



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Department for Planning
and Operations

lutheranworld.org

From the LWF Institutional Memory
DPO/Archive services

A GALERIE OF PORTRAITS: LWF PRESIDENTS SINCE 1947

1. Anders Theodor Samuel Nygren

Country of origin:	Gothenburg, Sweden
Date of birth:	15.11.1890
Date of death:	20.10.1978
Period of mandate:	1947-1952

Short biography: Bishop Anders Nygren was elected first President of the Lutheran World Federation at its first Assembly, held in Lund, 1947 and served through the second Assembly at Hannover, Germany, 1952. Bishop of Lund, in the aftermath of World War II, his concern was to meet contemporary demands: “our purpose is not to reiterate what the Reformers said but to rethink our Gospel the one and only Gospel, the whole Gospel, to study it anew, possibly from a new point of approach and to express it in terms of today”. It was the fulfilment of this purpose that Nygren intended with his celebrated call: “Always forward towards Luther” (Proceedings Lund, p. 140). With energy and passion, he took the chair as first president with clear aspiration to make the new organization not only functional but loyal to its vision as expressed in its foundation such as the LWF being a global entity. For Nygren, the central contribution of the LWF was to bring theological reflection and practical service into a proper and productive relation. He was a prominent ecumenical leader as well, whose leitmotiv was “the way to the center is the way to unity”.



More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, Anders Nygren, by Jens Holger Schjorring, p. 421-429.

2. Hanns Lilje

Country of origin: Hanover, Germany
Date of birth: 20.08.1899
Date of death: 06.01.1977
Period of mandate: 1952-1957

Short biography: Elected at the LWF Assembly in 1952 as President of the LWF, Lilje aimed at equipping young churches of Asia and Africa with more self-confidence, strength and self-reliance through extensive pastoral visits. He supported the project of the Ecumenical Research Institute at Strasbourg. Lilje's contribution to the LWF is an indication that confessions can and must learn from one another. At the end of his mandate in 1957, the LWF had acquired a status and a character that had hardly been expected, his proclamation was able to build bridges of understanding. As a young theologian, he was a member of the World Student Christian movement and Federation which made him encounter ecumenical leaders such as Willem A. Visser'Hooft. Thanks to Lilje's political integrity and the trust that he enjoyed during his extensive ecumenical contacts beyond national borders, the doors to the world were once again opened to Germany after the war. He tried to heal wounds and to reunite that which had been severed.



More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, Hanns Lilje, by Hans-Volker Hertrich, p. 430-437.

3. Franklin Clark Fry

Country of origin: Pennsylvania, USA
Date of birth: 30.08.1900
Date of death: 06.06.1968
Period of mandate: 1957-1963



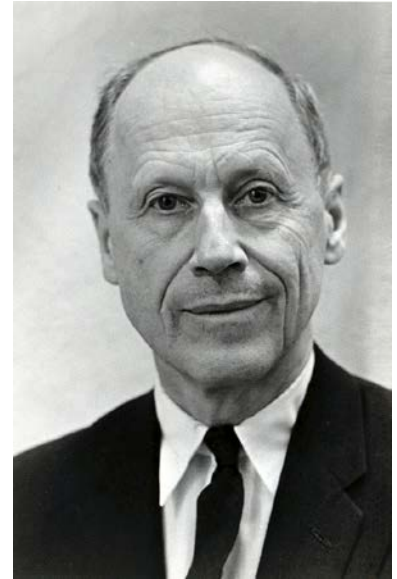
Short biography: President of the United Lutheran Church in America, Bishop Franklin Clark Fry became President of the LWF at its third Assembly in Minneapolis, 1957 until 1963. With 34 honorary doctorates and numerous government decorations, presiding over several institutions including LWR, NCCC in the USA, chairman of WCC until 1968, he was a giant who cast his shadow over virtually every area of worldwide Lutheranism and of the ecumenical movement of this day. Yet, he was first and foremost a pastor. Fry was an active participant in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the LWC in Uppsala in 1946 which planned the constituting Assembly of the LWF in Lund in 1947 and a major actor in the process of the transformation of the Lutheran World Convention into the LWF. Fry's leadership within the LWF and especially his presidency was characterized by confessional integrity with his constant emphasis on confessional and evangelical principles as well as ecumenical commitment. The three issues that engaged his attention were the relation of the LWF to the WCC, the relation of the LWF to LCMS and a study of the nature of the LWF from the standpoint of theology and church history. For approximately two decades Franklin Clark Fry kept before global Christianity confessionalism as an integral part of the ecumenical vision, surrendering neither unity nor truth.

