

Nortey, Jacob Jonas Nii Klu (1939–2023)

CHRISTOPHER OSIMHEN OGAH

Christopher Osimhen Ogah, D.Min., is professor at the Department of Religious Studies, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey was a pastor, a chaplain, an evangelist, a teacher, an accountant, and a church administrator in several countries in Africa, America, and Europe. He was a Division Treasurer, a Division president, and a General Conference Vice President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹



Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey

Shared by the author.

Early Life

Jacob Nortey was born on March 23, 1939, at Abokobi, a renowned Presbyterian town in the Greater Accra Region of [Ghana](#). His parents were Joseph Nii Kwei Nortey from Osu and Regina Ayorkor Nortey (nee Adjekweifio) from the Abokobi royal family. He was the youngest of their four children. His father was a goldsmith and a trader in gold. His mother was a hard-working trader and a committed Christian. Jacob was raised in a God-fearing home, where his mother greatly influenced his outlook on life, shaping it to serve humanity in humility. His mother called him Ataa (a special father) after her own father, and Jacob Nortey indeed grew up to become a Father to many people.²

Nortey had a deep-rooted family connection relating to the development of the Abokobi township. His maternal great-grandfather, a famous herbalist, converted to the Presbyterian faith and became the well-known Evangelist Paulo Mohenu. He worked with the Basel Missionaries from Switzerland to populate Abokobi, Nortey's hometown, by winning converts to the Presbyterian Church.³

Nortey began his formal education at Presbyterian Primary School, Abokobi, in 1945, and later attended middle school, earning the Middle School Leaving Certificate in 1954. He continued his studies at the Scriba Secretariat Institute in Kokomlemle, Accra, where he passed the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) advanced examination in

Accounting. He subsequently became a chartered accountant and attained the status of Fellow of the Association of International Accountancy.⁴

During his late teenage years, Nortey experienced the loss of his father, older brother, and uncle, who had provided financial support to the family. In response to these significant losses, he sought guidance and encouragement through his faith. Nortey often recounted to friends and family that his calm demeanor stemmed from a personal conviction of divine assurance and care for all aspects of his life.⁵

Conversion and Family

In 1959, Nortey attended a series of lectures at the Baden Powell Memorial Hall in Accra, conducted by Elder [E. Cleveland](#) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although raised and trained as a Presbyterian, he was persuaded by the teachings presented and promptly accepted the Seventh-day Adventist faith, becoming one of 100 converts baptized that year. From 1962 to 1969, Nortey served as a youth leader, teacher, choir director, and chaplain responsible for prison ministry at the Hansen Road Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1964, he was appointed Bursar (financial officer) at Accra Academy, where he performed his duties with distinction. Upon receiving a call to church service in 1968, the headmaster, the late Mr. A.K. Konuah, expressed deep regret at his departure.⁶

Nortey's commitment to his new faith, combined with his effective service as an officer of the [West African Union Mission](#) (WAUM) and his pastoral leadership at the Korle-Gonno Church, led to his nomination for ordination by the then President, Pastor Thorvald Kristensen, despite not having formal seminary training. He was ordained into the Gospel Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on January 8, 1977, at the Labone Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One of the 100 new members who were at the Hansen Road SDA Church was Miss Thelma Naa Kreshie Temley Nartey. Nortey and Nartey served together in the new believers' outreach programs. When they married, they were the first couple to be married at the newly built Labone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Accra.

Thelma provided unwavering support for her husband's ministry. Together, they had a daughter and two grandchildren, and also cared for nieces and nephews as their own children. Additionally, they supported numerous other children by providing housing and assisting with education and career development. Notably, Nortey, affectionately known as 'Uncle Jack,' served as godparent to Honorable Dr. Alfred Nii Oko Vanderpuije, MP (former Accra Mayor, MP Ablekuma Central).⁷

Thelma was exceptional in her own right. She was Ghana's first female Hematologist and also the first woman to head the National Blood Bank System in Ghana. She hailed from the Gbese Kreshie Abodiamo We and the Obono Wem Prampram Royal Stool.⁸

Education

In 1979, Nortey attended Adventiste du Saleve (Adventist University of France), where he studied the French language and quickly achieved proficiency. In 1996, he and Mrs. Nortey relocated to Loma Linda, California, U.S.A., to pursue further education. By 2005, Nortey had earned both a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Doctorate in Education from [La Sierra University](#), California, U.S.A.⁹ The title of his doctoral dissertation is "Acculturation in Moral Development: The Impact of Acculturation on Kohlberg's Moral Development Model."¹⁰ Among his notable publications is "Independent African Churches – Are they genuinely Christian" (1998).¹¹

Ministry

Pastor Nortey served as an Assistant Treasurer at the Western African Union Mission (WAUM) from 1968 to 1969. He was then called to the [Adventist College of West Africa](#) (ACWA) to teach and head the Business department. He functioned as the Recruiter for ACWA during that time. He was in this position in [Nigeria](#) from 1970 to 1973, after which he reverted to Ghana as the Assistant Treasurer from January 1973 to December 1974.

During the 1979 uprising led by Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings, Nortey was the pastor for the Korle Gonno SDA Church. He organized the Church's youth to carry out cleaning on Sundays. Later, other members of the SDA Churches in Accra joined the exercise. This, in no small measure, helped create a favorable impression of the Church in the government's plans and programs.

