Not an "Ordinary Man": J. Gresham Machen and the Un-Queering of Evangelical Theology

Austin Steelman

In early 1906, a young American studying abroad in Germany had a crisis of faith. He was far from the first young man to have such an experience, and he was far from the last. The modernist theology then reshaping German academia often proved jarring for students steeped in the old-time religion of American Protestantism. J. Gresham Machen's story was thus a deeply ordinary one. But Machen, by his own tortured description, was not "an ordinary man." Nor did his crisis of faith lead to ordinary results.

J. Gresham Machen became America's leading fundamentalist intellectual in the 1920s as the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy roiled in America's major denominations, sundering theologies and spawning new institutions. Machen, a Princeton Seminary professor and Presbyterian minister, published defenses of biblical inerrancy and broadsides against modernism, eventually founding his own seminary and evangelical denomination. He was the professor and pivotal mentor to several of America's most influential evangelists and theologians, including Carl McIntire, Harold Ockenga, and Francis Schaeffer.

Yet all of this—the seminary, the denomination, the theological legacy—almost never happened. For, in early 1906, the twenty-four-year-old Machen decided that he was morally unfit for ministry.

At Marburg University in 1905, Machen encountered a dynamic German liberalism that seemed to offer something for his faith that the provincial American Old School Calvinism had neglected—a faith rooted in present spiritual experience instead of inherited dogma. He was thrown into intellectual confusion. He also encountered in Germany a culture with a uniquely robust conception of "homosexuality" as an identity. After a Christmas break in Berlin, then the city with the world's most notable community of gay men,

CrossMark

he wrote to his family that his "moral fault" made a career in Christian ministry or teaching impossible. "The difficulty is more deep-seated than you can ever understand—," he wrote his father, "and I can only beg of you not to think you can understand it by drawing on your own experience or that of the ordinary man."[1] Read alongside his other letters and in the context of his lifelong preference for male companionship, Machen's coded language points to a likely same-sex sexual orientation.[2]

My point in investigating Machen's sexual identity is not to satiate the historian-as-voyeur. Nor is it to narrate the tragic emotional consequences for one individual in cultures that rejected same-sex sexual orientation as deviant—though that purpose alone would be worthwhile. Rather, Machen's personal moral crisis must be explored because it was central to the development of his theology and, by extension, the theology of twentieth-century American evangelicalism.

In recent decades, scholars and clergy have taken up the task of "queering" Christian theology. To "queer" theology means, alternatively, to "disrupt any and all efforts to reduce into simplistic dualisms our experience of life, of God . . . historically rooted in the urgent need to rupture, or disrupt, binary thinking about gender and sexual identity"; to "inject . . . it with the vibrant sexual and gender diversity that reflects the variant multiplicity of . . . God"; to "not only re-imagine and re-value queer lives and spirits but reveal covert viciousness in the traditional (colonial, racist) 'family values' of dominant Christian ethics and theology"; to "spoil . . . the spoiled system to make it more inclusive of folks disenfranchised"; and more.[3] Building on the work of Michel Foucault and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, both of whom placed the recognition of queer sexuality at the center of Western modernity writ large, theorists have largely agreed that "queering" is simultaneously rooted in diversity with respect to gender and sexuality *and* a part of larger antinormative projects.[4] Historians have joined this endeavor, exploring new archives, offering new approaches to existing ones, and recognizing imaginative possibilities to fill gaps in the archival record to identify clergy and laity who "queered" their theologies and religious communities in ways that have often been forgotten or intentionally ignored.[5]

This approach has even reshaped the history of fundamentalism. In her brilliant article "Queering Fundamentalism," Kathryn Lofton examined the 1917 ouster of John Balcom Shaw, a Presbyterian minister defrocked for his same-sex sexual activity. In Shaw, Lofton found the possibility of a gentler fundamentalism in which gender was a less rigid stricture and homoeroticism was not

anathema.[6] Whereas Shaw paved a "queered" fundamentalist path not taken, however, Machen paved a decidedly "un-queered" fundamentalist path taken by many since.

Any but the most Whiggish view of American religious history demands attention to what I term the *un-queering* of evangelical theology. Simply put, if "queering" is a broad *antinormative* project empowering multiplicity that stems from encounters with antinormative approaches to gender and sexuality, then "un-queering" is a broad *normative* project constraining multiplicity that stems from encounters with antinormative approaches to gender and sexuality.

Identity-based queer group mobilization in the United States emerged in the mid-twentieth century.[7] Yet, as scholars continue to detail, queer people existed in religious communities, challenging prevailing theology and praxis even before notions of sexual orientation had coalesced.[8] Hegemonic heteronormativity was thus continually contingent—in need of reinforcement and reconstruction, in search of the theological tools for un-queering ends.

In *Make Yourselves Gods*, Peter Coviello detailed an un-queering (though not named as such) of Mormonism, explaining how the movement's unique approach to marriage, family life, and community fell prey to the standardizing forces of American secularism and mainstream respectability.[9] The historical un-queering of American evangelicalism needs such analysis.

A growing list of scholars have analyzed the centrality of antiqueerness in the ascendance of the New Christian Right in the later part of the twentieth century.[10] But J. Gresham Machen's encounter with his own sexuality suggests that resistance to queerness was earlier and more centrally woven into the intellectual fabric of evangelicalism than has yet been recognized. His "un-queered" theology remains the ideological core of evangelicalism today.

After providing background on Machen's youth and early adulthood, I describe Machen's dual crises in Germany where he confronted his own "moral fault" during a time of growing interest in liberal theology. By analyzing the archival record and silences understood in the context of early twentieth-century Germany, I outline the probability of Machen's same-sex sexual orientation. I then turn to Machen's writing to understand his resulting hardline Calvinist retrenchment that animated a career successfully dedicated to advancing an un-queered orthodoxy within American fundamentalism. This orthodoxy rested on the inerrancy of the Bible, the innate sinfulness of all people (himself included), and the abject apostasy of liberalism. I then show how this theology was passed through his students and how they, in turn, adopted it in rallying the emergent American evangelical right against antinormative identities

and ideologies in the decades that followed. I then conclude with consideration of ways in which this un-queered theology anchors the evangelical "revolt against modernity."

Beginnings

John Gresham Machen was born in 1881 into a wealthy Baltimore family with deep Southern roots. His mother, Mary Gresham Machen, would forever be the closest female companion of his life. She taught her three sons the Old School Calvinist theology that was a calling card of Southern Presbyterianism. Old School Calvinist theologians, like Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary, rejected emotive revivalism and focused instead on doctrines of the Westminster Catechism. Old School Calvinists emphasized the depravity of humanity and God's salvation of only the elect, whereas New School Calvinists softened these views to better fit aspirations toward personal and national progress.[11]

J. Gresham's father, Arthur Machen, was a Harvard Law School graduate and one of Baltimore's most successful attorneys. His older brother and close confidant, Arthur Jr. ("Arly" to his family), followed in their father's footsteps, attending Harvard Law School and then returning to practice law in Baltimore. Arthur Jr. eventually married Helen Chase Woods in 1917 and the couple had three children. J. Gresham, however, had a harder time than his older brother in finding both his career path and personal fulfillment.[12]

J. Gresham initially stayed in Baltimore to earn an undergraduate degree at Johns Hopkins University, then spent an additional year in graduate studies with Basil Gildersleeve, a former Confederate officer and acclaimed Classics scholar.[13]

After Hopkins, Machen was professionally adrift, yet still propped up financially by his family's wealth. He spent the summer dabbling in banking and international law at the University of Chicago. He considered a career in law or economics, eyeing Harvard. But he rejected even the possibility of attending Columbia University because he considered it "cursed with co-education."[14] Eventually, at Gildersleeve's urging, Machen decided to attend Princeton Theological Seminary, the intellectual bulwark of Old School Calvinism, to pursue another undergraduate degree in theology. Even as he made his decision, however, he showed little enthusiasm for his new path and a marked resistance to the possibility of entering the ministry.[15]

Despite initial homesickness, Machen soon fell in love with Princeton, where he found both intellectual excitement and social

belonging.[16] He became fast friends with men like Harold McAfee "Bobby" Robinson, one of his most intimate associates throughout his life and a future colleague. Machen wrote often of Bobby to his family, praising his virtues, which included being "as funny as a goat."[17] Machen excelled in his coursework, absorbing the learned defenses of the Old School Calvinist orthodoxy. His professors included B. B. Warfield, the so-called "Lion of Princeton," whose rationalistic defense of biblical inerrancy laid the most important theological basis for Machen's later work.[18]

Machen's closest friend on the faculty was William Park Armstrong, an Alabaman and the Chair of New Testament. Machen followed Armstrong into his scholarly specialty, defending the historicity of the New Testament through textual analysis. Armstrong, like Basil Gildersleeve, had prepared for success in American academia with graduate studies in Germany.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Germany boasted the most robust system of higher education in the world. German scholars stood at the cutting edge of new developments in philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences. Many American universities were on the rise (often, like Johns Hopkins, in conscious imitation of German higher education), but the United States remained an intellectual backwater compared with Germany.[19]

Few conservative American Protestants engaged deeply with German scholarship. Even fewer studied in Germany themselves. Yet reckoning with modernist scholarship—confronting and rebutting the anthropology, history, and literary analysis that challenged the factuality of the Bible—was central to Princeton Seminary's intellectual mission.

