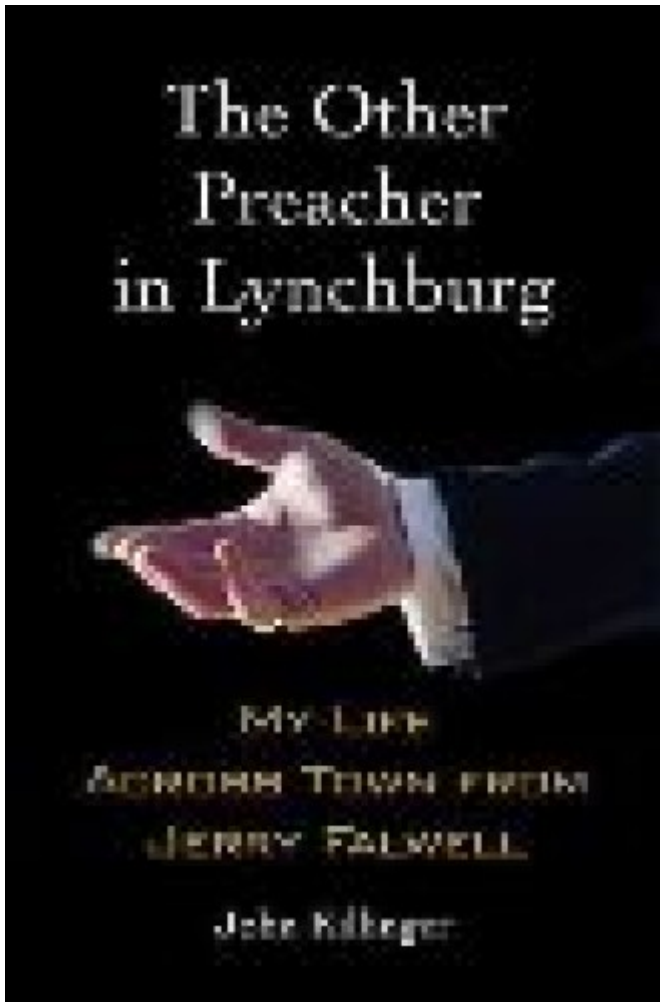


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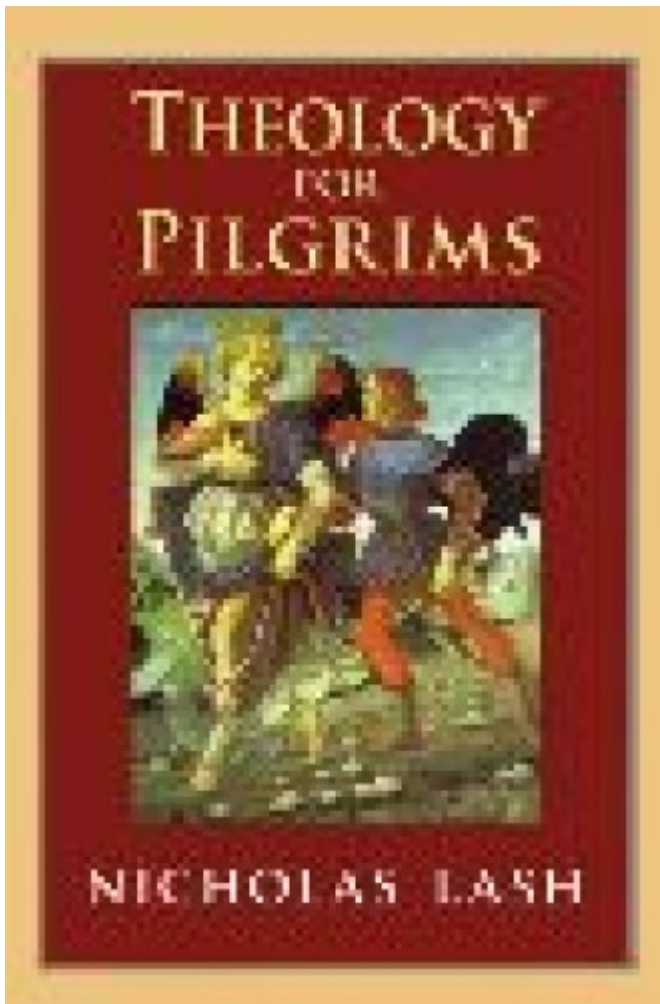
Books in the [April 21, 2009](#) issue

In Review



The Other Preacher in Lynchburg: My Life Across Town from Jerry Falwell

John Killinger
Thomas Dunne



Theology for Pilgrims

Nicholas Lash

University of Notre Dame Press

Killinger took his first pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, a small city that Jerry Falwell had put on the map. Arriving there in 1980, Killinger felt obliged to speak out against the rise of the religious right because of its distortion of the gospel, but also because people in his own congregation were under Falwell's sway. Killinger tried not to attack Falwell personally, yet when Falwell became aware of Killinger's challenges he struck back. Killinger received death threats, he was sure his telephone line was tapped, some of his mail was diverted to Falwell's Liberty University, his garbage was raided, and he and other Falwell opponents in Lynchburg were repeatedly harassed by the Internal Revenue Service during the Reagan administration. Killinger and Falwell eventually became acquainted, but they never were able to discuss theology. Killinger believes that

having to contend with Falwell made him a better pastor and theologian.

These previously published essays by Catholic theologian Nicholas Lash range from a response to Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* to a discussion of the enduring value of Vatican II and reflections on the insights of Joseph Conrad. An essay titled "The Impossibility of Atheism" is directed more at religious folks than atheists. To worship something is what it means to be human, and to be atheistic in this sense, says Lash, is an impossibility.