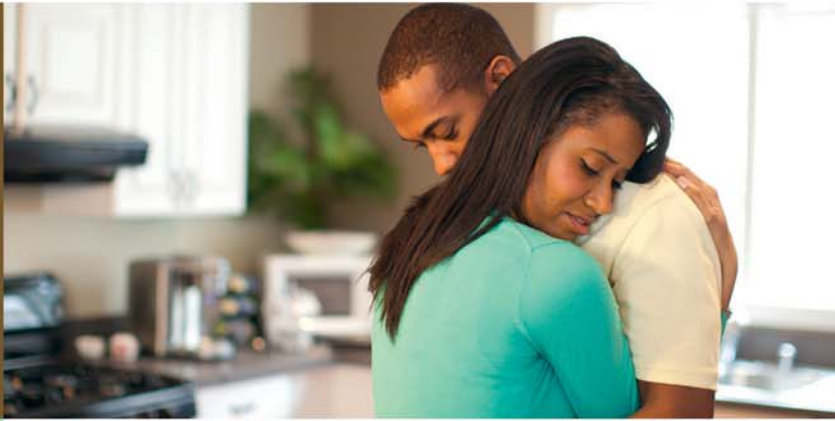
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY C.E.

Commercial interest in Halloween grows into a worldwide multibillion-dollar industry.

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Roman soldier: © North Wind Picture Archives; Pope Boniface IV:
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All Saints Day: © The Bridgeman Art Library Ltd./Alamy; poetry: Courtesy University of Michigan Library and Google; customs:
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How to Forgive



THE CHALLENGE

When you and your spouse argue, you often bring up the past, rehashing a list of old grievances that should have been settled long ago. The problem? One or both of you may not know how to forgive.

You *can* learn. First, though, consider why a husband and wife may find it so difficult to forgive each other.



WHY IT HAPPENS

Power. Some husbands and wives withhold forgiveness to maintain a sort of power over their spouse. Then, when a conflict arises, they use a past event as a trump card to gain the upper hand.

Resentment. The scars of a past offense can take a long time to heal. A spouse might say ‘I forgive you’ but still harbor resentment for what happened—perhaps craving to get even.

Disappointment. Some people enter marriage fully believing that life will be like a fairy-tale romance. So when a disagreement arises, they dig in their heels, wondering just how their “perfect match” could possibly see things from a different point of view. Unrealistic expectations can make a person more prone to find fault and less inclined to forgive.

Misunderstanding. Many spouses withhold forgiveness because they misunderstand what extending it will mean. For example:

If I forgive, I am minimizing the wrong.

If I forgive, I have to forget what happened.

If I forgive, I am inviting further mistreatment.

Really, forgiving does *not* imply any of the foregoing. Still, extending forgiveness can be difficult—especially in the close relationship between husband and wife.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Understand what forgiveness involves. In the Bible, at times the word “forgive” means “let go.” So forgiveness does not always require that you forget what happened or minimize the wrong. Sometimes it means that you simply need to let go of a matter, for your own well-being and that of your marriage.

Recognize the consequences of not forgiving. Some experts say that holding on to resentment can put you at greater risk for a wide range of physical and emotional problems, including depression and high blood pressure—not to mention the damage it does to your marriage. For good reason, the Bible says: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another.”—Ephesians 4:32.

Recognize the benefits of forgiving. A spirit of forgiveness allows you and your mate to give each other the benefit of the doubt rather than to “keep score” of wrongs. That, in turn, helps you to create an environment that keeps resentment in check and allows love to grow.—*Bible principle: Colossians 3:13.*

Be realistic. It is easier to be forgiving when you accept your spouse for who he or she is, flaws and all. “When you focus on what you didn’t get, it’s too easy to forget all of what you did get,” says the book *Fighting for Your Marriage*. “Which list do you want to dwell on at this point in life?” Remember, no one is perfect—including you.—*Bible principle: James 3:2.*

Be reasonable. The next time you are offended by something that your spouse said or did, ask yourself: ‘Is the situation really that important? Do I need to demand an apology, or can I just overlook what happened and move on?’—*Bible principle: 1 Peter 4:8.*

If necessary, discuss the matter. Calmly explain what offended you and why it made you feel that way. Do not impute bad motives or make dogmatic statements, since these will only put your spouse on the defensive. Instead, simply relate how your spouse’s actions affected you. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another.”
—Colossians 3:13.

“We all stumble many times.”
—James 3:2.

“Love covers a multitude of sins.”
—1 Peter 4:8.

WHEN YOU NEED TO APOLOGIZE

If you have hurt your spouse in some way, sincerely apologize. Even if you do not agree with your spouse’s view of the matter, you can ask forgiveness for what you have done that resulted in hurt feelings. If you work hard to avoid repeating the same mistake, you will give your spouse confidence that your apology was genuine.



A Kidney Specialist Explains Her Faith

Dr. Céline Granolleras is a medical doctor in France who specializes in kidney disease. More than 20 years after becoming a doctor, she came to the conclusion that there is a Creator who cares for us. *Awake!* asked her about her work and her faith.