In the late 1980s, Nortey was a member of a delegation from the General Conference who met some African Heads of State to discuss issues of Religious liberty. Some of the reputable Heads of State the delegation met with were: His Excellencies Robert Kaunda of Zambia, Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, as well as James Kissaka, the Prime Minister of Uganda.¹²

Treasurer of the WAUM

In 1975, Nortey was confirmed as the substantive Treasurer of the West African Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists from 1973 and ended his tenure in 1980.¹³ He was the first African to be called to this position as an officer. He also pioneered stewardship education and training of pastors and therefore did a lot of travelling to the offices in the various countries of the union. He worked and conducted outreaches with Dr. Sherman Nagel and Pastor Russell Staples in 1975.

Treasurer of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division

In April 1980, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, meeting in Dallas, Texas, established the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (AID; now [West-Central Africa Division](#)), encompassing 32 nations across five time

zones. AID included all West African countries and several in Central Africa, as well as Madagascar, Mauritius, Rodrigues, and Seychelles. Nortey was elected as the first Treasurer of this new Division, serving with distinction until 1985.¹⁴ His tenure was marked by significant development throughout the division.

During his tenure as Division Treasurer, Nortey was instrumental in establishing Valley View College ([Valley View University](#) since 1997) on October 31, 1983, in Adentan, Accra, Ghana, as Adventist Missionary College with 16 students. In January 1989, the school was renamed Valley View College and relocated at its present site, Oyibi, a town northeast of Accra, Ghana's capital city.¹⁵

President of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division

In 1985, Nortey was elected and became the first African and the first Ghanaian President of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (AID), and therefore a Vice President of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists. In the same vein, he was the first Treasurer ever to become President of the Division. He served in this capacity until 1995.¹⁶

Legacy

Thelma Nortey died in July 2021. Jacob Nortey was laid to rest on September 15, 2023.¹⁷

Over 52 years of ministry, Nortey made a profound and lasting impact on the communities he served. In Ghana, Nortey was recognized as a prominent advocate for Christian values, justice, and righteousness. He contributed significantly to the growth and development of educational institutions, where young people were educated, trained, and empowered with skills for personal advancement and service to others.

A. A. Alalade, a former Vice Counsellor of Adventist College of West Africa/Adventist Seminary of West Africa and Babcock University, asserts in his tribute to Nortey that "Jacob J. Nortey was a people-centered servant of God, who was kind, level-headed, loving, humble, considerate, and patient. He was a decent gentleman. Jack was Christlike as a teacher and compassionate as a Pastor."¹⁸

As part of Nortey's legacy, the J.J. Nortey Education Trust Fund for Tertiary/Christian Education benefitted many individuals at home in Ghana and abroad, including Pastor Professor Seth Nii Aban Laryea (Ex Vice Chancellor, Valley View University), Dr. Moses Tawiah Adoko (Chief Knowledge Officer of the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, U.S.A., and a Professor of Aerospace Complex Systems), the Venerable Dr. Nii Naate Atswele Agbo Nartey (Community Support Specialist/Biblical Psychologist), and many others.¹⁹

SOURCES

"Founder of Valley View University, Pastor Professor Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey, to be laid to rest on September 15," [gbcghanaonline.com](#), September 14, 2023, accessed February 24, 2026,

<https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/jacob-nortey-2/2023/>.

"Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey." Funeral brochure. In the author's private collection.

"Our Story." Valley View University website. Accessed February 24, 2026.

<https://vvu.edu.gh/index.php/about/the-vvu/our-history>.

Owusu-Mensa, Kofi. "Three Decades of Ghana's Valley View University." Accessed February 24, 2026.

http://www.sdahistorians.org/uploads/1/2/3/6/12365223/kofi_owusu_mensa_three_decades_of_ghanas_valley_view_univers

.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

NOTES

1. "Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey," funeral brochure, in the author's private collection.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "Founder of Valley View University, Pastor Professor Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey, to be laid to rest on September 15," gbcghanaonline.com, September 14, 2023, accessed February 24, 2026, <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/jacob-nortey-2/2023/>.
8. Ibid.
9. "Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey," funeral brochure, in the author's private collection.
10. A dissertation presented to the faculty of the School of Education, La Sierra University, May 2005, accessed February 24, 2026, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/5de638cb0ac14bb9e8ab3741b8b54c75/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y#:~:text=The%20study%20hypothesized%20that%20immigrants,Kohlberg's%20theory%20of%20moral%20development>
11. *Spectrum* 20, no. 2 (1998): 30-37, accessed February 24, 2026, https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/1989_Vol_20/22253211.READER_037.pdf.

12. Ibid.
13. "West African Union Mission," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1975-1980).
14. "Africa-Indian Ocean Division," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1980-1985).
15. Kofi Owusu-Mensa, "Three Decades of Ghana's Valley View University," p. 5, accessed February 24, 2026, http://www.sdahistorians.org/uploads/1/2/3/6/12365223/kofi_owusu_mensa_three_decades_of_ghanas_valley_view_university.pdf; "Our Story," Valley View University website, accessed February 24, 2026, <https://vvu.edu.gh/index.php/about/the-vvu/our-history>.
16. "Africa-Indian Ocean Division," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1986-1995).
17. "Founder of Valley View University, Pastor Professor Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey, to be laid to rest on September 15," gbcghanaonline.com, September 14, 2023, accessed February 24, 2026, <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/jacob-nortey-2/2023/>.
18. Prof. A.A. Alalade, former Vice Counselor of ACWA/ASWA/Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria: A tribute written by Alalade and documented in "Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey," funeral brochure, in the author's private collection.
19. "Founder of Valley View University, Pastor Professor Jacob Jonas Nii Klu Nortey, to be laid to rest on September 15," gbcghanaonline.com, September 14, 2023, accessed February 24, 2026, <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/jacob-nortey-2/2023/>.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000