

## **BECOMING LOCAL**

Wallace [Alston] often quotes G.K. Chesterton in saying, “Nothing becomes real until it is local.” In that sense, it would seem like the elections in South Africa, the carnage in Rwanda and the insanity in Bosnia are destined to be forever unreal to us. Some may be glad to keep it that way! Yet, in the incredible providence of God, in God’s providing for the integrity of our lives and the dignity of others’ lives, we have been given a chance to make Bosnia “real” by bringing into our community an incredible family whose lives would otherwise be in terrifying danger.

“Mr. and Mrs. Kopanja are considered neither fish nor fowl in this conflict,” began the letter from Lutheran Community Services of New Jersey ... “as he is a Christian and she a Muslim. They are not acceptable to either side involved in this war and in consequence would be in great peril regardless of the outcome of the conflict.”

To say a bit more (which is all we know), Mrs. Kopanja is a dentist, Mr. Kopanja an economist and they have two daughters, ages 6 and 10. They will arrive in the next few weeks and need simply everything, for they come with barely the clothes on their backs. Clearly, we were not ready, but as Tom Charles and your editor talked, there was no question these people were a gift of God to us! We had to say “Yes” and to say so with great excitement and anticipation.

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We have been beside ourselves since Tom Charles called the office with the sheepish but assured suggestion from Lutheran Community Service that we move our timetable up! Please consider what part you can play in welcoming the Kopanjas as they incarnate in our midst the plight of hundreds of thousands of their people in a place which has only been headlines and now is about to become local. Thanks be to God!

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