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Faith in Policing is a Gift to All of Us



December 24, 2025  by [Thomas Lemmer](#)

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As a culture, those of us blessed to be living in the United States of America are in the midst of our most intense giving season of the year. Annually, the holiday season from Thanksgiving through the end of the year brings amazing levels of charitable giving. According to a nonprofit marketing resource, [30% of all annual charitable giving](#) occurs in the month of December. Additionally, each Christmas, traditional gift giving is significant. From 1992–2024,

Americans spent 19% more in December than the next highest month (November). Holiday gift buying was a key factor. But among the greatest gifts we receive is not one found wrapped under the tree. It is the far more enduring gift of faith in policing.

What We Should Not Buy

Wherever there is buying there is selling. We try to buy what we need or want. In considering what to buy, I am reminded of some wisdom passed along to me by my mother. *“Be careful about what you wish for, because you may get it.”* So with the most important issues of life, we need to be thoughtful about what we want. Policing is one of those issues requiring thoughtful consideration.

We live in an increasingly secular-focused society. I am a Christian and I write with this perspective. I am also an American and a student of our shared history. We are blessed as a nation to have been founded on a heritage of religious principles. First among those principles is that [our rights come from our Creator](#) and not government – any government. As such, our government is tasked with protecting our rights and not with choosing which rights we retain. As citizens, we should never buy that our rights are a gift from government.

Neither should we buy that the founders ever advised an embrace of a God-less nation. The [First Amendment](#) to the [U.S. Constitution](#) protects our right to religious liberty. It acknowledges our right to choose how we individually worship, and to freely exercise our religious beliefs. It does not remove faith as a pillar that supports a just and free society. In his [farewell address](#) as president, George Washington highlighted the importance of faith. He cautioned, *“reason and experience both forbid us to*

expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

On Governance

As Americans, we have sought a nation where the people rule. But, the process now elects over [five-hundred thousand](#) government officials. Those officials have hired [millions of government employees](#). The most recent estimates, from 2023, put the federal government workforce at about 3 million. Another nearly 20 million employees work for state and local governments around the country. By any measure, that is a lot of government.

No agency of government is more vital to maintaining the peace in our communities, or is more closely connected to our ability to exercise our individual liberties, than our local police. We look to the police for safety. When our communities are overrun with crime and violence, our ability to safely exercise our rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is greatly diminished. But [world history](#) provides another important lesson as well. When the police and other government officials overstep their proper authority, our rights are also placed in jeopardy.

What Do They Believe?

Being thoughtful about what we want: Does it matter what the police and other government officials believe about their authority and our rights as citizens?

[Jim Bontrager](#), the immediate past president of the International Conference of Police Chaplains, has provided the following observation: *“If America was founded on the principle of preserving God-given*

rights, which it was, then it stands to reason that a belief in God would aid in that effort.”

Every officer has a duty to do what is right and true, even if no other person hears or sees their actions. When we know God, we know that no matter how much authority we may have in this world, there is a higher power. In this knowledge, we understand that our actions are always known. We know that no one who engages in evil escapes God’s judgment, and that the path to redemption is only possible through God. The faith of those police officers who believe in God impacts how they carry out their duties. Such beliefs are consistent with the needs of a free people, and such faith benefits the entire community.



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I have been blessed in countless ways in my life. Among those blessings has been the opportunity to work at helping to build safer and stronger communities as a police officer. I was also blessed to have been entrusted to serve in several leadership positions. I enjoyed the opportunity to teach undergraduate students about policing, and I continue to be blessed with opportunities to provide advanced training for members of the police profession. From that background, I always instruct that the role of the police officer was never intended to be an easy one.

Adversity, Suffering, Service and Faith

Indeed, policing has always been a challenging profession. The role exists within a stark reality. In this life there is suffering and evil is real. Yet, even as our news outlets regularly report on extreme acts of depravity and violence, serious discussions about evil and the importance of faith are infrequent for most people. Drawing a connection between faith, the role of the police, and the need to confront evil is even rarer.

When asked about these connections, Fr. Dan Brandt, the Directing Chaplain for the Chicago Police Department, provided the following insight: *“Truly, sometimes the police are the only face of God, the only face of order, the only face of normalcy, seen by some good folks living in neighborhoods governed by evil forces.”*

We rely on our officers to alleviate the suffering that comes when evil is left unchecked. The role carries with it great responsibilities and extreme risks. As of 23 December 2025, there were 27,146 fallen police officers remembered and honored on the [Officer Down Memorial Page](#), and all of their names will

ultimately be etched on the [National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial](#) in Washington, D.C.

Of this sacrifice, scripture provides us clarity.

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends (John 15:13, NIV).

We ask a lot of our police officers.

We should not ask our officers to meet their responsibilities without the strength that comes through faith. Yes, we want our police officers to get through the trials that they will encounter. But, just getting through adversity should not be their goal or ours. Research has long shown that having higher levels of religious belief and practice are associated with better mental health. Writing in *Psychology Today*, [Dr. Rob Whitley](#) found that such individuals have lower rates of depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and suicidal behavior.

The CEO of the National Alliance of Mental Health (NAMI), Daniel Gillison, Jr., has also highlighted the intersection of faith and mental health. He observed: *“Faith can help us in many ways that traditional treatments can’t. Faith is a powerful thing.”* He explained further: *“Faith can help us make sense of our suffering. Faith can give us strength to persevere through hardship. Faith can help us connect with a community that cares.”*

Through their faith, the wellness of those doing the work in policing is strengthened. Clearly, the entire community benefits from healthy, emotionally-stable police officers. Our communities are stronger and safer when our police officers endure adversity well, embrace it, and emerge stronger, with a renewed sense of faith and purpose.

Receiving the Gift

As a Chicago Police Department chaplain, Rabbi Moshe Wolf, has observed that *“without faith, life is tough.”* In response, he encourages officers to pray. *“If you need something, ask God. If you don’t, thank God.”*

As a community, we should pray as well. We should pray for our police officers and that they continue to find strength in their faith. We should also pray thanking God for the gift that comes through police officers with faith.

In this gift-giving season, we should also thankfully receive the gift of faith within policing. Christian scripture instructs: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”* (Matthew 5:9, NIV). That blessing serves our communities well.

In that spirit, Merry Christmas. *“God bless us. Everyone.”*

This article originally appeared at [Secure 1776](#). It is shared with permission.

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Thomas Lemmer is a consultant, researcher, analyst, author, and instructor. He has been active in the field of public safety for over 40 years. He has extensive experience as a state-certified law enforcement officer, including within key supervisory and police executive roles. Lemmer served for more than 34 years with the Chicago Police Department (CPD),

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