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Christianity and gender in South-East China : the chaozhou missions (1849-1949)

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STELLINGEN

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Christianity and Gender in South-East China:

The Chaozhou Missions (1849-1949)

te verdedigen aan de Universiteit Leiden

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door

Cai Xiang-yu

1. Despite their different confessional allegiances, the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions in the Chaozhou society shared a similar modernizing agenda, as reflected in the promotion of education and economic independence for Christian women.

2. Marital norms in the Protestant community in the Chaozhou region constituted a radical break with earlier Confucian ethics emphasizing men's superiority vis-à-vis women, with its emphasis on companionship, mutual respect and love as part of the wider Evangelical concept of the "Christian Home".

3. The needlework workshops that were organized by the Protestant and Catholic missions in Chaozhou enabled new forms of social and economic mobility for Christian women, which in turn contributed to the economic modernization of Chaozhou society at the grassroots level.

4. Christianity, marriage and profession reinforced each other in the lives of the Chaozhou Christian women: By fostering faith, hope and charity, Christianity created new understandings of the marital bonds and enabled new ways of living, which in reverse confirmed religious conviction and commitment.

5. Only in the context of the tradition of male emigrant labour can the lenient position of both Protestant and Catholic missions with regard to female bigamist practice in Chaozhou be understood.

6. The study of gender history makes sense only if the stories of both men and women are included, because the formation of femininity, feminism and masculinity are the result of interaction between men and women.

7. Contextualization is a valuable method in the study of history of Sino-western relations, since it brings the records of the westerners who used to live in China down to the earth and vividly reconstructs the space in which the interactions of the westerners and the Chinese took place.

8. Without doubt the Nationalist ideology stimulated female emancipation in the Republican period. For a better understanding of Chinese gender history, however, the influence of the immediate and wider family should be taken into account, for instance via nuanced prosopographies of the lineages and Christian congregations.

9. To become a historian one should learn to be righteous and conscientious: the people who lived in the past can not argue with you when they are treated unjustly.

10. The study of history elucidates the present: “the material is then, the mood is now” (Susan Sontag, *In America*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000)

11. The saying “Help yourself and God will help you” is not true between lovers: God will bless them only when they need and help each other.

12. Writing a proposition about human existence is harder than writing a PhD thesis.