Tell us about your childhood.

My family moved to France from Spain when I was nine. My parents were Catholic, but I stopped believing in God when I was 16. For me, religion had no bearing on reality. If anyone asked me how life began if there is no God, I replied, “For now, scientists cannot explain it, but one day they will.”

What made you study kidney disease?

I studied at a medical school in Montpellier, France. A professor there spoke to me about working in nephrology, a branch of medicine involving the kidneys. The work combined research with the care of patients. That was just what I wanted. In 1990, I began taking part in research on the clinical

use of recombinant erythropoietin (EPO) to control the production of red blood cells in our bones. At that time, it was considered a relatively new field of research.

What made you start thinking about God?

Back in 1979, my husband, Floréal, started studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. But I was not interested. As a child, I had had enough of religion. Nevertheless, my husband and children became Witnesses, and soon nearly all our friends were Witnesses. One of them, Patricia, suggested that I try praying. “If there is

I researched history books . . . Finally, I concluded that this Bible prophecy had come true on time

nobody in heaven, you don't risk anything," she said. "But if there is, you will see what happens." Years later, I started to wonder about the meaning of life, and I remembered Patricia's words. I began to pray for understanding.

What made you wonder about the meaning of life?

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York made me wonder why there is so much evil in society. I thought: 'Religious extremism endangers our future. Yet here I am surrounded by Jehovah's Witnesses who are peaceful. They are not extremists. They follow the Bible. Perhaps I should look into what it says.' So I began reading the Bible for myself.

As a doctor, did you find it difficult to believe in a Creator?

No. I had a deep respect for our body's sophisticated design. For example, the way our kidneys control the amount of red cells in our blood is awe-inspiring.

Why do you say that?

As you may know, red blood cells transport oxygen. If you lose a lot of blood or if you go to a high altitude, your body will lack oxygen. Our kidneys have oxygen sensors. When they detect an oxygen shortage in the blood, they activate the production of EPO, and the level of EPO in the blood may rise as much as a thousandfold. The EPO stimulates the bone marrow to produce more red cells, which in turn transport more oxygen. It's wonderful! Strangely, I studied this process for ten years before it struck me that only God could design such an elegant system.

What was your impression of the Bible?

I had read lots of history books and famous novels, but I immediately recognized that the Bible was different. Its advice is so practical that it must come from a source higher than man. Jesus' character

fascinated me. I saw that he was a real person. He had feelings, and he had friends. Since I didn't want to use the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, I did research in encyclopedias and other reference works when questions arose.

What did you research?

Among other things, I was intrigued by the way the Bible foretold the year of Jesus' baptism. It shows exactly how much time would elapse between the 20th year of the reign of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes and the year Jesus would present himself as the Messiah.* I am accustomed to doing research—it is part of my job. So I researched history books to confirm the dates of Artaxerxes' rule and the dates of Jesus' ministry. Finally, I concluded that this Bible prophecy had come true on time and that it must have been inspired by God. ■

* See the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses, pages 197-199.

It struck me that only God could design such an elegant system



ZHENG HE

“We have traversed more than one hundred thousand *li** of immense waterspaces and have beheld in the ocean huge waves like mountains rising skyhigh, and we have set eyes on barbarian regions far away . . . while our sails loftily unfurled like clouds day and night continued their course (rapid like that) of a star, traversing those savage waves as if we were treading a public thoroughfare.”—Fifteenth-century inscription at Changle, Fujian, China, attributed to Zheng He.

QUICK FACTS

- ▶ The Ming fleet under the command of Zheng He undertook seven epic voyages between 1405 and 1433.
- ▶ The fleet may have numbered 200 vessels or more—warships, supply ships, water tankers, ships to transport horses, and so on. More than 27,000 sailors, government officials, troops, merchants, maintenance workers, and others were transported.
- ▶ Not until World War I did any nation again assemble a fleet comparable to that of Zheng He. It visited ports in the Far East and the Indian Ocean, reaching as far as East Africa.
- ▶ Three of Zheng He's subordinates wrote independent eyewitness accounts that tell us much about his voyages.