More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by William G. Rusch, p. 438-444.

4. Fredrik Axel Schiotz

Country of origin: Chicago, USA
Date of birth: 15.06.1901
Date of death: 25.02.1989
Period of mandate: 1963-1970

Short biography: First chairperson of the Commission of World Missions of the LWF 1952-1957, president of the ALC and of the ELC, he was a delegate of his church to the first three assemblies of the LWF and was elected to the LWF Executive Committee 1955-1971. The Federation elected him President at the Fourth Assembly in Helsinki in 1963. Schiotz was particularly concerned about the lack of a consciously Lutheran approach to mission and developed the theological basis for such an approach. Although his dream was to become a missionary in China, as President of the LWF his was particularly helpful in negotiations with churches in communist Eastern Europe. His cool, polite manner as

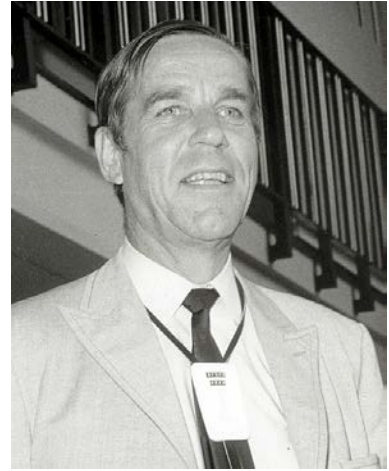


well as his clear communication of Christian concerns in a hostile environment kept line of communications opened. He advocated for the Fifth Assembly to be held in France instead of Brazil and steered the Assembly in Evian to have voting privileges granted to youth delegates. He heartily welcomed Cardinal Willibrands, who was the first emissary of the Vatican to address an LWF Assembly. He then attended sessions of Vatican II.

More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Eric W. Gritsch, p. 445-449

5. Mikko Juva

Country of origin: Kaarlela, Finland
Date of birth: 22.11.1918
Date of death: 01.01.2004
Period of mandate: 1970-1977



Short biography: Professor at the university of Helsinki and subsequently Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Mikko Juva became President of the LWF at its Assembly in Evian, France, 1970 after having served as chairperson of the LWF Commission on Theology from 1963 to 1970. Juva's election as the President of the LWF at the Evian Assembly did not follow the usual pattern as he was not from the host church nor a bishop. He had become known in the LWF as the local coordinator of the Helsinki Assembly and as an active and influential chairman of the LWF Commission on Theology. Earlier participation in the World Student Christian Federation had added vital elements to Juva's vision about the ministry of the church. Attending the WCC Central Committee, and WSCF General Committee exposed him to the worldwide ecumenical movement and to the mission of the church. His leading theme became "the church for the world". Until 1980, he was also chairman of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, a task very close to his heart. The visits he made in this capacity especially to Namibia and Tanzania, influenced his own grasp of the struggle of African countries for independence, especially the fight against apartheid. Juva's passion to deal openly and fairly with clashes and the parties involved, including those with whom he disagreed, combined with his ability to place LWF debates in the context of wider social and political movements, contributed decisively to the improvement of the atmosphere within the LWF. Juva's era as the President of the LWF was a major step forward in making the Federation into a world community. Representatives of churches from Africa, Asia, and Latin America felt themselves to be no longer an appendix to an organization of European and North American churches but full members of the worldwide community of Lutheran churches.

More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Risto Lehtonen, p. 450-456

6. Josiah Mutabuzi Kibira

Country of origin: Kashenye, Tanzania
Date of birth: 25.08.1925
Date of death: 18.07.1988
Period of mandate: 1977-1984



Short biography: An African church leader with an international outlook, Bishop Josiah Kibira, was bishop of the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, consecrated by his predecessor, the Swedish bishop Bengt Sundkler. He participated in the third and fourth assemblies of the World Council of Churches in New Dehli 1963 and Uppsala in 1968 and was elected chairman of the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation in 1970. He saw himself as a spokesperson for the southern churches which not only claimed equal rights for themselves in the governing bodies of the LWF but primarily fought for a life in true human dignity for their congregations and their nations. Elected LWF President at the LWF Assembly in Dar El Salaam, 1977, he took the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession and the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's birth very seriously, elaborating in his speeches on the Lutheran heritage and its present importance in the global family of Lutheran churches. Kibira said in 1984: "Indeed Luther is 500 years young! The celebrations made aware that it is our task to carry to this generation the message of the free mercy of Jesus". During Kibira's term as President the heated debate on the question of status confessionis, a subject particularly crucial to him took place, which he addressed also in his opening address at the LWF Budapest Assembly.

