According to Sir Robert Peel, England’s pioneer of modern policing, “The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.” If evidence of their actions should not be visible, does it follow that the wounds all law enforcement officers incur carrying out these activities also should remain unseen? The ominous necessity of being armed and vigilant to protect the innocent and defenseless, not to mention their fellow officers and themselves, against the assaults of human predators wounds all those sworn to uphold the law. Fortunately, spirituality, “a universal, human dimension,” is an invisible weapon used by law enforcement professionals worldwide, even when they cannot explain its features or precisely identify how it operates. Sometimes, spirituality is misidentified as ethics, emotional intelligence, intuitive policing, or stress management. However, these experience-based behavioral responses and coping mechanisms are learned disciplines that officers employ in their fight to survive wounds inflicted upon them.

Most law enforcement agencies have begun proactively addressing the realities of job-related stressors, crisis incidents, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and other potentially debilitating conditions and wounds.
often caused or exacerbated by the rigors of law enforcement duties. Even though such efforts prove helpful, many do not incorporate a spiritual-wellness component. By contrast, however, military branches have developed effective programs to address the inculcation of core spiritual values in training and practice. “The language of spirituality reveals the inspirations, intuitions, and devotions that reside in the spirit (soul, inner life, core, subconscious) of human beings. This is the realm in which ontological questions are discussed yet defy the limitations of the spoken word. Human touch, a smile, the shedding of a tear, the embrace of persons in love, a silent prayer of the heart; these are the expressions of a language in which all fully developed persons need to be fluent. This is the powerful dimension of humanity that is sadly, and too often, disregarded or cast aside as sentimental, of inferior importance to the rational mind.”

“Human beings are essentially spiritual creatures because we are driven by a need to ask ‘fundamental’ or ‘ultimate’ questions. Why was I born? What is the meaning of my life? Why should I go on when I am tired, or depressed, or feel beaten? What makes it all worthwhile?” The pursuit of answers to questions of meaning and purposefulness is the transformative activity of spiritual intelligence that addresses the lack of integrity between precepts and practices. Spiritual intelligence is the deepest inner capacity (beyond the hardware of the brain, emotions, and psychological states) human beings possess that directs their perceptions or interpretations of the meaning of life and reality. It is a universe that engulfs, as well as governs, patterns of conscious and unconscious thoughts into coherent bits of meaning that can shape attitudes, mediate feelings, and guide behavior. The disciplines employed nurturing their spiritual intelligence throughout the discovery and perpetuation of meaning and value in what people do and experience is spirituality.

Intentionally cultivating spirituality without neglecting other human dimensions can provide officers with an effective invisible weapon for defense against evil and its toxic wounds. This result follows because spirituality is more capacious than stress management and more ubiquitous than intuitive policing. It defies a simplified definition. Just as entertaining holistic thoughts while punching a heavy bag or inhaling nature’s beauty while eclipsing mile 2 on a 4-mile run invigorates the spirit, mind, and body, intentionally cultivating spirituality increases awareness and intuitive accuracy. The undeniable affirmative effect of positive intuitive policing, coupled with the acknowledged benefits of developing emotional intelligence and effective stress management, on officer safety and survival is evidence that efficient, constitutionally sanctioned law enforcement can include the spiritual dimension.

Discussing the reality of spirituality has profoundly
resonated with law enforcement officers. The author’s first foray into this arena, “Spirituality: The DNA of Law Enforcement Practice,” brought diverse responses that reflected a unifying acknowledgment of the significance of spirituality across the broad spectrum of law enforcement positions.11

“I think the article is...a subject to which we should be paying more attention.... I think you nailed the basic problem: if we are continuously exposed to the toxicity of evil, it will have a corrosive effect.”12

“Two weeks ago, I lost a fellow officer to suicide, the eighth...in my 25-year career.... I hope and trust that you will continue your research to identify causes and solutions to counteract the ideation of suicide for the members of the law enforcement community.”13

“I have served for nearly 14 years and have recently attempted to broach the subject that your article uniquely describes. My...vision is to offer spiritual support to officers who encounter various issues that you have aptly labeled ‘evil’ in your article.”14

In view of the affirmative, experientially based consensus captured in these comments, the author provides the salient ideas from his first article; presents the Spirituality in Law Enforcement Practice Model and explains how it relates to practice, performance, vitality, and longevity in the profession; and discusses the inextricable nexus between all human dimensions to underscore how spirituality relates to ethics, emotional intelligence, intuitive policing, and stress management. This approach can demonstrate what resonated with readers of his first article. That is, the embrace of spirituality does not weaken law enforcement. Rather, it liberates its members to greater service through informed practice and guided performance.

