



REV. PAUL AND REINHILD SYDNOR

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR REFUGEES FRANCE

Paul, an ordained minister, and graduate of Virginia Tech. He began serving in refugee ministry in 1985. In 1992 our church began partnering with him as he began serving with International Teams (IT) in Austria.

He met and married his wife Reinhild while serving with IT. He joined International Association for Refugees (IAFR) in 2010, became EU Regional Director in 2012, and is now the Director of IAFR Europe. IAFR is a global ministry and a strategy for refugee ministry. At its core is the belief in strong collaboration and partnership with local churches and refugees.

Paul explains why refugee ministry is his life passion by citing Hebrews 11:13-14 where it is written that there were those who “confessed that they were strangers and aliens on the earth...seeking a homeland”. He feels refugee ministry helps him recognize and appreciate those who long for a home, understanding that God wants to walk with them through this displacement journey, finding their hope in Him.

Paul and his wife Reinhild live in Lille, France where they both are involved with refugees along the European “Refugee Highway.” This “Highway” is the common route through many European countries that refugees travel as they try to complete their documentation to legally live and work away from their homeland. The Sydnors helped to open the Lille Centre 3 years ago. The Center is housed in a renovated building, near the center of the city, and convenient to bus lines. The Centre provides services such as language classes, cell phone repair, fellowship and discussion groups, shared meals, laundry service, and assistance with refugee documentation.

Paul often leaves the Centre to go meet people where they are – in make-shift camps, on the streets, or in a café sharing a cup of coffee. Paul gladly initiates conversations and builds friendships, offering refugees a safe place to gather and discuss their situations.

In 2022 a new teammate, Joe Saperstein, joined the Centre. Joe helps to plan social and interactive activities with the refugees who regularly come to the centre. Some activities have included eating a picnic, watching a soccer match, taking a day trip to the beach, and going on excursions into the surrounding community. Later in 2023, three more missionaries will be joining Paul’s team.

Some ministry partners have dropped off since Covid, and there are additional expenses with the expanding ministry. Paul is looking to find more supporters, maybe even from local churches in Lille to help meet the financial needs of the refugee center in Lille. Paul is trusting God to provide.

Birthdays: Paul, Sept. 4; Reinhild, Nov. 13

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