5,000 Fervent Followers of Father Divine in Newar

March Far and Feverishly in Muggy Air, Pack Hall to Suffocation

Father Divine's dream children held an outing and demonstration yesterday. It was strong. Swarming around the old four-story factory building they have converted into their Newark Kingdom No. 1 at School and Weehawken streets, formed a small, triumphant army. They marched several miles in the muggy air,outing and demonstrating frenziedly at every glimpse of the stocky, former Baltimore hedges clipper, who calls himself God, and later the complete session within the stifling confines of the Kingdom.

It was an amazing scene. Not so amazing is Father Divine, a small man floundering in the muck and mire of overlarge but sticky words. What is amazing is the grip that has been placed on these simple, humble folk.

They are a happy, sky-looking, completely possessed and exalted group of dream children who have fallen under the sway of Father Divine. That is all; but the smattering of whites who have taken up the beliefs is among the whites are the critical and informed, and others who, burdened by troubles, look for succor anywhere.

Foolproof Religion.

Father Divine has a foolproof religion. You will not die, he promises, unless... Should you deviate from his rules death then will overtake you. And those followers who have departed this earth did so because of a violation. And since he was no re-birth to offer retribution, the dead man stands by his own act condemned.

And the father promises bounty for all. In the parade yesterday, behind his own Rolla Rosce, and behind the Rolla Rosce of his inner guard, both of them bearing on the radiators proud, stuffed doves of peace, were true loads of vegetables, of corn, pumpkins and watermelons. In one truck were tables loaded down with candied hams and sweet potatoes.

All these come from the father who comes into his money from nobody knows where. A simple guess might be that the kingdoms provide the money. In the kingdoms live hundreds of his followers. Neither smoking nor drinking, caring nothing for material and costly pleasures, they follow their jobs during the day, return to the kingdoms at night. Here psalms singing and exhortations keep them busy until they are exhausted enough to sleep. Their money goes to the father who counsels them that in poverty of material things is the wealth of spirituality.

So the father is never in need of money.

"Just Gets It and Gets It."

"Why," said Pearl Green, a tall, slender Negress of 25, who has not yet been inducted into a kingdom, "be just gets it and gets it. Strictly cash is his motto. Ain't it wonderful?"

"Peace," cried her companion, "it sure is wonderful!"

Pearl Green continued: "My lady when I first went to her was so sick she couldn't even raise a hand off her bed. She was sure to die, the doctors said. So I told her about Father Divine and his great message. I told her: 'Never give out a negative thought, only think of positive thoughts.' And she did this and now she's as well as you and me."

"Glory, glory," punctuated two listeners, "ain't it wonderful?"

"Now," continued Pearl, "they're moving to Detroit and they want me to go along."

"Are you going?" asked some one.

"No," said Pearl. "Father has come to me in my sleep and he keeps telling me to go to Pittsburgh and pay some debts I owe. I'm going there. I owe some people and I intend to pay up."

10,000 in Newark.

The cult has grown to amazing proportions in New York. Here in Newark they have, according to claims, 10,000 members and in Essex County 15,000.

Accurate information about the Divine group is hard to obtain. Father Divine won't give it out. His loose and joyful followers frankly don't know. Those who do know probably are Nathan Kranzler of Irvington, a Newark lawyer, who represents Father Divine in this estate and in New York, and Brother Lamb, a white college graduate, who is the father's personal secretary, follows him everywhere and takes stenographic notes every time the father opens his mouth.

But Kranzler, who said when asked if he is a Divine follower: "My ac-

Right here tonight I suggest you follow Father Divine everywhere he goes."

"But that would cost more than I can afford."

"Why, not at all. Father Divine will provide if you believe in him."

String of Emotion.

The crowd, after the long parade, packed into the suffocating limits of the auditorium, could not have understood much, even if it had been expressed clearly. But when it went wild over declarations, the words were not doing it. Rather, it was the emotional strings that these sounds touched, the emotional strings of a group seeking something that has been denied their own capacity for expression.

The demonstration was not strictly a Newark performance. Places as far away as New Rochelle were represented. Bus loads came from New York.
Five thousand followers of Father Divine came to Newark yesterday from four states and filled local streets with four hours of color and pageantry. Above view shows part of crowd on Wickliffe street with an inset of Father Divine.

News: Sept. 28, 1936