SYNOPSIS OF SALIENT IDEAS

Several key insights about spirituality emerged from the author’s research presented in his first article.15 Among these, spirituality is the continual, intentional nurturing of the inner person (spirit) that motivates and implements the spirit of the law. Spirituality is not sectarian nor institutionalized in denominations and, thus, is different from religion. But, religion can nurture spirituality and vice versa. In addition, spirituality in law enforcement constitutes an essential internal coping power for identifying and confronting the reality of evil and its toxicity across careers. A true understanding of spirituality reveals that more than tactical training is needed to combat current conditions affecting officers. Law enforcement training academies must include spirituality in their curricula; officers must take charge of their own spirituality; and agencies and communities must become actively involved in the effort.

Finally, congruent with the vision of America’s founders, the basic mission of law enforcement officers—as agents of respective governments—is to protect life through service. In this context, law enforcement constitutes a fiduciary trust that, at its best, can only be fully embraced and pursued in the context of spirituality-oriented policing. Officers can apprehend those who murder, rape, and pillage citizens because society has authorized them to use force to secure life and liberty. As the vanguard of national security, they protect this country from international and domestic terrorism. Yet, their basic mission—to protect and serve—isc fraught with repeated
exposures that wound them in every human dimension. Thus, embracing spirituality as the DNA of law enforcement can free officers everywhere to cultivate an essential invisible weapon of protection.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS**

Officers responding to catastrophic events, horrific crime scenes, traffic fatalities, or domestic disturbance calls must follow standard operating procedures and comply with administrative protocol to protect themselves, safeguard their communities, and ensure the proper conclusion of non-criminal matters and the appropriate resolution or disposition of criminal investigations. At no time during the execution of these official duties can they engage in activities that interfere with, detract from, or impair their abilities to act with physical and moral courage. Yet, these duties exact a heavy toll on officers who then need to filter such experiences through their own spiritual lens.

As the governor of law enforcement practices, spirituality calls forth a level of professional performance that propels wounded warriors away from mere survival and toward vitality and holistic wellness. Survival is a low bar. Giving the best part at work and taking an expended empty self home is survival. Officers must be allowed to do more than just survive their chosen profession; they must thrive. Spiritual wellness produces exemplar life-giving performances throughout the course of a meaningful life and vocation. When officers fail to comprehend the inherent spiritual nature of their mission, they face a resulting void that can create a contradiction of meaning and manifest as corruption, illness, dispiritedness, and similar maladies, all capable of-inflicting debilitating wounds. Just as when matter meets antimatter, a black hole forms, or when fire meets gas, an explosion ensues, when officers lose sight of the nobility inherent in their profession, they can slide down a slippery slope that, for some, leads to the black hole of suicide. When officers lose the fire of spirituality, they implode into the abyss.

“Promoting spiritual wellness and mental survival... should begin at the recruitment stage. Just as we train with firearms, officer safety, and legal issues, I believe the same type of attention is needed for spiritual wellness and mental survival of officers.”

“As leaders of the organization, I believe that it is very important to emphasize spiritual wellness and mental survival to all associated with our group. This aspect of wellness is just as important to a new hire as it is to a veteran trooper. Thus, the success of this program depends largely upon those of us in a position to positively impact this life-changing practice.”

“Training should be fluid and constantly changing. We always should be concerned with finding the best way to train our personnel, not the fastest or least expensive way. Our goal as administrators should be to retain our personnel and maintain their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This should be a priority.”

These comments from law enforcement leaders support the author’s belief that just as agencies institute safeguard strategies for their officers in high-risk assignments, such as undercover operations, they should provide similar care for all officers so they can resist the toxicity of evil and its harmful effects and remain strong, vibrant protectors.
Spirituality is the human dimension that shapes law enforcement practice, performance, vitality, and longevity. This model connects spirituality with these four areas. Moving from left to right, the model posits that spirituality is the source of effectiveness for stress management, ethics, intuitive policing, and emotional intelligence. In short, it amplifies them, and they, in turn, feed back into spirituality in a healthy cycle. On the right side, spirituality affects the vitality, longevity, performance, and practice of law enforcement by enabling officers to recharge themselves in the spirit of the law throughout their period of vocational active duty. A nurtured spirituality improves practice, performance, vitality, and longevity, which all feed back into spirituality to improve emotional intelligence, intuition, ethics, and stress management.