Machen first traveled to Germany to learn German in the summer of 1904 before his final year at Princeton. He stayed briefly in Berlin and then at Göttingen, closing his summer with a 450-mile bicycle tour and then sightseeing with Bobby Robinson to round out what he considered one of the best summers of his life.[20]

After his 1905 graduation, Machen decided to follow in his academic mentors' footsteps by spending a year in graduate studies in Germany.[21] Neither the decision nor the departure came easily. To start, Machen seemed to have developed some reluctance about his course toward joining the clergy. "I wish that I could have gotten into some business or profession which I could be sure of not doing wrong to enter," he wrote to his mother months before his graduation, foreshadowing his moral doubts to come.[22]

On top of his misgivings about the ministry, Machen had "the blues . . . at the thought of leaving Princeton" and the intimate social group he had so intentionally cultivated there.[23] He wrote wistfully,

"The fellows are in my room now on the last Sunday night, smoking the cigars and eating the oranges it has been the greatest delight I have ever had to provide whenever possible. My idea of delight is a Princeton room full of fellows smoking."[24] Machen's trepidation in this moment of flux was justified: a year in Germany would both trigger an unanticipated intellectual crisis and bring his long-simmering personal crisis to a raging boil.

Crises in Germany

In July 1905, Machen began his journey to Germany in good spirits. Some passengers became seasick on the rough North Sea waters; Machen felt "as usual like a hippopotamus."[25] Before the term started, he found time for another bicycle tour, followed by a visit to the Alps, where he found scenery that inspired sermon illustrations for the rest of his life.[26]

By October, Machen settled in at Marburg to begin his German studies there, just as his mentor Armstrong had several years earlier. Machen lodged with the family of a woman known as Frau Kuemmel and took his meals with Frau Professor Link, the widow of a Marburg theology professor. Though he never denigrated the kindness of either woman, their companionship proved insufficient to fill the social hole left by the lost companionship of the men of Princeton. Machen's letters home soon attested to the "blue" feelings that had set back in.[27]

However, Machen's social life soon improved as he was accepted as a *Hospitant*, or guest member, in a Marburg fraternity called the Verbindung Franconia. He was once again dining and socializing with a group of young men. "The fellows have been exceedingly hospitable," he wrote Arly, "and I have had a week which contrasts strongly with my previous life at Marburg. Into bed night after night at about half-past one, and up again in time for the eight o'clock class." Machen enjoyed the men his age but "tr[ied] not to think unchristian thoughts about that stupid waitress" whose misunderstanding of his name had briefly delayed the news that he had been accepted into the Verbindung.[28]

Three professors stood out to Machen during his first term at Marburg. Adolph Jülicher and Johannes Weiss were the two scholars who had drawn him to Marburg in the first place. Jülicher was the Church History professor and author of *An Introduction to the New Testament*. He sought to study the historical Jesus of the New Testament and of Mark's gospel in particular. Machen found him "bubbling over with enthusiasm," "gifted with lots of common

sense," and "among the less radical of those who reject the miraculous."[29] Weiss, on the other hand, Machen identified as "chief professor of New Testament" and "anything but conservative." Machen was not persuaded by Weiss, who, he wrote, "is putting into the mouth of Jesus what he himself truly believes Jesus *really* to have been—in accordance with a common literary form, and of course with the most honorable intentions." Yet, despite his Princeton training in biblical inerrancy and the historicity of the New Testament, Machen remained surprisingly open to Weiss's teaching. "I haven't investigated the thing enough to form any judgment, but it is a little too complicated to be convincing to everybody," he explained. Weiss did persuade Machen that there was some "literary history" that accounted for the "remarkable similarities and remarkable divergences" between the gospels. Machen was no liberal but found "a good deal stimulating and interesting" in the historical-critical reading of the New Testament. He recognized that his drifting theological sympathies might alarm his brother Arly but assured him that Weiss's ideas were "by no means so wild as I should think them had I read only this letter."[30]

Yet it was theologian Wilhelm Herrmann who most enamored Machen. He wrote excitedly to his mother upon meeting the professor of Dogmatics:

> If my first impression is any guide I should say that the first time that I heard Herrmann may almost be described as an epoch in my life. Such an overpowering personality I think I almost never before encountered—overpowering in the sincerity of religious devotion. Herrmann may be illogical and one-sided, but I tell you he is alive. When Browning wrote his description of the German lecture room, he had never listened to Prof. Herrmann of Marburg.[31]

An intrigued Machen immediately took it upon himself to read Herrmann's *The Communion of the Christian with God*. Four days later, he wrote even more animatedly to his father:

> Since I have been listening to him, my other studies have for a time lost interest to me; for Herrmann refuses to allow the student to look at religion from a distance as a thing to be *studied* merely. He speaks right to the heart; and I have been thrown into confusion by what he says—so much deeper is his devotion to Christ than anything I have known in myself during the past few years. I don't know at all what to say as yet, for Herrmann's views are so revolutionary. But certain I am that he has found Christ;

and I believe that he can show how others may find Him—
though, perhaps afterwards, in details, he may not be a safe
guide. In fact, I am rather sorry I have said even so much in
a letter; for I don't know at all yet what to think.[32]

"Herrmann affirms very little of that which I have been accustomed to
regard as essential to Christianity," he told Arly, "yet there is no doubt
in my mind but that he is a Christian, and a Christian of a peculiarly
earnest type." He continued, "Not only has he given me new
sympathy for the prevailing German religious thought; but also I
hope I may leave his classroom better morally and in every way than
when I entered it."[33] Machen found himself intensely confused and
irresistibly drawn to this theologically "unsafe" guide.

Herrmann's theology was a far cry from Princeton's. The
Princeton tradition relied on the philosophy of Scottish Common
Sense Realism, which found universal truth in common-sense
empiricism and rejected skepticism and sentimentalism.
Princetonians like Warfield contended that common sense vitiated
the facticity of the traditional Calvinist creeds.[34] Herrmann, by
contrast, relied heavily on the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and
Friedrich Hegel. He taught the importance of a dialectic between
"thesis" and "antithesis" in the moral and epistemological progress
of Christianity. No single historically conditioned perspective, he
argued, could lay claim to timeless and universal truth.[35]
Princetonian theology built upon the defenses of biblical inerrancy
and hardline Calvinism outlined by former Seminary Principals
Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander Hodge in the middle to late
nineteenth century. Herrmann, on the other hand, built on the work
of Albrecht Ritschl, a nineteenth-century German theologian who
held that the irreducible experience of faith came through contact
with a Christian community rather than a set of metaphysical and
historical facts.

Herrmann was far more interested in his Continental
interlocutors than American theologians, but he nevertheless offered
a clear repudiation of the traditionalism that included the Princeton
theology. Those who demanded a literal Bible, he wrote in the
introduction of *The Communion of the Christian with God*, imposed a
new law on the faithful that violated the broad biblical message.
"This reduction of the holy Scriptures to a rule of doctrine," he
explained, "is limited in its practical working by the power of the
Spirit that is met with in the holy Scriptures." Science and historical
criticism were tools for a historically dynamic Christianity embracing
contemporary circumstances. "The new day of Protestant
Christianity," he proclaimed, "can dawn only in hearts that have

perceived that truly religious faith recognises no other law than the moral law of sincerity and love." In a sentence that must have been jarring to a student accustomed to the rigid orthodoxy of Princeton, he wrote: "The doctrine which really springs from faith has necessarily an infinite variety of forms." Herrmann called for theological multiplicity—for Christians to "cease attempting to bind together into one system thoughts of faith coming from various sources."[36] Herrmann invited readers to an experience of the objective Christ embodied in the contemporary Church. To Machen, Herrmann seemed to offer the possibility of just such an experience.

In a letter to Arly, Machen called *The Communion of the Christian with God* "one of the greatest religious books I ever read." And the man himself was even more compelling than his work. Machen was forced to reappraise modernism as Herrmann demonstrated "the *religious* power which lies back of this great movement." He explained, "In New England those who do not believe in the bodily Resurrection of Jesus are generally speaking religiously dead; in Germany, Herrmann has taught me that this is by no means the case." Machen's sense of inspiration nearly leapt off the page as he paraphrased Herrmann:

> It is the faith that is a real experience, a real revelation of God that saves us, not the faith that consists in accepting as true a lot of dogmas on the basis merely of what others have said. Every Christian has consciousness of having experienced a miracle, but it is a miracle in his own inner life.

Machen recognized how changed his thinking must sound to his brother. "There is no use in my trying to give a resume of Herrmann—I repent already of what I have written," he wrote, "for it can only make you wonder what I find so inspiring about him. But you would no longer wonder if you could hear him speak and could read what he has written."

Machen was never fully convinced to abandon the Princeton theology, but Herrmann's emphasis on experience and morality showed that he "ha[d] gotten hold of something that has been sadly neglected in the church and in the orthodox theology."[37] Machen's religious infatuation with Herrmann and his theology seemed likely to open the door to a theological exploration that would reshape his thinking for the rest of his life. But that door was soon slammed shut.

On Christmas Day 1905, Machen traveled to Berlin for a holiday. His vacation included a trip to the theater and a few lessons in Italian. Shortly after returning to Marburg in the new year, he

wrote to inform Arly that he had decided that he was morally unsuitable to enter the ministry.