More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Jens Holger Schjorring, p. 455-463

7. Zoltan Kaldy

Country of origin: Iharosbereny, Hungary
Date of birth: 29.03.1919
Date of death: 17.05.1987
Period of mandate: 1984-1987



Short biography: During the sixties, Kaldy, the son of a pastor, presiding Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, developed in the context of his time a “theology of diakonia”, promoting the way of serving without exercising power, promoting the Gospel through a strategy of love in action. Within the time span of one decade, from the late 1950s to the late 1960s occurred a general shift in LWF policy toward its member churches in Eastern Europe, a shift toward greater openness. As a result considerable confidence was shown in Kaldy and he was elected to a number of important positions in the Federation’s governing bodies: in 1963: he served as a member of the LWF Committee on Nominations and a member of the Commission on Stewardship and Evangelism. At the Evian Assembly he became vice chairperson of the Commission on Church Cooperation and in Dar El Salaam, he was elected to the LWF Executive Committee, in 1984 at the Budapest Assembly: LWF president, the first president to die still in office. He had been also a leading member of the Conference of European churches and a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches during two mandates as well as a member of the Hungarian parliament.

More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Jens Holger Schjorring, p. 464-471

8. Johannes Hanselmann

Country of origin: Ebingen/Ries, Germany
Date of birth: 09.03.1927
Date of death: 02.10.1999
Period of mandate: 1987-1990

Short biography: Johannes Hanselmann, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, was the first president to be elected at a time other than an LWF Assembly. Bishop Johannes Hanselmann was elected to this post at the 1987 meeting of the Executive Committee in Viborg, Denmark, following the stroke of President Kaldy at the Zürich airport, back from meetings in Geneva. Since 1978, he was already one of the vice-president and upon completion of his term, Hanselmann became an honorary President of the Federation. From the very beginning, the commitment of the Bavarian bishop focused on the question of how the LWF, which according to Article III of its constitution understood itself to be a free association of Lutheran churches and not a church itself, could become a communion of churches. He turned against perceiving altar and pulpit fellowship in a minimalistic sense and explained "Rather pulpit and altar fellowship entails much that "ecclesial communion" means only when further explicated: Mutual recognition of ministries, joint action and structures of joint decision-making indispensable for the latter. What is ultimately decisive is that ecclesial communion in essence is mutually committed communion." Hanselmann has participated in interconfessional dialogues and was an ecumenical leader enjoying excellent relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.



More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Udo Hahn, p. 472-476

9. Gottfried Brakemeier

Country of origin: Cachoeira do Sul, Brazil
Date of birth: 04.01.1937
Period of mandate: 1990-1997

Short biography: The son of a German missionary, Gottfried Brakemeier was president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil. Elected at the Curitiba Assembly in 1990, Brakemeier became the second President of the LWF to come from a Southern hemisphere member church. He has insisted to keep in dialectical relationship: a contextual commitment as the incarnate expression of one's faith and uncompromising faithfulness to the Gospel. His leadership within the LWF is marked by his vision of the relationship between the church having the double mandate of mission and diakonia and the world. From 1983 to 1989, he was a member of the Board of the Ecumenical Institute of Strasbourg and President of the National Council of Churches in Brazil. In his theological pronouncements, Brakemeier is deeply committed to the heritage of the Lutheran Reformation.



More to read in the book: *From Federation to Communion: the history of the Lutheran World Federation*, by Martin Dreher, p. 477-480

10. Christian Krause

Country of origin: Brandenburg, Germany
Date of birth: 06.01.1940
Period of mandate: 1997-2003

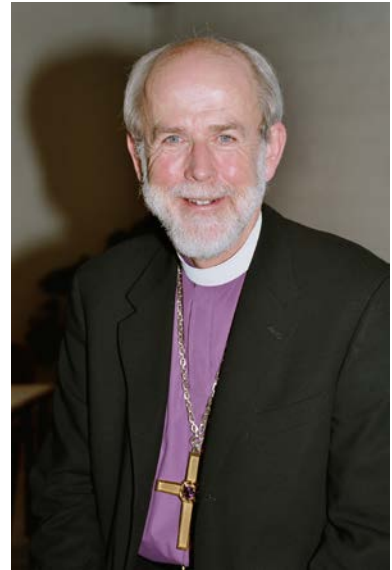
Short biography: Christian Krause, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brunswick was elected President of the LWF at the Hong Kong Assembly in 1997. He studied theology at the Universities of Marburg, Heidelberg and Göttingen, Germany, including a Fulbright Research Scholarship at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, USA (1962/63). He became a research assistant in the Department of Theology of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Geneva, Switzerland until 1969, ordained as a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover that same year within the Lutheran congregation in Geneva, Switzerland. 1971–1972, he worked at Headquarters of the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (LWF Department of World Service) in Dar el Salaam, Tanzania followed by a position as executive Secretary (Oberkirchenrat) of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany and of the German National Committee of the LWF for International Ecumenical Affairs in Hanover, Germany becoming from 1985 to 1994 the General Secretary of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag (German Protestant Lay Movement) at Fulda, Germany, then 1994–2002 Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick. Since 1999, he is the President of the Hermann Kunst Foundation for the Promotion of New Testament Textual Research in Münster, Germany and the chairperson of the Governing Board of the German Protestant Church Development Service. His mandate as LWF President is marked by the 31 October 1999 Signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, a benchmark in Lutheran and Catholic relationship and the fruit of 50 years of dialogue. He received a Doctor Honoris Causa of the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration, Madras, India, 1994, Doctor Honoris Causa of the Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 1999 Knight Commander's Cross (Badge and Star) of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, 2001



