Pastor Ilie Coada, Moldova. Founder of Bethania Foundation

Rev. Ilie Coada earned the BWA Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights award in 2014 for good reason. Rev. Coada has dedicated his life and resources to preventing young girls from becoming victims of human trafficking, even at risk to his very life. He opened a shelter for vulnerable girls, many of them fresh out of orphanages, to reside and to continue their education, as well as a transition home where girls attending schools in the city may go for holidays and weekends. Pastor Coada founded a community center that offers after-school and summer programs, including tutoring, to more than 500 children, so that risk of trafficking is reduced for youth in the area.

He instituted scholarships that enable girls at risk to attend vocational schools and university. He also developed greenhouses and other small businesses that offer employment to girls and women in the community so they may have paying jobs, helping them to take care of their children. He also began an elder-care program on the compound of the children's center so the elders can share meals and fellowship, and spend time with the children as "adopted grandparents."

Some human traffickers recruit directly from orphanages and Pastor Coada's work in these institutions has restricted their ability to recruit from the orphanages. This has resulted in threats on his life. His courage rests on his belief that "there is no fear in love."

"Pastor Ilie meets the threats of the mafia with wisdom, wit, courage and transparency," said the European Baptist Federation spokesperson. "He knows God's call on his life and he's willing to risk everything to follow the voice of the One who loves him and who has saved him."

Even while combating human trafficking, Pastor Ilie continues to pastor a local congregation and plant new churches in Moldova.

What a pleasure to be able to share some of the resources you have given through the Day of Prayer to this ministry that God is using in such powerful ways. Thank you for giving!