Abstract:
This work investigates the experience of Street Pastors in Lambeth, especially in its partnership with the police and local authority; and asks to what extent such a partnership can be seen as a valid expression of Christian mission.

The first chapter places Lambeth Street Pastors in its historical, social and theological contexts. In this it pays particular attention to some contemporary re-assessments of the nature of Christian hope and the nature of Christian mission.

Chapter 2 listens to the experiences of the different partners in the Lambeth initiative. It does this through a series of recorded, semi-structured interviews with representatives from Street Pastors, the Police and Lambeth Council.

Chapter 3 moves on to look at some of the biblical resources which might help to interpret and evaluate this experience, and also help to shape a possible theology of partnership.

Chapter 4 examines issues arising from the wider church’s experience of partnership in mission. For example, reflection on Christian social action in South Africa highlights the underlying tension between a pragmatic and a prophetic approach to social engagement. The image of ‘partnership as dance’ is explored; and the need to be alert to the dynamics of power within partnerships is highlighted.

The Conclusion suggests that, while it is impossible to prove a theology of partnership per se, working in partnership with secular bodies is consistent with the nature of God as revealed in and through the missio Dei. It identifies themes of commonality, tension and mutuality as the contours of a possible theology of partnership. It also suggests that Street Pastors should pay attention to a number of issues such as: further developing a theology of holistic mission, power issues, the importance of indwelling and rigorous double-listening, and the need to remain centred in God. Finally, some recommendations are made about the development of the initiative.