

Washington summit and making our trip possible. Its success may be measured in several ways: by the growth and expansion of dialogues we initiated, by the positive response of China's leaders in the coming months to specific concerns we raised, by the development of the web of contacts we began. We note with satisfaction the decision of the Chinese government to sign the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes guarantees of freedom of religion and assembly. We sincerely hope that the U.S. and China will build on our mission, so that both countries can reap the benefits of religious freedom.■

### **Facts about China**

- The distance from China's northern extremity to the southern extremity is 5,500 km. and spans 50 degrees of latitude.
- The width of the country exceeds 5,000 km. and spans 62 degrees of longitude.
- China has an area of 9.6 million km. It is the world's third largest country after Russia and Canada. It is almost as large as the whole of Europe and covers 1/15 of the total land area of the earth.
- China shares a boundary with Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikstan, Afganistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.
- The Chinese population is the largest in the world. At the end of 1996, the population stood at 1.22389 billion people. The eastern part of the country is densely populated while the western part is sparsely populated.
- The Han population can be found everywhere throughout China. The ethnic minorities live in close knit communities and are concentrated, for the most part, in Southwest, Northwest and Northeast China.
- China has 2,800 different kinds of trees. Some species include living fossils like the ginkgo and China fir.

*Information taken from People's Republic of China Year Book 1997/98*