This was not the first time Machen's written qualms about his career path crossed the Atlantic. Two months earlier, Machen had written to William Armstrong to decline the funds from a Princeton fellowship already awarded to Machen for his study in Germany. Armstrong's response (the only side of the correspondence to survive) included mention of Machen's fondness for Herrmann but also addressed some deeper concern that Machen had expressed:

> I know perfectly well that you will do honest work—whatever may have been the trials through which you have passed—and I judge from your letter that they have been severe. . . . I can not tell you how my heart goes out to you in sympathy for you have suffered. Your suffering has been in that sphere where each of us stands face to face with God. . . . How thankful we ought to be that there is one person who knows our life even better than we do ourselves, and that knowing it in all its darkness he has yet made it possible for us to live in the light and blessings of His love.[38]

But Machen's concerned inklings yielded to a new decisiveness in early 1906.

Machen's initial letter to his family explaining his decision was not preserved with the rest of his papers. As early as 1954, when his former student, friend, and colleague Ned B. Stonehouse wrote the first biography of Machen, the letter was already missing. "Regrettably this letter has been lost," Stonehouse wrote, "but other references are so frequent and detailed that one need not grieve over the loss over much."[39] But we need not adopt Stonehouse's ambivalence, and the absence of this letter rings of more than mere archival happenstance.

As Annette Gordon-Reed reminded us in her work on Thomas Jefferson, powerful men who knew they would be remembered could and did curate the papers and the image they left behind.[40] Moreover, queer people often left similar archival incompletions because of, in Sharon Marcus's words, "the privacy, secrecy, shame, and fear that inhibit people from leaving detailed records of their sexual lives."[41] Machen's papers were not entirely complete, yet the absence of this key letter in an otherwise dense collection of family correspondence is evidence in its own right. "Any historical narrative," Michel-Rolph Trouillot argued, "is a particular bundle of silences." And particular attention to the power structures that produced those silences is necessary to deconstruct them.[42]

Nevertheless, Arthur Jr.'s January 21, 1906, response did shed light on his brother's vague confession of personal sinfulness. He wrote:

> [W]hile it is *possible* that you may not exaggerate your own defects, it is *certain* that you underestimate those of others— that is, of others who occupy, and properly occupy, high positions in the Church or in the world. So far as the ministry is concerned, the important thing is that he have no open vice which would be a public scandal. He may be guilty of secret sins of much greater flagrancy without disqualifying him for the exercise of his profession. For instance, a man who is a drunkard *would* do harm in the ministry rather than good, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels. *But if his besetting sin were of a less public character* [emphasis added], he might properly in my judgement enter the ministry irrespective of the degree of moral guilt attaching thereto—provided, of course, that his moral aspirations and endeavors are of the right sort, or in other words, provided he is truly a Christian.[43]

Arly clearly suspected that his brother's undisclosed moral failings were of the private nature that would not be professionally disqualifying.

Machen was initially unconvinced, writing back:

> I am nearly 25 years old, and solely *through my moral fault* [emphasis added] have made a failure of things so far—I can't say that my state of mind is very pleasant. But anything is better than the old hypocrisy, which even such an un-hysterical person as yourself would fully admit as such if you knew the facts. For me to speak of the Christian ministry in one breath with myself is hypocrisy.[44]

A day later, Machen wrote his mother of his disappointment that Arly had kept the decision to abandon the ministry to himself as he wanted the whole family to know. "You probably think my decision or my present feeling about the matter is something new," he wrote, "but as a matter of fact, it is many years old."[45]

In a poignant February 4 letter to his father. Machen offered greater insights into his disqualifying moral fault:

> Through my own fault, I had so poisoned my surroundings during the past few years, had gotten into such a rut that there seemed to be no chance of escape. I had so long kept

up the form of piety, and even engaged in active church work, when the whole thing was hypocrisy. . . . But you have no idea what a relief it was to me to be able, in a certain sense, to start out fresh; where my external relations had not been so connected with the habit of a false life. Don't misunderstand me by thinking I mean to say that I have now overcome the difficulties or that I am now leading anything like what a Christian life out [*sic*] to be—*or even what an ordinary man regards as the ordinary morals of the world* [emphasis added]. But to say that this is not better than my life for example at the Hopkins is ungrateful. At least, it is not so full of hypocrisy—at least I can begin, with something more like honesty, at the beginning.[46]

His anguish leapt off the page as he wondered "whether it would be better to write nothing, as after all I only can understand the circumstances." Yet he continued, in a circumlocutory manner:

Don't think that this is anything particularly new—for in my more honest moments I have for years that it is practically impossible for me to enter the ministry. . . . The difficulty is *more deep-seated than you can ever understand* [emphasis added]—and I can only beg of you not to think you can understand it by drawing on your own experience *or that of the ordinary man* [emphasis added]. Such a procedure, little as you think it, could have only the effect of making me feel more keenly my isolation.[47]

Machen's letters alone offer ample textual clues to their possible meaning, but two other historical contexts are crucial for deconstructing the "bundle of silences" they convey: the first is the distinct understandings of sexuality that Machen encountered in his transnational education; the second is Machen's own lifelong embrace of bachelorhood and homosociality.[48]

It was not only new theological perspectives to which Machen was exposed in Germany but new understandings of sexuality as well. In early twentieth-century America, the concept of sexual identity had not yet taken root. American cities, most notably New York, featured growing networks of men connected by their shared interest in same-sex love and sexual activity. However, same-sex attraction was not understood as a sexual identity or orientation. Prejudicial stereotypes attached to behavior perceived as effeminate rather than sexual identity—particularly in upper-middle-class families like Machen's own.[49] Indeed, early twentieth-century American culture featured a backlash to a perceived crisis of manhood that brought "Rough Rider" Theodore Roosevelt into the White House as a

hypermasculine celebrity.[50] Machen detested Roosevelt's politics and domineering personality.[51] Yet, in many ways, Machen fit middle-class America's new emphasis on manly vigor. His favorite hobbies included mountain climbing and following sports, especially football, at Johns Hopkins and Princeton.[52]

Germany, however, boasted new understandings of human sexuality little known across the Atlantic or elsewhere in Europe. Men attracted to other men had found cultural enclaves in most of Europe's major cities. But in the middle to late nineteenth century in Germany, some of these men and a growing class of academic sex theorists began to identify same-sex attraction as an innate characteristic and identity. Foucault most famously drew historians' attention to the modernity of the "homosexual" as a "new species," possessed of a distinct identity, and several scholars since have identified what Robert Beachy called "the German invention of homosexuality."[53] In 1867, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs became the first person in modern history to "come out" publicly with his orientation.[54] Raised with strict Lutheran sexual mores, Ulrichs overcame spiritual and social pressures in accepting his own nature while studying at the University of Göttingen and began a movement to recognize the rights of the "class of persons" like him possessing "a sexual nature that is opposite of that which is usual."[55] Two years later, journalist Karl Maria Kertbeny first introduced the word *homosexuality* in protest against Germany's antisodomy statute. By 1897, Berlin was home to the world's first gay rights organization, the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, which protested antisodomy laws and drew attention to the high rates of suicide among gay men.[56]

In Germany, Machen likely first encountered the concept of "homosexuals" as an identified class, a concept that did not exist in the United States at the time. Germany's press was free and uncensorious compared with those of contemporary nations, and scientific analyses and popular accounts of same-sex love abounded by the time Machen arrived in Germany.[57] German cities, especially Berlin, boasted gay "scenes" then unparalleled in American cities, which were just beginning to foster the communities of gay men that would boom in the decades that followed.[58]

Although Germany was home to the most advanced understandings of same-sex sexual orientation, it also had a correspondingly robust legal and cultural system for its stigmatization. In 1905, the same year Machen began his German studies, Sigmund Freud published his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that posited a childish state of bisexuality and diagnosed "homosexuality" as the product of incomplete or errant psychological development.[59] Even

high-profile politicians and businessmen—like Friedrich Alfred Krupp, a millionaire friend of the Kaiser's—had their careers derailed after being accused of being "homosexual" in the press or the courts.[60] Thus, if Machen learned to understand "homosexuality" in Germany, he likely also perceived the coemergent homophobic culture that cast gay men as a threat to the social order.