**Spirituality Enhances Practice**

Understanding why the spiritual practice of law enforcement is essential to the continued orderly advancement of civilization and how the equitable enforcement of just laws informs performance represents a source of vitality for some officers throughout their vocational lives. Practice—how and why officers fulfill their sworn responsibilities—is the essential building block of effective, efficient, ethical, and equitable law enforcement. "Being a police officer is not only the hard tough guy catching the bad guy, enforcing the law but also a caring and helpful person who takes the extra time to give that helping hand when someone needs it. This is what has helped me cope with the unsightly side of law enforcement."  

Why officers are in this vocation determines how they practice. How they practice influences their day-to-day performance. "Spirituality in policing can be seen when an
Vitality is important because repeated exposures keep officers in constant start-up mode.

It was truly a heartbreaking task but one I felt I had to do personally, rather than send another officer who may not be as compassionate to that girl’s mother.”

Failure to appropriately connect why and how officers practice most often leads to the development of coping mechanisms that, while temporarily effective, exacerbate the wounds caused by exposures. Most officers identify “dark humor” as a primary coping mechanism, although many acknowledge it as a cover-up for what they need. “Finding humor in awkward situations relieves tension and gives officers an outlet on the spot. One example that comes to mind was when I was working as a detective in the sexual assault unit. The subject matter is possibly some of the most vile an investigator can handle but approaching it with a little humor brought some stress relief, and it was outwardly more acceptable to laugh when what many of us would have preferred to do was cry (and frankly, at times, we did).”

Spirituality Improves Vitality

Embracing resilience is a spiritual act itself because the desire to overcome is constantly under assault. “In my career, I have seen a great deal of human tragedy... After a while, these kinds of events begin to run together, and they become intertwined somewhere in the back of my mind. Other events, however, are stuck right in my forebrain. For example, I can tell you, in great detail, about each of the calls I’ve been on where a child has been killed or seriously injured, just as though they happened this morning, and, because of this, I’m harder on my kids. I find myself on them constantly about wearing their bike helmets, staying
away from the street, and out from behind parked cars.... I’m equally troubled each time an officer anywhere in the country does something out of line that makes the news. Each time an event like this occurs, the public’s confidence in the police is further eroded.”

Vitality is important because repeated exposures keep officers in constant start-up mode. "I understand that each exposure sets the stage for things to return to the ‘new normal.’ The way it was never will be again. Acceptance and coping require that realization. Life, freedom, and sanity are worthy of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice.”

Mending the spirit of a wounded warrior is a worthy goal that can be achieved. "I consider myself to be very well-adjusted and well-rounded, but that has not happened by accident. It requires a conscious effort and the help of others. I also have made a point of cultivating friendships outside law enforcement. I think this is one of the best things a person in this work can do.... This keeps me connected to people and minimizes the possibility that I will fall prey to that notion that it is us against the rest of the world and that ‘no one understands what we go through.’ I have found people understand quite a bit if you let them in and give them the opportunity to understand.”

**Spirituality Fosters Longevity**

The spiritual well-being of officers should be a primary concern beginning at recruitment and continuing until after retirement. “The question for us leaders is whether we want our employees to collapse as they cross the finish line or have an opportunity to continue to enjoy their life and reflect back positively on their years on the job.”

The presence of a moral compass and appropriate coping mechanisms represent major indicators of officer success, and agencies should not overlook or minimize them. In addition to offering their officers appropriate assistance for external exposures, departments should ensure that workplace conditions foster positive morale. “I have discovered the importance of the department’s employee assistance program and the benefits that it offers to those in times of need. As leaders...we must ensure that our member’s spiritual and mental wellness is addressed constantly.”

Unfortunately, positive results do not always occur. “During my career, I have made numerous arrests; handled several high-profile cases; responded to numerous death scenes, including homicides and criminal child/infant deaths; testified against fellow officers in disciplinary hearings and criminal proceedings; and attended several police funerals for partners and coworkers. Aside from the child-death scenes and the frequent homicides, my biggest source of frustration and stress had more to do with the internal pressures from within the department, rather than the external pressures associated with handling crime in the community.”

**CONNECTIONS TO OTHER STRATEGIES**

"Spiritual intelligence makes us the fully intellectual, emotional, and spiritual creatures that we are.”

Cultivating spiritual intelligence cannot be achieved through training officers only in emotional intelligence, intuitive policing, ethics, or stress management, regardless of the rigor or repetitiveness. All of these disciplines are worthy, but alone none can offer sufficient protection from the intentional exposures of
law enforcement as attested by personal testimonies of wounded warriors that appear in the remainder of this article.

