

Benjamin Eino Nicka

My finance career motivates my theological research. It combines with my pastoral work and theological education to make me uniquely situated to bring theology to bear on the ethics of finance.

Raised in a small town, the son of a prison guard, I learned finance theoretically during undergraduate studies in business school and experientially over a 17-year consulting career at Deloitte. Working primarily in New York City, I served private equity investors (such as Blackstone and KKR) in leveraged buyouts and corporations in acquisitions. Each day, I focussed on questions of valuation, return on investment, profitability, and debt financing, so that eventually the mathematical, rational, and abstracting analytical lens of finance became second nature. My theological research leverages this experience to (i) illumine ways to open up finance to theological description and engagement, (ii) creatively apply theological concepts to ethical problems in finance, and (iii) critically evaluate existing theological work on finance against a concrete phenomenological backdrop. I also leverage my industry network to resource my theological work with additional insider perspectives.

I entered the Christian faith in 2006 at a Manhattan-based church committed to generous, critical, and theological engagement with the world of work. Such that, while working in finance after my Westminster seminary studies, I began to ask how theology might serve my field by defining its goods, diagnosing its disorders, and reordering its work. To explore these ideas, I negotiated a 40% reduction in workload and pay at Deloitte starting in the fall of 2014, making time for research and practical theological experiences. This journey of discovery, elongated by my wife's nine-year losing battle with cancer (begun that same fall), first involved researching and teaching the theology of work in finance to Christian finance professionals through the Center for Faith & Work. Next, I founded a church-based faith & work ministry in Queens, NYC, serving many kinds of workers and enriching my general theology of work. A 2019 move to Minneapolis, Minnesota, facilitated a phase of library-based research on finance ethics that led me to Oxford's Centre for Mission Studies for a supervised literature review. This review made clear my need for full-time study of theological ethics at the University of Aberdeen. My odyssey of theological formation both (i) revealed and relativized the ideology of finance I had absorbed as normative and (ii) deepened my conviction of the great good finance can bring to society.

With these two perspectives, my research aims to construct bridges between theology and work in finance by employing a dual focus on (i) modern and historical theological concepts addressing the moral realities of work in finance and (ii) concrete practices and operative theories within contemporary finance. My doctoral research proposal is designed to elaborate and hone this approach through constructive theological engagement with the intellectual history of index fund investing.

Education	University of Aberdeen	(planned) January 2024
	<u>Masters in Theology</u> - Distinction, A3, 20/22 through Spring 2023.	
	Note: My delayed completion is due to the sudden passing of my wife in April 2023 in Scotland and the concomitant adjustment to single parenting.	
	Winner of the Neil Prize, for an exegetical essay on the story of Joseph.	
	Oxford Centre for Mission Studies , Oxford, England	February 2023
	<u>Guided Research Programme</u> on a Christian finance ethics.	
	Westminster Theological Seminary , Philadelphia, PA	May 2011
	<u>Master of Arts in Religion</u> - GPA 3.7	
	Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota	May 2002

Bachelor of Science in Business – Double Major, Finance & Accounting - GPA 3.7

Experience ♦ **Publications**

- ‘Investing and the Separation Thesis’ for Eventide Center for Faith & Investing’s *Journal for Faith & Investing*, January 2023.
- ‘The Demon is in Too Deep: Clashing Orthodoxies of Investment and the Separation Thesis’ for *Faith in Business Quarterly* 22 no. 1.
- Pending articles with these two publications and the Kirby Laing Centre’s *The Big Picture* address (i) business ethics’ agency theory and stakeholder theory using the concept of the moral order and (ii) a general frame for business ethics constructed from a creational moral ecology and the eschatological shape of the Bible.

♦ **Associations**

- **The Kirby Laing Centre, Cambridge, U.K.** - Associate Fellow - Currently serving on the KLC’s Capital Investment Hub, a collective aimed at the articulation of a Christian approach to capital allocation.
- **Faith in Financial Services, New York City** - Steering Committee Member - Advising on this group’s engagement with the Christian community within NYC’s financial services industry.

♦ **Deloitte, New York City, 2002-2008, 2011-2022 (part-time 2014 forward)**

Senior Manager, M&A Transaction Services

- Top-rated performer. Recruited for promotion to Managing Director.

Key Responsibilities:

- Advised clients on the completion and financing of transactions.
- Directed and conducted financial analysis of companies being transacted.
- Served private equity clients on leveraged buyouts and corporate clients on mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures.
- Drafted financial due diligence reports used by clients, potential buyers, and financing banks to assess the opportunities and risks of their investments.
- Coordinated tax, information technology, human resources, and financial due diligence teams.

Project Experience: advised on U.S.-based and international deals ranging from US\$ 10 million to US\$ 65 billion across a range of industries, with a focus on energy and resources companies.

♦ **Kings Cross Church and Living Faith Community Church, New York City, 2017-2019**

Director of Faith and Work (Part-Time)

Key Responsibilities:

- Researched, wrote, and taught a 12-week faith and work curriculum.
- Researched, wrote, and taught for regular church-wide faith and work events aimed at cultivating vocational community and a missional approach to work.
- Preached during Sunday service at either church, as requested.

♦ **Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City, 2012-2016**

Center for Faith & Work: Instructor and Leader, Financial Services Ministry

Key Responsibilities (as a volunteer):

- Researched, wrote, and taught an eight-week faith and finance course aimed at finance professionals, transforming the initial curriculum.
- Participated in the leadership team.

♦ **Office of U.S. Senator Rod Grams, Washington, D.C. Intern, Fall 1999**