If early twentieth-century German understandings of sexuality are one half of the historical context needed to understand Machen's crisis of faith, his lifelong commitment to homosociality is the other half. Simply put, Machen lived in a world of men by choice. He cherished the intimate fraternal communities fostered at Johns Hopkins and Princeton. He hated co-education and showed little interest in female companionship.[61] According to Stonehouse, "Occasionally as a young man at Princeton he went out with girls, usually in company with male companions, on a picnic or to a concert. The prevailing impression, however, is that his romantic interests were not highly developed, and that for the most part he preferred the company of men."[62]

Machen loved the gendered social life of elite academia. Friends affectionately called him "Das" or "Dassy," from the commonly taught German phrase *das Madchen* meaning "the girl" that sounded like his last name (although some of his students only used the nickname outside of his presence).[63] Machen remained single even as his old companions began to marry off. Throughout his teaching career at Princeton, he lived in the dorms, reveling in the male camaraderie and hosting checkers games and festive "tight-wad parties" for the young men who, according to his student Henry W. Coray, "seemed to converge on him, as they did on [the Apostle] Paul."[64]

Even among his peers, Machen preferred bachelor company. His former student John Murray, a fellow bachelor, became one of Machen's closest friends later in life. A founding faculty member at Machen's Westminster Seminary, Murray lived on campus as Machen did, and married only later in life, at the age of sixty-nine, over three decades after Machen's death.[65]

Machen's only particularly close female companion was his mother. Coray posited that his bachelorhood may have fostered a special fellowship with his male associates and a stronger-than-usual bond with his mother—reversing the cause-and-effect relationship of a popular trope about gay men.[66] In his chapter on Machen in *Voices of American Fundamentalism*, historian C. Allyn Russell arguably hinted at Machen's sexuality by invoking this trope, noting that "his close relationship with his mother . . . probably made difficult other meaningful relationships."[67]

Arthur Jr. later relayed to Stonehouse a story of his younger brother's one great romantic attachment—to Miss Mildred B. Stearns of Boston. In Arthur's words, she was "intelligent, beautiful, and exquisite." However, the potential match was predestined for failure because Stearns was a Unitarian and Machen, by then, was an ardent defender of orthodoxy. Thus Machen's brief and only foray into a heteronormative romance was ideologically doomed from the start.

By the summer of 1920, Machen and Stearns had met at Seal Harbor where they both vacationed with their well-off families. Stearns's letters to Machen, which survived unlike Machen's responses, certainly carried a flirtatious tone—although even Stonehouse admitted, "None is exactly a love letter."[68] The pair wrote less than monthly, and Machen's letters apparently left something to be desired. Stearns repeatedly asked for longer or more prompt responses, chalking his epistolary defects up to the busy life of a professor.[69] Machen did travel up to Boston in November 1920 to take Stearns to the Princeton-Harvard football game, but his letter to his family evinced more excitement about the game itself than Stearns's company, about which he wrote as matter-of-factly as his plans to take supper with Bobby Robinson that evening.[70]

Even in the midst of his romance, Machen wrote to his mother that no other letters could ever "break in upon the dull monotony of life like your letters, and bring the only little touch of warmth and love."[71] His mother appreciated the sentiment but considered it "a little pathetic for you, so that I find myself wishing that you could have a good wife."[72] But she recognized the unlikelihood of a match, writing after seeing Stearns in Seal Harbor during the summer of 1921: "I know more about your perplexities than you expect, and everything that troubles you is redoubled in my heart."[73] Machen's romance quickly foundered. And perplexity, loneliness, and frequent depression dogged Machen in his personal life until his 1937 death.

Machen's bachelorhood came under scrutiny once more as the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy came to Princeton. In May 1926, the Princeton Board of Directors elected Machen Chair of Apologetics. However, the Presbyterian General Assembly declined to approve the promotion and commenced an investigation into the theological fight at Princeton between the Machen-led conservatives and the Charles Erdman–led moderates. While most of the hearing revolved around theological disputes, testimony about Machen included concerns about his temperamental idiosyncrasies. Machen was mostly accused of a tendency to be uncompromising, unforgiving, and overly critical in theological discourse. But one former student body president wrote that, even as a student in 1918,

he "wondered why such a 'queer' man as Dr. Machen should ever have been chosen on the faculty." Another alumnus wrote, perhaps euphemistically, of concerns that Machen and his fundamentalist ally Clarence Macartney were "men not aware of the responsibilities of family life and therefore lacking sympathetic experience of larger social life."[74] In the end, the General Assembly declined to approve Machen's promotion.

None of Machen's biographers—Stonehouse, Coray, William Masselink, and D. G. Hart—raised even the possibility of Machen's same-sex sexual orientation. Yet each of these biographers was a conservative Calvinist, and all but Masselink were members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the fundamentalist denomination that Machen founded in 1936. They followed in Machen's theological footsteps in institutions that clearly held same-sex sexual and romantic activity to be sinful. Masselink and Coray, relying on Machen's own narrative hindsight, cast his crisis in Germany as an intellectual one occasioned by Herrmann's teaching.[75] Stonehouse and Hart acknowledged the climax of his long-standing moral qualms but declined to interrogate their source.[76]

It is, of course, possible that Machen's spiritual crisis was unrelated to his sexuality. No evidence indicates that he ever had any romantic or sexual relationships with men. His lifelong desire for male social intimacy may have been nothing more. Yet the coded language employed by Machen and his family read within his transnational cultural encounter and alongside his lifelong behavior suggest that Machen's queerness is a probability if not a certainty—a probability in need of interrogation because Machen's German crisis indelibly shaped his theology. His private crisis proved pivotal for American evangelicalism writ large.

Machen was initially resolute in his 1906 decision to abandon a career in ministry. He wrote to Bobby Robinson and William Armstrong informing them of his decision and declining Armstrong's invitation to take a teaching post at Princeton the following year despite encouragement from both friends.[77] At Marburg, Machen still found the classes stimulating. In fact, he felt a new freedom to pursue only those topics he found most interesting. He looked forward to Marburg's summer-term courses with Jülicher, Weiss, and Herrmann.[78] He regretted only wasting his family's money in studies irrelevant to his longed-for secular career.

Machen's confrontation with his sexuality was deeply intertwined with his confrontation with liberal theology. Herrmann's modernism may have been liberating for those intellectually constrained by the older, historically suspect orthodoxies, but it was hardly good news for a gay man. In Germany and the United States

in the early twentieth century, modernists largely agreed with traditionalists that queer lifestyles were sinful.[79] And Herrmann and the modernists actually raised expectations for the moral evidence of the faith. "There must lie in Christian faith," Herrmann wrote, "*not only the power to will what is good, but also the impulse to do so* [emphasis added]. The real interests of faith find satisfaction only in moral activity."[80] If Herrmann's message was genuine Christianity, Machen's intractable "moral fault" was anathema to it. Herrmann's Christianity consisted of an internal moral shift that an agonized Machen had lost hope of experiencing.

But Herrmann was not Machen's only faith mentor. His parents' influence persisted. "Without what I got from you and Mother I should long since have given up any thoughts of religion or of a moral life," he wrote to his father in the throes of his crisis.[81] In the end, the Old School Calvinism of his parents and Princeton brought Machen back to a career in theology.

Machen's return from his brush with modernism happened slowly. He ultimately decided to attend another University for the summer term—a decision motivated more by his failure to make close friends at Marburg than by academics. He felt like a foreign outsider even in the Verbindung Franconia.[82] "Berlin has by far the greatest professors," he told his father, "but I do not want to go there and am leaving it out of the question."[83] He settled on the University of Göttingen. He wrote his brother en route, "I am too much troubled with problems of various kinds—there is not a solid enough bottom under my whole course of life. I wish I could live over again the last five years of my life."[84]

At Göttingen, Machen's social life returned first. The Burschenschaft Germania accepted him as a *Conkneipant*, a full member and not just a foreign guest. Machen proudly donned the society's cap and dove fully into the student life. He found not only friends but also a renewed commitment to his older conservative theology. He compared acclaimed New Testament professor Wilhelm Bousset unfavorably to Jülicher and considered it "very doubtful" whether the liberal giant espoused Christianity at all.[85] Machen increasingly esteemed Princeton for its willingness to "not hide from itself the real state of affairs in Biblical study at the present day."[86]

After further importuning from Armstrong, Machen agreed to teach New Testament at Princeton for a year with assurances that he would not need to be ordained as a minister. He took the position still doubting whether he should have accepted and intending to return to Germany to pursue a PhD (potentially in Classics). However, he ended up staying at Princeton for twenty-three years.

And by fall of 1913, he had quieted his moral qualms enough to seek ordination.[87]

Machen himself always considered his crisis in Germany the pivotal point in his life and theology. In his one brief autobiographical article in 1933, Machen intellectualized—in hindsight—his "agony of the soul." "Obviously it is impossible to hold on with the heart to something that one has rejected with the head," he explained, "and all the usefulness of Christianity can never lead us to be Christians unless the Christian religion is true." Machen's preexisting soul-doubts had been brought to the fore by Germany, a nation in which the "Christian religion as [he] knew and loved it had long been abandoned."[88]

The "Liberal Jesus" of transcendent morality espoused by Ritschl and Herrmann, he still acknowledged, had an "attractiveness," but that Jesus was "utterly fallacious." If Herrmann was a Christian, it was "not because of but despite those things that were most distinctive of his teaching." "A man *under true conviction of sin*," Machen explained, "will never be satisfied with the Ritschlian Jesus, but will seek his way into the presence of that Jesus who redeemed us by His precious blood and is ever living to make intercession for us at the throne of God [emphasis added]."[89]

Machen described his family's faith as the only theological balm for his moral agony:

> Another thing used to be said to me by my mother in those dark hours when the lamp burned dim, when I thought that faith was gone and shipwreck had been made of my soul. "Christ," she used to say, "keeps firmer hold on us than we keep on Him."
>
> That means, at least when translated into worldly terms, that we ought to distrust our moods. Many a man has fallen into despair because, losing the heavenly vision for the moment, passing through the dull lowlands of life, he takes such experience as though it were permanent, and deserts a well-grounded conviction which was the real foundation of his life. Faith is often diversified by doubt, but a man should not deserve the conviction of his better moments because the dark moments come.
>
> But my mother's word meant something far deeper than all that. It meant rather that salvation by faith does not mean that we are saved because we keep ourselves at every moment in an ideally perfect attitude of confidence in Christ. No, we are saved because, having once been united to Christ, by faith, we are His for ever. *Calvinism is a very comforting doctrine indeed* [emphasis added]. Without its

comfort, I think I should have perished long ago in the castle of Giant Despair.[90]

Machen's over-intellectualization of his crisis in Germany did not match the documentary record. But it revealed a great deal about those features of conservative orthodoxy that appealed to him as he confronted his "moral fault." Despite an earlier professed certainty that Herrmann had "found Christ" and taught "something neglected in the orthodox theology," two particular features made Calvinism a "comforting doctrine" to Machen during his moment of crisis, and for many queer evangelicals in their moments of crisis amid antiqueer beliefs since.

