

Spirituality Gal

By Tammy Ann Winn, M.A.

"Whatever is true and holy in the world's religions is a reflection of the one divine light which enlightens the whole world."

– Elizabeth A. Johnson, referencing *Nostra Aetate*

Tammy Ann Winn works as a writer, recording artist, and fundraiser whose career has taken her around the world to continents such as Europe, Africa, and Australia. With a graduate degree in Religious Studies, Tammy's theological interests encompass promoting global justice and peace through interreligious dialogue and nourishing the feminine soul life through well-rounded spirituality. Tammy lives in the Milwaukee area with her husband, Ben, and their daughter, Nadia.



Lisa Paul

A Book Worth Reading: Swimming in the Daylight by Lisa Paul

One of the most moving books I have read recently is the newly released memoir *Swimming in the Daylight*, written by Wisconsin native Lisa Paul. The subtitle of the book is "An American Student, A Soviet-Jewish Dissident, and the Gift of Hope." It is the last phrase, about the gift of hope, which captures the universal message and broad appeal of this profound story.

As the inside cover summary states, "Swimming in the Daylight tells the remarkable story of two women – one an American Christian and the other a Soviet Jew – who stood up against a ruthless dictatorship and fought for freedom." This true narrative begins in Moscow in 1984, the center of the Communist-controlled Soviet Union. As an American college student living there, Lisa Paul embarks on an incredible journey to alleviate the oppression of her dear friend, Inna Kitrosskaya Meiman. Inna, who is Lisa's Russian language tutor, is repeatedly denied a visa to leave the Soviet Union to seek effective treatment for life-threatening cancer. Taking her rights as an American citizen to heart, Lisa returns to the United States and heroically generates national awareness of Inna's plight by undertaking a 25-day hunger strike, giving a resounding voice to the voiceless. Committed to hope and courage, these two inspirational women work together to fight not only for Inna's life, but also for human dignity at large.

Swimming in the Daylight demonstrates the transformative power that the human spirit has when filled with compassion and faith. Today, in a world with many causes still needing support and activism, Lisa's memoir reminds us that each individual has something worth offering. That significance

must not be taken for granted.

Lisa Paul is originally from Appleton, WI and currently resides in Shorewood, WI. A natural advocate for the rights of others, she loves her work as a civil litigation attorney, specializing in employment discrimination and personal injury. She was not setting out to become an author when the idea of writing *Swimming in the Daylight* took root. Lisa realized, however, that she had been "given the gift of the story to tell," and answered the call to do so.

When asked what the theme of *Swimming in the Daylight* is, Lisa replied, "From my perspective, it's really that the way you can make a difference is to first believe and trust that you can." Additionally, she stated that for her this meant relying on her internal resources, at the center of which was her faith, trusting that what she had to offer to help another was enough. This point is especially pertinent given recent events, from Madison to Egypt, where we see that taking a stand for what you believe in does plant seeds for change. Referring to a story shared within the book about an unprecedented demonstration made by just seven Soviet citizens to protest their government's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, she said, "We don't know the limitations of five minutes in the Red Square. You can't be defeated in the ripple effect."

Swimming in the Daylight speaks to the beauty of bridging gaps between religion and culture to stand together in shared mission. Lisa, a Roman Catholic, affirmed, "It's a story about what unites us and what we have in common." For both Inna and Lisa, the core of their bond was and is eternal hope.

For more information about the book, visit www.swimminginthedaylight.com. To contact the author, email lisapaul@swimminginthedaylight.com.