

"Three Reconstruction Leaders: Blanche K. Bruce, Robert Brown Elliott, and Holland Thompson"), as well as his major book, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (1978). In the introductory essay to the collection under review (which is the only essay not published elsewhere), Rabinowitz rejects any intimation that his thesis is politically problematic or "incorrect." It is here that he most explicitly ties himself to earlier generations of historians. "I'm an empiricist at heart," he writes, "and the highest compliment I can pay an author is that he or she displays a common sense based on a thorough reading of the sources" (p. 15).

Yet Rabinowitz sells himself short, for he is far more than "an empiricist." These essays not only sketch a framework for understanding the key dynamics of race relations in the post-Civil War South, but also present a model of historical scholarship—built upon collective knowledge constructed over generations of work, informed by broad questions, and based upon careful work in historical archives—which is hard to surpass. Whether the reader is an experienced historian or a new student who wants to know what "history" is, this collection offers itself as a worthwhile read.

PETER RACHLEFF is associate professor of history at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the author of *Black Labor in Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1890* (1989).

Communication and Change in American Religious History. Edited By Leonard I. Sweet. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993. Pp. vi, 481. Notes. Paperbound, \$24.99.)

This is a timely collection of essays dealing with the interaction of the media and religion throughout American history. It is especially opportune because in recent years we have been reminded of the power and influence that the electronic church has been able to exercise in national and local politics as well as in the controversies surrounding moral and ethical issues. But this is not another book taking conservative preachers to task, although it does have relevance for understanding the close connection between religious leaders and the successful manipulation of available media, whether print, visual, or electronic. Nor is it a "how-to" book, providing strategies or practical suggestions for those who seek to use the media effectively. It is, as its title accurately states, a collection of historical essays.

The essayists are a distinguished group of historians, most of whom are well known in the field. Several draw on research that they have published elsewhere in fuller form. For example, Harry S. Stout writes about George Whitefield, A. Gregory Schneider about the domestication of American Methodism, James H. Moor-

head about the millennium in the nineteenth century, and David Edwin Harrell, Jr., about Oral Roberts. Yet all of these authors and the other essayists, too, focus on the ways in which changes in communication technology have affected religion and, in turn, have been used by religious groups to advance their causes.

Readers familiar with Leonard I. Sweet's previous publications will recognize a striking parallel between this volume and the collection of essays he edited earlier entitled *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (1984). That volume also began with a major historiographical essay by Sweet himself, surveying the scholarly literature on evangelicalism. In this new collection Sweet begins with a ninety-page "Historiographical Probe" divided between discussion of communications in a print culture and in an electronic culture. In his essay he evaluates an immense amount of historical and theoretical literature, and he identifies a full agenda for future investigation.

It is not completely inappropriate to see this volume as an extension of Sweet's earlier publication on the *Evangelical Tradition*. He has, for example, devoted a third of his opening essay to an examination of the evangelical Protestants' mastery of "the media and meanings of American antebellum culture" (p. 20). His discussion of communications in the electronic age also features the opportunistic use of the new media by evangelical preachers. Sweet's essay—although at times a bit precious—serves a very valuable purpose, even if one may not agree with all of his judgments concerning individual authors and publications.

Among the most instructive contributions in this collection is the essay by David Paul Nord dealing with the relationship between religious publishing and marketing practices in the early nineteenth century. Nord demonstrates the ways in which evangelical publishers exploited the market revolution of the day and, in turn, became pioneers in the development of systematic management practices. Newcomer Ronald J. Zboray introduces readers to a category of publication not familiar to many, the "story papers," and shows how the impact of advancing technology created new communities among the readers of these "newspapers." The closing section of the volume is a "Bibliographical Probe" on "American Christianity and the History of Communication" compiled by Elmer J. O'Brien. This 125-page annotated bibliography is divided into chronological periods and is both potentially useful for future researchers and limited because O'Brien is vague about the principles of selection.

STEPHEN J. STEIN is professor and chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington. He is currently preparing an edition of *The Biblical Writings of Jonathan Edwards*.