



***Lawrence L. Lacour***

**L**ARRY'S face grabs people. God has added an indefinable magnetism to his facial features. This quality, which is a near charismatic gift, is the most effective characteristic of his ministry. From the pulpit before large congregations, in groups seated on the floor of a living room, or in person-to-person conversation, the inner radiance of this man comes across. It is a quality of personal openness and joy which calls up in his hearers a readiness for two-way communication.

Lawrence Lacour is an evangelist who has taught hundreds of ministers that the essential element in getting others to come to decision is this open exchange of affection and joy. Since 1957, Dr. Lacour has been showing The Methodist Church how to unite the ambivalence of administration and evangelism. As Director, first, of the Department of Evangelists, and now of the Department of Preaching Evangelism, he has combined the actual conducting of evangelistic missions with special training programs for ministers aimed at improving the preaching ministry of the church.

There lies behind his present effectiveness a lifetime of unique preparation. The environment of his early life was that of the revival and camp meeting, since his father was a Methodist evangelist. His own decision to enter the ministry came at the age of eighteen as a part of the moral struggles of a youth who, while active in the youth program of his local church, knew periods of doubt and rebellion.

**The MAN  
of the  
MONTH**

His training at John Fletcher College (B.A.) and at the seminary of Drew University (B.D.) provided background in both the conservative and liberal traditions of evangelical Christianity.

*(Continued on page 66)*

## MAN OF THE MONTH

*(Continued from page 4)*

Dr. Edwin Lewis and Dean Lynn Harold Hough were Drew professors who became the strongest influence in the development of his own theology.

Here is a minister whose life is dedicated to evangelism, and who has continued to seek the highest possible academic training both in theology and communications. Twice in his adult life he has had the courage to interrupt the performance of his ministry to return to the university for graduate study. After two student pastorates, service as a chaplain with the United States Navy, and almost a decade of public evangelism, he entered Northwestern University's Graduate School of Speech. Following the study of rhetoric and the dynamics of communication, he received the M.A. degree, on the basis of a thesis on "The Preaching and Speaking Theories of Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes." A few years later he returned to Northwestern for further study. His Ph.D. dissertation was on "Revivalism in America since 1920 with Special Reference to Billy Sunday, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Billy Graham." He was awarded the degree in 1956.

The creativity of Lawrence Lacour has produced significant patterns of evangelism in two most important places—the overseas mission and the local church. As a result of what he saw in Japan during the first six months of the Occupation, he began to develop techniques of effectiveness. In addition to a six months' tour of his own, he led, for five summers, in the establishment of new Christian congregations. The Lacour Mission to Japan, a part of the centennial celebration of Japanese Protestantism, resulted in twenty-nine new churches and an untold number of Christian converts. This mission took twenty-five to thirty American pastors

each summer to Japan. Each minister lived in a non-churched community and worked with an interpreter and a Japanese theological student. This village team was assisted by periodic visitations of mass evangelism teams. During the winter months, the developing Christian community was ministered to by the theological student. After three summers, the churches in each village became self-supporting and a part of the United Church of Christ in Japan.

A mission conducted in a local church by Lawrence Lacour leaves the pastor with a deposit of spiritual strength in the congregation. There is a freshness in every activity of a mission. The careful period of planning and preparation becomes a period of involvement and encounter, even before the date of the arrival of the Lacours. The services of worship combine the best in music, worship, and preaching, for Mildred and Larry combine the best in Christian living in their own marriage. Mildred Sullivan Lacour was also reared in the home of a Methodist evangelist. Trained at the Juilliard School of Music, an artist as a harpist, she is also at home in theology and personal guidance. The Lacour ministry frequently has its most potent effect in the smaller group meetings before and after the evangelistic service. In these, both Lacours reveal an exceptional ability to lead people to open themselves to a confession of need and then further into the decisions which result in the filling of the needs.

Here is a vocational evangelist who achieves a unique ministry in the present-day church because heritage, training, ability, and devotion are united in a person. Thus through the person, "the Word (which) became flesh" is communicated.

—THE REV. DOW KIRKPATRICK  
*First Methodist Church  
Evanston, Illinois*