The first feature was the doctrine of the total depravity of humanity. Under this tenet of hardline Calvinism, all humanity deserved damnation. Salvation came only through the unmerited atoning sacrifice of Christ for the elect. For a queer man in an antiqueer culture, in Machen's words, "a man under true conviction of sin," this doctrine of innate human depravity was intuitive—far more intuitive than the liberal doctrines of moral progress and human perfectibility. Moreover, this was "a comforting doctrine indeed" for many queer people to whom it meant that they were no more depraved or unmeritorious of salvation than anyone else. The substitutionary atonement of Christ through his crucifixion provided the same justification for all of the elect regardless of internal purity or external piety. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement remained front and center in Machen's gospel throughout his life.

The second feature was an understanding of Christianity as constituted by proper belief, rather than as experience validated by moral progress as Herrmann contended. For a young man in personal and intellectual flux, confronting the epistemological vagaries and sexual hierarchies of the modern moment, belief in the historical facts of Christianity as presented in an inerrant Bible offered certainty and comfort—eternal truth to quiet inner turmoil. And it was to the defense of this second feature that Machen dedicated his life as he sought "a solid enough bottom under my whole course of life."[91]

The Un-Queering of Evangelical Theology

Defense of biblicist orthodoxy became the focus of Machen's career in the classroom, in the pulpit, and in print. He wrote scholarly defenses of both the supernatural in Paul's New Testament writings and the Virgin Birth.[92] "The Christian religion," he

preached, "is no mere form of mysticism, but is founded upon a body of facts; the facts are recorded in the Bible; and if the supposed facts were not the facts at all, then Christianity and the Bible would certainly sink into a common ruin."[93] "Faith," he contended, "is just as scientific as astronomy" and "may afford just as high a degree of scientific certitude as 'proof.'"[94]

But Machen went on offense as well. In 1923, Machen attacked modernism in *Christianity and Liberalism*, a book still taught in many evangelical seminaries today. "The chief modern rival of Christianity is liberalism," he wrote plainly. "In the intellectual battle of the present day," he predicted, "there can be no 'peace without victory'; one side or the other must win." Seventeen years after his German crisis, Machen proffered an inerrant Bible as a paper remedy for faith in flux. "Cut from its root in the blessed book," Machen argued, "[Christianity] withers away and dies." "Christianity," he reiterated, "is founded upon the Bible. . . . Liberalism on the other hand is founded upon the shifting emotions of sinful men."[95] These sentiments were far from Machen's insistence in the fall of 1905 that Herrmann had a living and vital faith.

This polemic, together with the vaunted Princeton tradition, earned Machen a reputation as America's premier fundamentalist intellectual. As the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy ramped up within American Protestantism, the *New York Times* included a feature on fundamentalism's leading lights that included Machen. In 1925, during the sensationalized *Scopes* monkey trial, Machen even wrote an article for the *Times* titled "What Fundamentalism Stands for Now, Defined by a Leading Exponent of Reading the Bible as the Word of God."[96] After his death, the editors of the *New Republic* called Machen "perhaps the best known religious fundamentalist in the United States" and infamous journalist H. L. Mencken admiringly eulogized him as "Doctor Fundamentalis" in the *Baltimore Evening Sun*.[97]

Machen himself disliked the term *fundamentalism*. He worried that the term reduced Christianity to just another new ideological "-ism" of the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, he recognized its justifiable applicability to himself, writing:

> If an inquirer asks me whether I am a Fundamentalist or a Modernist, I do not say, "Neither." Instead, I say: "Well, you are using terminology that I do not like, but if I may for the moment use your terminology, in order that you may get plainly what I mean, I just want to say, when you ask me whether I am a Fundamentalist or a Modernist, that I am a Fundamentalist from the word go!"

Machen preferred the terms *conservative* and *evangelical* to *fundamentalist*, but he liked the designation *orthodox* best of all because it indicated "straight doxy" in accordance with "a rule or plumb-line," adding "Our rule or plumb-line is the Bible."[98]

Machen made frequent common cause with those fundamentalists more comfortable with the label, particularly his fellow Presbyterians William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Macartney. Nevertheless, he remained uneasy with the pietistic fundamentalism proclaimed by men like Bryan, J. Frank Norris, Billy Sunday, and William Bell Riley. In his preaching, Machen generally focused on a theological defense of biblical inerrancy or analysis of a doctrine that emerged from it, and rarely exhorted congregants on personal morality. This tendency was consonant with the Princeton tradition, but it seems likely that Machen's particular distaste for pietism stemmed from his personal experience and his sexuality crisis in Germany as well. A focus on human sinfulness and salvation through acknowledging God's sovereignty and biblical inerrancy held far more appeal for Machen than what he deemed a futile call for inward purity.[99]

In fact, Machen's emphasis on orthodoxy over personal piety proved crucial for the future of fundamentalism. Currents of pietism remained throughout the twentieth century, but, as Molly Worthen outlined, American fundamentalism, under Machen's influence and rebranded as evangelicalism, increasingly consolidated around the doctrine of biblical inerrancy rather than discrete moral issues.[100]

This direction was foreshadowed by Machen's interactions with Bryan. The moralizing populist and three-time Democratic presidential nominee loomed larger than Machen in headlines about fundamentalism in the early 1920s. But the "Great Commoner" unsuccessfully lobbied Machen to join the prosecution in the *Scopes* trial as an expert witness on education, and, after Bryan's death, the presidency of Bryan Memorial University was first offered to Machen, the conservative intellectual defender of orthodoxy.[101]

Machen had been, for a fleeting period in Germany, a theological moderate interested in the benefit of a plurality of theological perspectives on the Bible and Christian faith. But as his career progressed, he increasingly opposed such moderates as well as modernists. Many of the moderates at Princeton held conservative dogma themselves, but Machen rejected their approach, which he disdainfully referred to as *indifferentism*. The moderates eventually won the fight for Princeton, denying Machen the Chair of Apologetics and restructuring the board to favor the modernists. In 1929, Machen left with fundamentalist colleagues and students in tow to found Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia.

A similar story unfolded in the Presbyterian denomination. Machen resented the moderation of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions as it countenanced the work of Pearl S. Buck. Buck, a missionary to China who won a Pulitzer for her 1931 novel *The Good Earth*, became a champion of Chinese culture and promoted an understanding pluralism instead of proselytism. Such pluralism was anathema to Machen's un-queered theology and its prescription of absolute truth for modernity's ills. Machen defiantly founded the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in protest. When he refused to disband the board, he was suspended from the Presbyterian Church, so he founded his own denomination, which eventually came to be known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Machen's theology also came with political corollaries. From a wealthy Baltimore family deeply attached to the Lost Cause, Machen longed for an imagined American past of constitutional and biblical fidelity. He opposed the Fifteenth Amendment and Black suffrage.[102] He opposed women's suffrage as well, and his letter to his Congressman lambasting the "ill-timed and unintelligent feminism" was read into the Congressional Record.[103] He joined the Sentinels of the Republic, a Massachusetts-based organization dedicated to "maintain[ing] the fundamental principles of the American Constitution" and reducing the power of the federal government, and he aided their fight against a proposed Child Labor Amendment.[104] When Franklin Roosevelt ran for the presidency promising a New Deal, Machen, a lifelong Southern Democrat, voted Republican for the first time, and he later took every opportunity to lambast the president and his welfare-state schemes.

Yet Machen's greatest political crusade was waged against the proposed Federal Department of Education, against which he even testified before a Joint Congressional Committee on Education. With memories of Germany never far from his mind, Machen worried about the secularizing ideological impact of teachers beholden to curricula controlled by the modern American state. Indeed, Machen's politics were an extension of his backlash against the modernity he first encountered in Germany. "I am, I think, almost the most conservative person alive," he wrote his mother in 1917, "I hate changes, and that, I suppose, is one reason why I hate the profound change that seems imminent in our American life."[105]

Machen died from pneumonia in North Dakota at age fifty-five on New Year's Day, 1937, while on a trip to visit churches in his fledgling denomination. Yet his theological impact lived on.