11. Mark Hanson

Country of origin: USA
Date of birth: 02.12.1946
Period of mandate: 2003-2010

Short biography: LWF President Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America became the 11th President of the LWF at its Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, 2003. He has previously graduated from Minnehaha Academy in 1964, and earned a Bachelor's degree in sociology from Augsburg College in 1968. He was a Rockefeller Fellow at Union Theological Seminary from 1968 to 1969, received a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1972, and attended Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota, from 1973 to 1974, received a Merrill Fellow at Harvard University Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1979. After being ordained in 1974, Hanson served as pastor at Prince of Glory Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, from 1973 to 1979; Edina Community Lutheran Church, Edina, Minnesota, from 1979 to 1988; and University Lutheran Church of Hope, Minneapolis, from 1988 to 1995. He was elected bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1995, and had been reelected to a second term as synodical bishop prior to his election as presiding bishop of the ELCA in 2001. While serving the Saint Paul Area Synod, Hanson was president of the Minnesota Council of Churches from 1998-2000, and was vice-chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops. In 2003, Hanson was elected president of the Lutheran World Federation, a role in which he serves concurrently with that as ELCA presiding bishop. He also serves on the executive council of the executive board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.



12. Munib Younan

Country of origin: Palestine
Date of birth: 18.09.1950
Period of mandate: 2010-2017

Short biography: LWF President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (ELCJHL) was elected as LWF President at the Assembly in Stuttgart, 2010. He first was consecrated bishop of the ELCJHL on 5 January 1998 after having been a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope, Ramallah, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Beit Jala, teacher and coordinator in Christian Education in Lutheran schools and Synod President of the ELCJHL. After his ordination on 30 May 1976 at the Church of Redeemer, Jerusalem, by Bishop Daoud Haddad, he studied at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), USA 1972 – 1976 followed by study of theology at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Since July 2003, he has served the LWF as Vice-President for Asia and as member of the Council and member of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. In 1997, he was member of the Department for Mission & Development (DMD) and vice-chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France. He also had numerous regional responsibilities within the Middle East Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches (WCC), since 1998 Member of the WCC – Orthodox Study Group. He serves also since 1998 as chairperson of the Augusta Victoria Hospital Board. Since 1991, he initiated a number of informal, long-running dialogue groups, serving as forums for joint reflection of local Christians and Jews. Known as "Quiet Ecumenism", co-founder of Al-Liqa' Centre for Religious Studies in Jerusalem. In 1993, he translated the first Arabic text of the "Augsburg Confession" with an elaborate survey and became since 2000 instrumental in developing the first Palestinian Christian Instruction Curriculum, which is ecumenical, and recognized by the Palestinian Ministry of Education for use in Palestinian schools. Since 1997 he evaluates the future Palestinian curriculae, and wrote "The Christian Dimension of the Palestinian Curriculum," which was adopted in 1998 by the Church Leaders in Jerusalem as the main document for negotiations with the Ministry of Education. Active in Church to Church relationships in Jerusalem for a Just Peace and Reconciliation. Is a profiled lecturer and speaker, locally and internationally, on what makes for just peace from a Palestinian Christian perspective based on the Christian teachings and doctrines.



He is the recipient of the Finnish Peace Prize 2001 from the Finnish Christian Peace Movement, of an honorary doctorate of divinity (D.D.) from Wartburg University, Iowa, USA, a Human Rights Award from the United Nations Association, Washington. In 2004, he received the Bethanien (Bethany) Prize, Methodist Church, Oslo, Norway and the Holyland Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF) Prize, Washington.

August 2014
LWF Archives/LWF Communications