**Spirituality Nurtures Ethics**

Spirituality nurtures ethics, and ethical practice nourishes the spirit of wounded warriors. Compliance with ethical standards, however, does not invoke spirituality. This commonly held misperception—that ethics and spirituality are synonymous—leaves the erroneous conclusion that compliance with ethical standards makes a person spiritual. Based upon this error, law enforcement traditionally has mandated annual instruction in ethics with the intent that this scenario-based training will inspire practice, build self-esteem, foster internal cohesion, and fulfill the need to derive meaning from purposeful work. But, distinguishing spirituality and ethics constitutes more than an academic hairsplitting exercise. “I remember you discussing this article...and now I have a copy. The timing couldn’t be better because I am in the process of preparing a lesson plan for a December ethics in-service for the department and have been struggling. I took the two ethics classes at the NA this past summer, but the subject matter just didn’t quite fit into what I needed. Your article is going to fulfill that need.”

“The spiritual well-being of officers should be a primary concern beginning at recruitment and continuing until after retirement.”

**Spirituality Nourishes Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence refers to the measurement of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management or social skill. To manage others well, leaders first must evaluate and address their personal strengths, deficiencies, needs, and competencies and then learn to self-manage before attempting to manage others. Absent truthful introspection and restraint, good intentions will be sabotaged by the display of inappropriate emotions. “Leadership is an emotional process where leaders display emotions in an effort to stimulate emotions in others. Emotions and moods impact our thinking and even the decisions we make and ultimately generate an attitude that we display through behavior and habits.”

The plight of wounded warriors operating without the awareness and restraint of emotional intelligence or the resilience of a developed spirituality can adversely affect unsuspecting citizens. “By its very nature, law enforcement can cause an officer to become cynical and profoundly negative. Many officers, but not all, are inundated with negative feelings of distrust and disdain. They come in contact with the worst sorts of situations, and we teach them to be safer by trusting less, which fosters the ‘us versus them’ culture. Citizens are oftentimes treated like subjects because, from a safety perspective, we use degrees of coercion to control people’s actions. We must be able to establish control, and, unfortunately, these situations become unpleasant experiences for otherwise law-abiding people. These negative encounters don’t just occur on the street. They occur in the office as well, and some cops will attest that they are more affected by the interoffice stress and negatives...”
than what actually occurs on the street.”

The genesis of truthful introspection, awareness, and restraint for the well-being of self and others is spirituality—a sense of meaning and purpose larger than the instrumental duties of law enforcement. The prescribed order for developing emotional intelligence (scrutinizing self before attempting to help others) affirms the loci of emotional intelligence in another, perhaps larger, intelligence. In view of this, the development of emotional intelligence includes the embrace of spirituality or spiritual intelligence. Emotion constitutes the coding or interpretation of, or reaction to, the signals provided by spirituality. Thus, as with ethics, spirituality nurtures emotions, and the exercise of emotional intelligence nourishes the spirit of wounded warriors.

**Spirituality Governs Intuitive Policing**

The word *intuition* means “immediate apprehension or cognition.”

In the context of law enforcement, some researchers have explained intuitive policing as a neurological decision-making process that officers frequently employ but find difficult to explain to those unfamiliar with the concept. This perspective suggests that intuitive policing is learned law enforcement behavior initiated through realistic training scenarios and reinforced through on-the-job instruction by seasoned field training officers. Specifically, officers learn intuitive-policing strategies through experience, responding to situations based on a few indicators as opposed to many or even a body of knowledge.

Because intuitive policing, or rapid cognition, is reliant upon stimulation from the environment, agencies must ensure

that, through the cultivation of spirituality, their officers and the communities they serve are insulated from injury through the application of positive, rather than negative, intuitive policing.

Spirituality refers to disciplines undertaken in the care and furtherance of the wholesome or holistic development of the spirit. The author suggests that intuition is a signal of spirituality. In law enforcement, spirituality abounds when

officers, while adhering to the letter of the law, perform and practice their profession in accord with the spirit of the law. Human dignity is rooted inexorably in spirituality. The dignity of officers, along with those against whom laws are enforced and those who benefit from equitable enforcement of just laws, becomes injured when intuition is compromised by underdeveloped spiritual awareness or the active presence of evil. Spiritual depravity, or dispiritedness, robs officers of discretion, thus rendering them incapable of compassionate and protective enforcement.

Intuition senses evil and danger at the hidden level of spirituality in much the same way as the sonic boom tangibly indicates that a supersonic aircraft has broken the sound barrier by excessive speed. Given the overwhelming response by law enforcement officers to questions regarding belief in a higher power and the difference between religion and spirituality, the author believes cultivating spirituality as an invisible weapon for wounded warriors will govern both the immediacy and accuracy of intuitive policing.

