

PAPA'S WIFE
by
Thyra Ferre Bjorn

"Papa was an old-fashioned preacher. He preached the word of God straight from the Bible, without regard for personalities or consequences." Papa took his calling very serious and, being a bachelor, he needed someone to take care of his house so he could attend to his many duties. That is why he hired sixteen year old Maria, who was not only an excellent housekeeper, but could cook as well. Unknown to Papa, Maria felt a definite calling - to become a minister's wife!

After working for Papa for four years, Maria was called into his study for a special talk. She felt sure the time had come for him to propose; but instead, after telling her what a wonderful job she was doing, he asked her to stay on as his housekeeper for the rest of his life. Maria felt it was time to take drastic action. She was sure Papa loved her but he just didn't realize it. To help him along she decided to quit her job and come to America. Surely that would wake him up.

After two years in America Maria had about given up hope of becoming Mrs. Franzon, when Papa decided to visit America for his vacation. He found Maria and begged her to return to Lapland as his housekeeper. She informed him she would return only as his Mrs. Papa protested that he was too old, being twenty years her senior, and felt any children produced by the union would disturb his sermon preparation. Maria gave him an ultimatum and faced with losing her, Papa realized how much he did love her. She returned to Lapland as Papa's wife.

What follows is the delightful story of their married life which produced eight children and finally ended in America when Pastor Franzon was called to a Swedish church in New England. *Papa's Wife* is a celebration of family life, a recognition of the great blessing of children, and a warm testimony of faith in our Lord.

Author Thyra Ferre Bjorn was born in Swedish, Lapland. Her family, like the Franzon family, had four daughters and four sons. Her father was the pastor of a Baptist church. In 1924, he received a call from a Swedish church in Massachusetts. In her own words, this story "is made up of facts mixed with fiction and sprinkled with lots of fancies."

Since this wonderful book is out of print, see if your library has a copy or you may purchase one from Amazon or other used book sites. This would be a good time to learn about a service provided by your local library that you might not know about. If your library does not have a copy of *Papa's Wife*, ask your librarian to help you request an inter-library loan of the book. A copy will be located in another library somewhere in the United States and sent to your library.

After reading *Papa's Wife*, continue your enjoyment and learning by choosing from the following suggested activities:

1. Learn about Sweden's history, climate, physical characteristics, etc.
2. Check out some books from the library that contain Swedish recipes. Prepare a traditional Swedish meal for your family.

3. Where is Lapland? Is it a part of Sweden?
4. The Swedish custom was for the wife to make coffee and take it to her husband every morning of the week except Sunday. On that day the husband would honor his wife with coffee in bed. Try serving your parents or brothers and sisters breakfast in bed as a special treat.
5. Our country has been greatly enriched by the many immigrants that have come to our shores. Thousands entered this country through New York as the Franzon family did. What do you think that was like? Research the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Find out where the immigrants came from in the 1800's and early 1900's. What were the peak years? Where do most immigrants come from today?
6. Maria and Pontus had an unusual courtship. Find out how your parents met. Ask some other couples for their story.
7. Meet with your pastor and find out how he received his "call" to the ministry.
8. Ask your pastor's wife over for lunch or refreshments and ask her to share with you what it is like to be married to a pastor. Are there special responsibilities or pressures the family faces?
9. Write a letter of appreciation to your pastor and his family for their service to you and your family.
10. How did the Franzon family observe the Sabbath? How is it different from the way you do?
11. The Jones family found it hard to forgive the Franzons for the Bunny-Betty tragedy. Whenever we don't forgive others we run the risk of allowing a root of bitterness to spring up. How would you counsel someone in this area? Memorize at least two Bible verses that would help you.
12. Maria and Pontus gave each of their children special names, but each ended up with a nickname. It has been said that he who is loved much has many names. Start a list recording all the nicknames used in your family for each other.
13. The Bible records many different names for God. Using a concordance, find as many different names for God as you can. (ex. Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Nissi, etc.) Jesus, too, has many names. How many can you find? (ex: Son of Man, Good Shepherd, Bread of Life, etc.)
14. There are several other titles in this series that tell about the Franzon family. If you enjoyed *Papa's Wife* you might also like *Papa's Daughter*, *Mama's Way*, and *Dear Papa*.