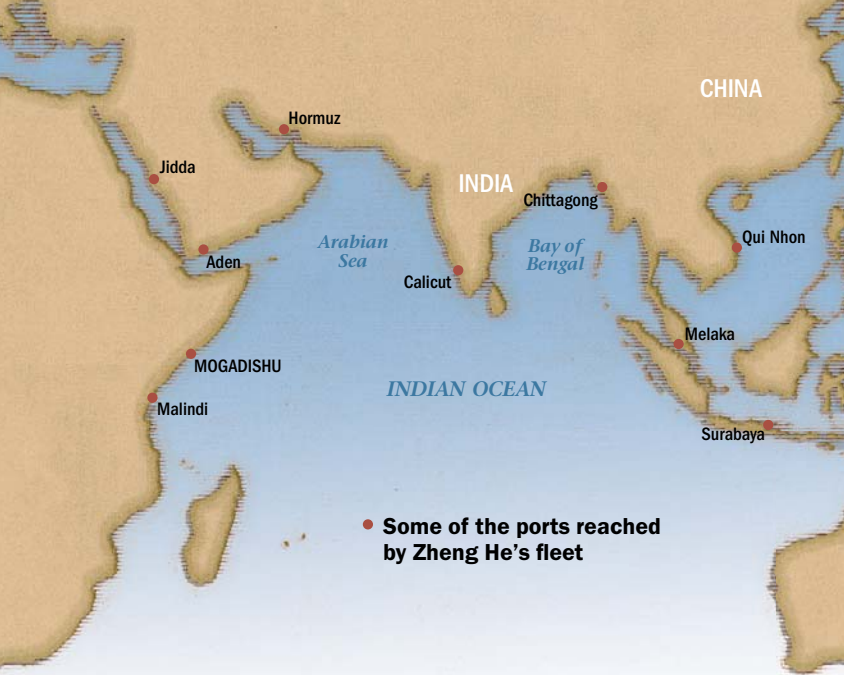
CHINA is a land of big things. It has the largest population and one of the largest land areas of earth's nations. Its people built the Great Wall, one of the most ambitious construction projects in history. A fleet of great ships built by China's Ming Emperors Yongle and Xuande was larger than any other that would be assembled for the next five centuries. The admiral of that fleet was a Muslim from southwestern China named Zheng He.

POWER, TRADE, AND TRIBUTE

According to the inscription partially quoted at the beginning of this article, Zheng He's mission was “to make manifest the transforming power of the (imperial) virtue and to treat distant people with kindness.” As a result of the voyages, it states, “countries beyond the horizon and from the ends of the earth have all become subjects [of China] . . . Barbarians from beyond the seas . . . have come to audience [at the imperial court] bearing precious objects and presents.”

The Ming emperors' objective in undertaking these voyages has been a topic of debate. Some see Zheng He

* The *li* is a Chinese measure, the length of which has varied through the centuries. It is thought that in Zheng He's time, one *li* was approximately a third of a mile, or half a kilometer.



Zheng He's Treasure Ships—How Large and How Many?

Historical records from the Ming dynasty say that Zheng He's treasure ships were amazingly large—447 feet (136 m) long and 183 feet (56 m) wide. Scholars find these figures problematic and hard to verify, in that wooden sailing ships in excess of 300 feet (90 m) in length are structurally unsound.

"All indications are that exaggeration has been at work in the accounts that mention the ships' enormous size," says one article on the subject. "A ship of about 200-250 ft [60-75 m] would make much more sense than the 450 ft [135 m] one." Whatever the case, in the 15th century, vessels measuring over 200 feet (60 m) in length were certainly exceptional, and Zheng He's fleet included up to 62 of them!

as an ambassador of culture and goodwill for a powerful yet peaceful nation. Others see his mission as one of aggressive political domination of vassal states. Indeed, Zheng He offered splendid gifts and political support to the rulers who welcomed him, but those who refused to give token submission and tribute to the Ming emperor, he overpowered and took prisoner. As a result of Zheng He's impressive voyages, dozens of rulers from around the Indian Ocean sent ambassadors to China to pay homage to the emperor.

Whatever the case, Zheng He's fleet also carried incomparable lacquerware, porcelains, and silks made by Ming craftsmen to trade in distant ports. The fleet returned with gems, ivory, spices, tropical woods, and other luxury items valued by the Chinese. It even carried a giraffe to China, which is said to have caused quite a stir. Through these exchanges of goods and ideas, the outside world was given inklings of China's impressive 15th-century civilization.

Those remarkable voyages did not continue. Just decades after Zheng He's voyages, China turned its back on foreign trade and diplomacy. Feeling no need to look beyond China's borders, a new emperor and his Confucianist advisers tried to seal the country off from outside influence. They consigned the treasure fleet to the past, apparently destroying records of their epic voyages and even the ships themselves. Only in recent years have people, inside of China and out, learned of that grand epoch when Zheng He's giant fleet sailed the seas. ■



© Chris Heller/Corbis



WAS IT DESIGNED?

The Emperor Penguin's Feather Coat

THE emperor penguin can jet through the water and leap onto an ice shelf at an amazing speed. How?

Consider: The emperor penguin traps air in its feathers. Not only does this insulate the bird against extreme cold but it also enables it to move two or three times faster than it otherwise could. How? Marine biologists have suggested that it does so by releasing tiny air bubbles from between its feathers. As these bubbles are released, they reduce friction on the surface of the penguin's plumage, enabling the bird to accelerate.

Interestingly, engineers have been studying ways to make ships go faster by using bubbles to reduce friction against their hulls. However, researchers acknowledge that further investigation is challenging because "the complexity of penguin plumage would be difficult to replicate in a man-made porous membrane or mesh."

What do you think? Did the emperor penguin's feather coat come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■



Emperor penguin feather

Penguin: Paul Nicklen/National Geographic Stock; feather: Division of Vertebrate Zoology, courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA



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