First, Machen's un-queered theology lived on in the institutions he founded. Machen's Westminster Seminary trained influential evangelical theologians like Wayne Grudem and Timothy

Keller. In the late 1980s, Grudem co-founded the evangelical Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood to promote complementarian gender roles and counter the growing acceptance of LGBTQ people. Grudem also served on the translation board of the English Standard Version of the Bible, an increasingly popular translation created with a priori assumptions of biblical literalism and gender complementarianism. Keller, a best-selling author and influential evangelical theologian, touted strict gender roles and opposed same-sex marriage in his books like *The Meaning of Marriage*, and added his high-profile signature to the 2009 Manhattan Declaration, a conservative Christian statement that included opposition to LGBTQ rights.[106]

Second, Machen's theology lived on in books, sermons, and articles. *Christianity Today*, evangelicalism's flagship magazine, was named by Billy Graham's father-in-law Nelson Bell; Bell was a Machen admirer who remembered an older fundamentalist magazine by the same title in which Machen had been the most prolific author.[107] Harold Lindsell, then editor of *Christianity Today*, wrote in his influential 1976 *The Battle for the Bible* that, with respect to the fight for inerrancy in the 1930s, "the name that stands above all others is that of J. Gresham Machen."[108] Even a 1977 *New York Times* reporter investigating the emerging "war on Christmas" heard Machen's *The Virgin Birth* cited most often by biblical literalists a half-century after its publication.[109]

But most significantly, Machen's un-queered theology lived on in his students.

Carl McIntire left Princeton with Machen to graduate from Westminster. Machen preached at McIntire's ordination and installment. "Most of all, though," McIntire wrote after, "I am thankful to you for the training you have given me for the ministry, and for the faith and definite convictions you have led me to believe, to rejoice in, and to preach!"[110] He joined his mentor on the Independent Board and in his new denomination. Machen expressed confidence in the young man who came to be known as the "fighting fundamentalist," writing, "I know that you will sound a clarion note . . . in favor of Christian liberty."[111] McIntire took Machen's schismatic impulse even further. He formed his own premillennialist splinter denomination, the Bible Presbyterian Church, shortly after Machen's death. He founded the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) to unite fundamentalist denominations in a militant stand for biblical inerrancy and against the perceived apostasy of the modernist Federal Council of Churches and theological compromises of the emerging neo-evangelical movement. At its peak, the ACCC claimed over a million members.[112] Like

Machen, he also engaged in political activism. By midcentury, he became, in the words of historian Darren Dochuk, "America's foremost Christian anticommunist."[113] Through his newspaper the *Christian Beacon* and his radio program *Twentieth-Century Reformation Hour*, the conservative Republican wielded the Bible and the Constitution as rhetorical cudgels against moderates within his party and his faith, laying the blueprint for the Christian Right decades before its ascendancy.

Harold J. Ockenga also left Princeton as a student to graduate from Westminster. Later known as "Mr. Evangelical," Ockenga led the neo-evangelical movement, a rebranding of fundamentalism.[114] Pastor of the influential Park Street Church in Boston and founding president of two major evangelical seminaries (Fuller and Gordon-Conwell), Ockenga helped found the National Association of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Theological Society, and *Christianity Today* alongside influential friends like Billy Graham. Ockenga credited Machen for his theology: "Your friendship has proved a source of tremendous blessing in my life, especially in spiritual and intellectual things. I am but a weak echo of the things you have fought through. Even though they are my own because of passing through my personality, yet you are the instrument. And I shall always appreciate it."[115] Ockenga defended biblical inerrancy as a litmus test for orthodoxy and sought to revive a Christian America against the dual threats of Marxism and modernism. When asked in 1974 about the book that most influenced him besides the Bible, Ockenga responded, "Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*, I suspect that he and his writings had more impact upon my thinking than any other author."[116]

Yet no one spread and honed Machen's theology more effectively than Francis Schaeffer, who was studying at Westminster when Machen died. Schaeffer became the leader of L'Abri Christian commune in Switzerland and then a best-selling author, speaker, and pop-intellectual crucial to the boom of evangelicalism in the 1970s. Like Machen, he identified the ideological pluralism of modernity as a threat to the absolute and timeless truth of the inerrant Bible. He popularized a sweeping declension narrative in which the "biblical worldview" that undergirded Western Civilization, particularly the United States, collapsed under the advances of the malign force of "secular humanism." He decried modernism in the church and collectivism in the state for inculcating moral relativism. Like Machen, he was deeply concerned with state interference in education. Unlike Machen, he faced (and vehemently opposed) an organized American political movement for gay rights. Schaeffer also wrote and preached about the biblical imperative for evangelicals to oppose abortion, an argument that convinced Moral

Majority founder Jerry Falwell with whom Schaeffer worked to help elect Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Schaeffer idolized Machen. He read Machen on one of the first dates with his future wife, kept his notes from Machen's New Testament survey course his whole life, had Machen's 1912 "Christianity and Culture" sermon reprinted, and called Machen's suspension from the Presbyterian Church "the most significant U.S. News in the first half of the twentieth century."[117] The results of Machen's crisis echoed in Schaeffer's work. Schaeffer carried on the intellectual battle against Herrmann's theology, rejecting the Hegelian notion of historical progress through the dialectic of thesis and antithesis. According to Schaeffer, Christianity was absolute truth, thesis unmixable with antithesis, unchanging and un-queer.[118]

It is possible to "queer" Machen's legacy to some degree. At Princeton and then later at Westminster, Machen fostered a congenial community of male social intimacy that left many of his seminary students with fond memories of "Dassy" and the dorm life he often enlivened.[119] His refined manners contrasted sharply with the aggressive masculinity in the style and rhetoric of fundamentalists like the baseball player–turned–evangelist Billy Sunday.[120] In his work, Machen avoided discussion of gender and sexuality, presenting first principles of Christianity rather than the diatribes about gender roles and male headship.

Machen's sexual nonconformity may have impressed some students like Carl McIntire. A noted schismatic and firebrand, McIntire vocally opposed the gay rights movement. Yet interpersonally, he showed a surprising degree of indifference toward allegations of same-sex sexuality compared to his peers. When his close advisor Edgar Bundy came under fire for alleged sexual acts with men, McIntire continued working with him. Even once Bundy admitted the truth of the allegations to McIntire, McIntire reinstated him in a publicity director role for an international fundamentalist organization after only a few months of probation.[121]

Among Machen's latter-day admirers was Ralph Blair, a gay man who studied at Westminster well after Machen's death. Through study of the Bible and psychology (including earning a PhD in counseling from Penn State), Blair determined that even a conservative theology could not support exclusion of queer Christians as attempts at gay "conversion" were ineffective and harmful. In 1975, he founded Evangelicals Concerned, an organization dedicated to integrating evangelical faith and queer sexuality that started a pro-gay evangelical movement largely stymied by the rise of the Christian Right. Blair, who long

maintained a hunch about Machen's sexual orientation, often cited Machen in his writing and speaking.[122]

But the scale of Machen's "queering" impact pales in comparison with his un-queering influence. Even if Machen had not exercised outsized influence on evangelical theology, he would still offer an illustrative case study in the impact of internalized resistance to queerness in evangelical leadership, presaging a narrative that would play out repeatedly in the decades that followed. This worked in two directions. On the one hand, Christian bona fides required the suppression of queer identity. On the other, repentance and a return to orthodox theology offered an antidote for past queer transgressions.

Take, for example, Whittaker Chambers, the former communist atheist and star witness against Alger Hiss before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1948. Chambers had had sex with men during his communist years, and this fact was used to malign his testimony. To maintain his anticommunist bona fides in the face of homophobic mistrust, Chambers asserted the rehabilitation of his sexuality through conversion to Quakerism.[123] FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, by contrast, maintained his anticommunist influence on evangelicalism by keeping rumors about his potential same-sex sexual orientation quiet.[124]

Revealed queerness meant the loss of allies and influence for many evangelical leaders. Such was the case for Edgar Bundy, despite McIntire's support. When news broke in 1976 that fundamentalist Cold Warrior Billy James Hargis had had sexual encounters with mostly male students at his American Christian College, he swiftly fell from grace and religious relevance.[125] In 1987, televangelist Jim Bakker was stripped of both his popular *PTL Club* television show and his Assemblies of God ordination in light of his reported bisexual infidelities.[126] However, in an apologetic 1996 memoir, *I Was Wrong*, Bakker sanitized and intellectualized his transgressions as the result of spiritual doubt and claimed they were solved by new theological grounding.[127] In doing so, he recovered some of his old audience to support *The Jim Bakker Show*. In 2006, National Association of Evangelicals president and vocal gay marriage opponent Ted Haggard resigned in response to allegations of sex with a male prostitute. Repressed sexualities and successful privatization of queerness that echoed Machen's experience undoubtedly left historical silences between these un-queering scandals.

