Rev. Tony Cooper is passionate about his work with the Jimmie Hale Mission and has served as its Executive Director since 1990. He might be so enthusiastic because he used to help out at his hometown's rescue mission when he was a teenager. Maybe he takes recovery so seriously because both his father and step-father were alcoholics. Maybe it is because he grew up poor, the oldest of eight children. For whatever the reasons may be, he has dedicated his life to helping people in need.

Both he and his wife, Dale, were raised in Pensacola, Florida. These high school sweethearts married in 1968, and then he served in the U.S. Army in Belgium, where their son, Anthony ("Little Tony"), was born. A couple of years later, they moved to Georgia for Tony to earn his bachelor's in Bible and Theology from Toccoa Falls College (Georgia), and there the couple welcomed the arrival of their second son, Ben. Upon graduating, the Coopers moved back to Pensacola, and Tony worked at the Waterfront Rescue Mission, earned his master's degree in Counseling from Troy State University, and later was pastor of Midway Baptist Church. In August 1990, Tony and his family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where he became the Executive Director of the Jimmie Hale Mission.

Downtown Jimmie Hale Mission, Inc. is a Christian-based, 501(c)(3) charitable organization, which helps homeless, hungry and hurting men, women and children get back to life. Its mission statement is "to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the men, women and children in our community by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ." Tony's vision has always been to help people. Under his leadership the Jimmie Hale Mission has become one of the most recognized and respected nonprofit organizations in Central Alabama. Since his arrival, its ministries have grown considerably to include:

- **Jessie's Place**, an intermediate shelter for women and children;
- **Royal Pines Center**, a rural recovery program for men;
- **Shepura Men Center**'s relocation to the renovated old Thomas School, and its campus expansion includes a chapel, dining hall, and education and administration building;
- **Stewart Learning Centers** for education remediation and employment readiness, which help men and women return to the workforce.
- **Discovery Clubs**, which serves as a preventative branch of the Mission ministries, provide Bible clubs for elementary school children after hours; and
- **Mission Possible Bargain Centers**, fundraising thrift stores in Adamsville, Eastwood, Hanceville, Homewood, Jasper, Pinson and Woodlawn.

Tony Cooper is a loving husband, father and grandfather. Rev. Cooper is a founding member of the Alabama Rescue Services Association, a board member of the Better Business Bureau and the Metro-Birmingham Evangelical Ministers Association, a former national board member and active member of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, and a member of the Alabama Association of Nonprofits, Downtown Kiwanis, Leadership Birmingham, and Gardendale's First Baptist Church. He is a trustee of the Birmingham Business Alliance, the Hoover Chamber of Commerce, and the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce, and also a member of Chambers of Commerce in Blount County-Oneonta, Center Point, Clay-Pinson, Cullman, Gardendale, Greater Shelby County, Homewood, Irondale, Mountain Brook, Trussville, and Walker County.

THE JIMMIE HALE MISSION