**Spirituality Enables Stress Management**

“Stress and spirituality are partners in the dance of life.” Stress is the inability to
cope with a perceived (real or imagined) threat to a person’s mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being that results in a series of physiological responses and adaptations. Stressors, the circumstances, situations, or other factors that cause or promote stress, are not inherently evil. Rather, people’s beliefs about and reactions to dangerous incidents or events that threaten their liberty or well-being influence their responses. They label these events stressful, and, most often, their responses include anger or fear. Unresolved, either can spiral downward into loss of control. Herein resides the impetus for stress management.

Hans Selye, one of the pioneers of stress management, said, “I cannot and should not be cured of my stress but merely taught to enjoy it.” Stress management identifies and implements acceptable coping mechanisms that enable individuals to validate perceptions and then respond appropriately to stressors. Stress management training attempts to make people aware of and able to control stress in their lives and often includes cognitive restructuring, physical exercise, nutritional management, effective communication, and resource allocation. Several researchers have identified spirituality as an effective means of managing stress, finding that spirituality plays an important role in the lives of healthy individuals and that many people, regardless of the status of their health, rely on their belief systems as a coping mechanism during stressful events. Therefore, effective stress management training must address every component of well-being: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. “Through these activities, I have been able to maintain a healthy mind, body, and perspective, not just through physical activity itself but through the social interaction with people of similar interests outside ‘the job.’ It helps me to remember that there are still good people out there.” I think I have been more inclined to view those stressful moments as tests of my ability to adapt to various circumstances. The other part of that test, and one that I believe is missed by many people, is to understand where that experience fits in one’s life and how each of us will reconcile it so it does not have a lingering stressful impact.”

Absent intentional spirituality, the coping mechanisms people adopt to manage stress often increases it. Then, they become a stressor to others. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that law enforcement training academies should consider stress management and spirituality as complementary disciplines. “It was during my basic training that I had my first look at anything really bloody or violent. We were given some crime scene photos to review and see what we thought the potential evidence may have been. The pictures were taken at a murder scene, and there was a lot of blood and a body. I had never seen a dead body in that condition before. I remember feeling sick to my stomach and wondering how people could treat each other that way. That was my first experience at dealing with the stress and violence of my new profession. After class that day, the instructor pulled me to the side and asked if I was okay. He said that he knew the photos had affected me. He told me that, in the future, I would be facing a lot of things that were terrible to look at and harder to forget. He said that I needed to learn to control my emotions because people would be counting on me to be
brave and make decisions and
do the right thing when every-
thing around me was falling
apart.”

CONCLUSION

The absence of protection from toxic exposures during the execution of peacekeeping ser-
vice, coupled with the ominous presence of evil, gives rise to a law enforcement officer’s need for the affirmation of self-worth,
clarity of values, meaningful life experiences, and connected-
ness that transcends personal,
cultural, and spatial limitations. Spiritual dormancy discourages appropriately accessing per-
sonal practices in search of much-
needed revival and restoration.
Spiritual dormancy at any level fosters spiritual bankruptcy. In today’s world of violence and terrorism, spiritual dormancy can no longer be the accepted practice. Likewise, spiritual bankruptcy cannot remain the norm for officers exposed to injury from evil and its toxic effects.

Undisputed evidence of the wounds inflicted upon officers as the result of acute and chronic exposures during and after investigative activities, whether short or long, cry out for the development and implementation of safeguards. The cultivation of spirituality in law enforcement, at both the individual and organ-
izational levels, can operate as an invisible weapon for wounded warriors. “Our great-
est assets are the people with whom we work. We should treat them as our most precious resource. We need to handle them with care. We need to acknowledge that people work to live, not live to work. ‘Once you choose law enforcement as a career you give up the right to be unfit.’ This must apply to fitness both mentally and physically.”

Endnotes

2 This article emphasizes spirituality as the missing link in law enforcement. The use of spirituality as the designated focus, rather than the spirit, is intentional. Spirit and spirituality are related but distinguished. The former (spirit) depicts the unobservable source of our innermost being, while the latter (spirituality) refers to the wholesome or holistic development of the spirit.
7 Ibid.
11 Feemster.
12 Michael A. Mason, former executive assistant director of the FBI, e-mail message to author, November 9, 2007.
13 Major Scott L. Salley, chief of Corrections and Judicial Services, Collier County, Florida, Sheriff’s Office, e-mail message to author, November 16, 2007.
14 Officer John E. Standley, Columbus, Ohio, Division of Police, e-mail message to author, November 24, 2007.
15 Under the auspices of the Behavioral Science Unit at the FBI Academy, the author surveyed four National Academy (NA) ses-
sions, wherein out of approximately 1,000 students, 747 of them participated. The FBI