But Machen was more than an example of the un-queering of evangelicalism; he was the most influential proponent of its enduring un-queered ideology. This theology was "un-queered" in the narrow sense of the term. Most modernists were not queer-affirming, but

they offered a vision of pluralistic faith and dynamic Christian morality that made it possible for their theological successors in mainline Protestantism to accept and advance queer equality. Machen's students and theological successors, by contrast, preached, prayed, marched, and mobilized against the movements for gay and later LGBTQ+ rights. Many, like Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Al Mohler, cited Machen in their opposition to same-sex sexual and romantic relationships.[128]

But evangelicalism was "un-queered" in a much larger sense as well. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick claimed that "a whole cluster of the most crucial sites for the contestation of meaning in twentieth-century Western culture are consequentially and indelibly marked with the historical specificity of homosocial/homosexual definition, notably but not exclusively male, from around the turn of the century."[129] She presented a series of binaries (masculine/feminine, natural/artificial, urbane/provincial, and more) that constituted the epistemological framework of modernity rooted in the emergence of the homo/heterosexual binary. It seems probable from Machen's own narration that he viewed his encounter with "homosexuality" as a synecdoche for his encounter with theological modernism and with modernity itself. (Admittedly, it was far from the last time he understood himself as engaging in a proxy war against modernity.) His resistance to queerness entailed resistance to the ideological structures of the liberal German theology that promoted antinormative pluralism over orthodoxy. In response to his crisis in Germany, Machen dedicated his life to a set of epistemic binaries—Christianity/Liberalism, evangelical/indifferentist, elect/nonelect, constitutional/unconstitutional, biblical/unbiblical—that must be added to Sedgwick's list to fully reconcile the impact of resistance to queerness on American modernity.

Relatedly, in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, Richard Hofstadter identified a fundamentalist "revolt against modernity." He only briefly mentioned Machen as the "highbrow fundamentalist" mentor of Carl McIntire, missing Machen's enormous influence on what Hofstadter identified as the "comprehensive world view" that became the driving force for "the fundamentalist mind."[130] Machen's outsized intellectual influence on fundamentalism's "revolt against modernity" emerged from his transnational reckoning with the sexual binaries undergirding modernity earlier and more deeply than his fundamentalist contemporaries. While the textualist theology (and politics) that Machen articulated sounded like a call to ancient (or colonial) wisdom, like an ideological antimodernity, it was reactionary (in the literal sense). It formed out of a strong normative stake in the modern "homo/heterosexual" binary. This "straight doxy" was, in

fact, a powerful countermodernity lent greater ideological power by its claims to timeless scriptural authority—purportedly unchanging and thus permanently un-queered.

In 1905 and 1906, despondency over his own queerness seemed to drive J. Gresham Machen, a bright young American in Germany, to despair of his chosen career in ministry and his own moral character. It drove him away from the most inspiring professor he had ever heard. It drove him to the conclusion that "Calvinism is a very comforting doctrine indeed." It drove him to teach and defend a rigid faith resting on an inerrant Bible rather than dynamic pluralism as he became America's leading fundamentalist intellectual. It drove him to "un-queer" the theology that he passed to his students—the theology that remains the ideological calling card of evangelicalism still today.

Austin Steelman *is a Ph.D. candidate in History at Stanford University and a former litigator.*

Notes

[1] J. Gresham Machen to Arthur Machen, February 4, 1906, J. Gresham Machen Papers, Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, PA).

[2] H. G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

[3] Elizabeth Edman, *Queer Virtue: What LGBTQ People Know about Life and Love and How It Can Revitalize Christianity* (Boston: Beacon, 2016), 3–4; Keegan Osinksi, *Queering Wesley, Queering the Church* (Eugene: Cascade, 2021), 3; Laurel C. Schneider and Thelathia Nikki Young, *Queer Soul and Queer Theology: Ethics and Redemption in Real Life* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 8; Robert E. Goss, *Queering Christ: Beyond Jesus Acted Up* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2002), xiv. See also Mark D. Jordan, *The Ethics of Sex* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); *Queering Christianity: Finding a Place at the Table for LGBTQI Christians*, eds. Robert E. Shore Gross, Thomas Bohache, Patrick S. Cheng, and Mona West (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013); Karen E. Macke, "Que(e)rying Methodology to Study Church-Based Activism: Conversations in Culture, Power, and Change," in *Queering Religion, Religious Queers*, eds. Yvette Taylor and Ria Snowdon (New York: Routledge, 2014); Kathleen Talvacchia, Mark Larrimore, and Michael F. Pettinger, eds. *Queer Christianities: Lived Religion in Transgressive Forms* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Linn Marie Tonstad, *Queer Theology; Beyond Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018).

[4]Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1980); Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008, first printing 1990); Kadji Amin, "Genealogies of Queer Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Queer Studies*, ed. Siobhan B. Somerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 17–29. But see Robin Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, "Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 1–25.

[5]Suzanna Krivulskaya, "Queer Rumors: Protestant Ministers, Unnatural Deeds, and Church Censure in the Twentieth-Century United States," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 31, no. 1 (2021): 1–32; Bruce Dorsey, "'Making Men What They Should Be': Male Same-Sex Intimacy and Evangelical Religion in Early Nineteenth-Century New England," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 3 (September 2015): 345–77; Mary E. Hunt, "Queering Old-Time Religion," *Literature and Theology* 15, no. 3 (September 2001): 210–23.

[6]Kathryn Lofton, "Queering Fundamentalism: John Balcom Shaw and the Sexuality of a Protestant Orthodoxy," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 3 (September 2008): 439–68.

[7]John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[8]For example, George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 189–211; John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[9]Peter Coviello, *Make Yourselves Gods: Mormons and the Unfinished Business of American Secularism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

[10]Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Amy DeRogatis, *Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Heather R. White, *Reforming Sodom: Protestants and the Rise of Gay Rights* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Seth Dowland, *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Anthony Petro, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Neil

J. Young, *We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); R. Marie Griffith, *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics* (New York: Basic, 2017); Hilde Løvdal Stephens, *Family Matters: James Dobson and Focus on the Family's Crusade for the Christian Family* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2019); Rick Perlstein, *Reaganland: America's Right Turn, 1976–1980* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020); Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (New York: Liveright, 2020).

[11] George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1970); Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[12] Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), 255, 321.

[13] Machen, "Christianity in Conflict," in *Contemporary American Theology: Theological Autobiographies*, vol. 1, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: Round Table, 1932), 245–74, especially 250.

[14] Machen to Arthur Machen, August 17, 1902, Machen Papers.

[15] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 58–70.

[16] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 71–86.

[17] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, March 12, 1905, Machen Papers.

[18] Kim Riddlebarger, *The Lion of Princeton: B. B. Warfield as Apologist and Theologian* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015); Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 66–68.

[19] Emily J. Levine, *Allies and Rivals: German-American Exchange and the Rise of the Modern Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 36–60; George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship, 1770–1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1978).

[20] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 83–84.

[21] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 64–70, 83–86.

[22] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, March 26, 1905, Machen Papers.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, May 7, 1905, Machen Papers.

[25] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., July 24, 1905, Machen Papers.

[26] J. Gresham Machen, "Mountains and Why We Love Them," *Christianity Today*, August 1934, 66.

[27] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 95–96.

[28] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., December 10, 1905, Machen Papers.

[29] Ibid.; Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., November 2, 1905, Machen Papers.

[30] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., December 10, 1905.

[31] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, October 24, 1905, Machen Papers.

[32] Machen to Arthur W. Machen, October 28, 1905, Machen Papers.

[33] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., November 2, 1905, Machen Papers.

[34] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism in American Culture*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*; Antti Lepisto, *The Rise of Common-Sense Conservatism: The American Right and the Reinvention of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

[35] Christoph Chalamet, *Dialectical Theologians: Wilhelm Herrmann, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2005).

[36] Wilhelm Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, rev. ed., trans. J. Standys Stanyon (1906) from 4th ed. (1903), (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 3, 8, 11, 16.

[37] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., December 10, 1905, Machen Papers.

[38] William Armstrong to Machen, November 12, 1905.

[39] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 113.

[40] Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997).

[41] Sharon Marcus, "Queer Theory for Everyone: A Review Essay," *Signs* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 191–218, 201. See also Alana Kumbier, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (Sacramento, CA: Litwin, 2014).

[42] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 2015), 27–29.

[43] Arthur Machen Jr. to Machen, January 21, 1906, Machen Papers.

[44] Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., January 31, 1906, Machen Papers.

[45] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, February 1, 1906, Machen Papers.

[46]Machen to Arthur Machen, February 4, 1906, Machen Papers.

[47]Ibid.

[48]On the connections between homosociality and same-sex sexual orientation, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

[49]George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic, 1995), 1–32, 47–64, 99–127. On the inchoate web of sexual prohibitions entangled with religion for young men that preceded a more robust concept of "homosexuality" in the United States, see Mark D. Jordan, *Recruiting Young Love: How Christians Talk about Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1–27.

[50]Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic, 1993); Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective" in *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1998); Victor Román Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies: Fantasy, Racial-Sexual Governance, and the Philippines in U.S. Imperialism, 1899–1913* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 222–46; Arnaldo Testi, "The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Culture of Masculinity," *Journal of American History* 81, no. 4 (1995): 1509–33; Gerald F. Roberts, "The Strenuous Life: The Cult of Manliness in the Era of Theodore Roosevelt" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1970).

[51]Arthur Machen Jr. to Machen, October 23, 1904; Arthur W. Machen Jr. to Machen, October 22, 1905; Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, July 7, 1912; Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, June 28, 1908, Machen Papers.

[52]Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*; Machen, "Mountains and Why We Love Them."

[53]Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 43; Robert Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality," *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (December 2010): 801–38; Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Knopf, 2014); Clayton J. Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany: A History, 1880–1945* (New York: Harrington Park, 2016).

[54]Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 3–21.

[55] Ibid. citing Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, "Gladius Furens" in *The Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love*, I:261–71; Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*, 4–9.

[56] Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*, 85–86.

[57] Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality," 822–30; Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*, 45.

[58] Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*, 85–88; Murphy, *Political Manhood*; Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 12.

[59] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic, 1975).

[60] Whisnant, *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*, 48.

[61] Machen to Arthur Machen, August 17, 1902, Machen Papers.

[62] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 317.

[63] Henry W. Coray, *J. Gresham Machen: A Silhouette* (Willow Grove: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1981), 8–12.

[64] Coray, *J. Gresham Machen: A Silhouette*, 8–12.

[65] Author interview with Ralph Blair, April 1, 2022.

[66] Coray, *J. Gresham Machen: A Silhouette*, 58–60.

[67] C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism: Seven Biographical Studies* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 219.

[68] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 318, 320.

[69] Mildred B. Stearns to Machen, October 4, 1920; Mildred B. Stearns to Machen, November 16, 1920; Mildred B. Stearns to Machen, February 9, 1921, Machen Papers.

[70] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, October 31, 1920, Machen Papers.

[71] Machen to Mary Gresham Machen, March 6, 1921, Machen Papers.

[72] Mary Gresham Machen to Machen, March 10, 1921, Machen Papers.

[73] Mary Gresham Machen to Machen, August 22, 1921, Machen Papers.

[74] L. V. Buschman to John C. Finney, November 15, 1926, Norman L. Euwer to John C. Finney, November 15, 1926, in Transcript of the Hearings by the General Assembly's Special Committee to Visit Princeton Theological Seminary, November 22–24, 1926, Machen Papers.

[75] William Masselink, *J. Gresham Machen: His Life and Defence of the Bible* (self-pub., 1938), 10–12; Coray, *J. Gresham Machen*, 5–6.

[76] Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 105–29; D. G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 22–23.

[77]Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 134–35.

[78]Machen to Arthur Machen, February 4, 1906.

[79]George Yancey and Ashlee Quosigk, *One Faith No Longer: The Transformation of Christianity in Red and Blue America* (New York: NYU Press, 2021), 79.

[80]Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, 306.

[81]Machen to Arthur Machen, February 4, 1906.

[82]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., February 25, 1906.

[83]Machen to Arthur Machen, February 4, 1906.

[84]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., April 18, 1906, Machen Papers.

[85]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., June 3, 1906, Machen Papers; Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 122–29.

[86]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., June 3, 1906.

[87]Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 145.

[88]Machen, "Christianity in Conflict," 248–49, 261–62.

[89]Ibid., 256–57.

[90]Ibid., 263–64. The castle of Giant Despair is a reference to a place in John Bunyan's 1698 allegorical Christian novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

[91]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., April 18, 1906.

[92]J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1921); J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1930).

[93]J. Gresham Machen, "God Transcendent," (1923–1924) in J. Gresham Machen, *God Transcendent*, ed. Ned Stonehouse, rev. ed. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 16; Brantley W. Gasaway, "As a Matter of Fact: J. Gresham Machen's Defense of the Metaphysical and Moral," *Fides et Historia* 41, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 47–70.

[94]J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Faith?*, rev. ed. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 233, 236.

[95]J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 5, 45, 62, 67.

[96]Rolin Lynde Hart, "Deep Conflict Divides Protestantism: Churchmen Who Demand Literal Acceptance of the Bible Organize Strongly against Modernists," *New York Times*, December 16, 1923, XX5; "What Fundamentalism Stands for Now, Defined by a Leading Exponent of Conservative Reading of the Bible as the Word of God," *New York Times*, June 21, 1925, XX1.

[97]Editor's Note to Pearl S. Buck, "Tribute to Dr. Machen," *The New Republic*, January 20, 1937, 355; H. L. Mencken, "Doctor Fundamentalis," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, January 18, 1937.

[98]Machen, "What Is 'Orthodoxy'?," *The Presbyterian Guardian*, November 4, 1935, 38.

[99]See Machen, *God Transcendent*, ed. Ned Stonehouse, rev. ed. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982); Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism*.

[100]Molly Worthen, *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[101]William Jennings Bryan to Machen, June 23, 1923, Machen Papers; Bradley J. Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 155; "May Head Bryan College: Dr. Machen of Princeton to Be Asked to Become President," *New York Times*, June 5, 1927, 27.

[102]Machen to Arthur Machen Jr., April 28, 1910, Machen Papers.

[103]Representative John R. Ramsey, "Letter from J. Gresham Machen," *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., 56 (January 10, 1918), 799.

[104]Application for Incorporation of the Sentinels of the Republic, vol. 1, Sentinels of the Republic Papers, Williams College Special Collections; Machen to Mary Machen, December 11, 1924; Katharine Balch to Machen, December 16, 1924; Alexander Lincoln to Machen, December 20, 1924, Machen Papers.

[105]Machen to Mary Machen, April 1, 1917, Machen Papers.

[106]Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God* (New York: Penguin, 2015); "Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience," November 20, 2009, https://www.manhattandeclaration.org/.

[107]Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 56.

[108]Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 141.

[109]Kenneth A. Briggs, "Scholars March toward Bethlehem," *New York Times*, December 25, 1977, 108.

[110]Carl McIntire to Machen, June 10, 1931, Machen Papers.

[111]Machen to Carl McIntire, January 7, 1935, Machen Papers.

[112]Markku Ruotsila, *Fighting Fundamentalist: Carl McIntire and the Politicization of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.

[113]Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 151.

[114]Garth M. Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

[115]Harold J. Ockenga to Machen, February 9, 1933, Machen Papers.

[116]Harold Ockenga to Dr. W. Ward Gasque, April 22, 1974, Box 12, Harold Ockenga Papers, Gordon-Conwell Seminary (Hamilton, MA).

[117]Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 7; Francis A. Schaeffer, Notes on New Testament Survey, Box 72, File 11, Francis Schaeffer Papers, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Archive; J. Gresham Machen, "Christianity and Culture," *Banner of Truth* no. 69 (June 1969), 15–24; Cornelius Van Til to Francis Schaeffer, March 4, 1970, Box 94, File 18, Schaeffer Papers; Francis A. Schaeffer, "Not Only Weep," *Presbyterian Guardian* (May–June, 1965), 70.

[118]Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity, 1968).

[119]Coray, *J. Gresham Machen*.

[120]Robert F. Martin, "Billy Sunday and Christian Manliness," *The Historian* 58, no. 4 (1996): 811–23; A. Cyrus Hayat, "Billy Sunday and the Masculinization of American Protestantism: 1896–1935," (MA thesis, Indiana University, 2008).

[121]Ruotsila, *Fighting Fundamentalist*, 127–128, 242–244.

[122]Author interview with Ralph Blair, April 1, 2022; Ralph Blair, "Paul Who?," Expanded version of keynote address at connECtion87 (1987), https://ecinc.org/paul-who/; Ralph Blair, "Life More Abundant?," Keynote address at connECtion2oo6 (Portland, OR: July 27–30, 2006), https://ecinc.org/life-more-abundant/.

[123]Rebecca Davis, *Public Confessions: The Religious Conversions That Changed American Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 43–66.

[124]Lerone Martin, *The Gospel According to J. Edgar Hoover: How the FBI Aided and Abetted the Rise of White Christian Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023); Beverly Gage, *G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century* (New York: Viking, 2023).

[125]"The Sins of Billy James," *Time* 107, no. 7 (February 16, 1976): 68; Krivulskaya, "Queer Rumors."

[126]Art Harris and Michael Isikoff, "The Good Life at PTL: A Litany of Excess," *Washington Post*, May 22, 1987.

[127]Jim Bakker, *I Was Wrong* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

[128]For example, Albert Mohler, "Homosexuality and the Bible: Telling the Truth," Crosswalk.com (May 4, 2004), https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/homosexuality-and-the-bible-telling-the-truth-1260715.html; Peter Jones, "Revoice: Sliding Into Heresy," The Ezra Institute (August 14, 2018), https://www.ezrainstitute.com/resource-library/articles/revoice-sliding-into-heresy/.

[129]Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 72–73.

[130]Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962), 132, 133, 135.

ABSTRACT   *In the 1920s, Princeton Seminary professor J. Gresham Machen was the leading fundamentalist intellectual of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. His Calvinist theology, commitment to biblical inerrancy, and opposition to liberalism were passed on to and spread by his influential students including Carl McIntire, Harold Ockenga, and Francis Schaeffer. But in the early days of 1906, the young man who would go on to indelibly shape evangelical theology wrote home from Germany where he was a graduate student that he could never go into Christian ministry because of his "moral fault" that no "ordinary man" could understand. This article analyzes the coded language of J. Gresham Machen's letters during his pivotal personal crisis in the context of changing German understandings of "homosexuality" and Machen's lifelong homosocial tendencies. Moreover, it connects Machen's confrontation with his sexuality with his simultaneous confrontation with German liberal theology. In the fall of 1905, Machen found himself drawn to the more experiential and pluralistic Christianity of Wilhelm Herrmann. However, in facing his own perceived immorality, Machen found "Calvinism a very comforting doctrine indeed." He rejected modernism and spent his life defending a rigid orthodoxy against the theologies that would come to accommodate and embrace queerness. The results of his personal crisis echoed through the history of twentieth-century American evangelicalism. This article analyzes the historical process of "un-queering" theology that emanated from that crisis and demonstrates that resistance to queerness was woven into the ideological fabric of evangelicalism far earlier than scholars have yet recognized.*