



FTA Newsletter



An open letter to my international community

by **Mary Hotvedt**

Ph.D., anthropologist and MFT supervisor, past president AAMFT and Former Regent Chair of the Western New Mexico University.

Dr. Hotvedt is the Chair of International Faculty of the Family Therapy Academy. She is an anthropologist and a MFT and supervisor. She is involved in the application of those fields to community development, education, and public policy. To those ends, she worked as a University Regent and as a board member on community projects in her area and the state of New Mexico. Her area of research has been contemporary sexuality. She has had a longstanding relationship with the Family Therapy Academy.



I had said I would write three brief columns on community for the FTA. This is the second.

I want to begin with a big fat apology: As an American, unwittingly, I am party to the dismantling of the USA's commitments of much of the world. The majority of us here are angered and horrified by the government's statements and actions . Venezuela, Greenland, tariffs, NATO, Nigeria, South Africa, travel restrictions, Gaza and the supposed Peace Council. The list of shit-stirring by the current administration continues, upending any trust another nation could ever place in the US.

You may kindly say that this is not my fault. But I would not agree with you. My culpability is that I thought, smugly, that we Americans had truly embraced the ideals of equality and enlightenment, that the rage of the right was the last dying screams of the patriarchy and racism. I forgot the authoritarian "know nothingism" streak that defines much of our history.



Trump is ultimately not the problem. He will pass, reluctantly, from the stage. He is a symptom of long-simmering sentiments in this country, one we are all familiar with. We have been trained to think of our nation as almost all-powerful and great, an exception to world history. In fact, we are horribly ahistorical and world-ignorant. Many Americans are proud of our ignorance. We underteach history, world affairs, and civics in our schools, and have done so for at least two generations now. Too often we value money as a mark of success over all else and have geared our whole educational system to finding gainful employment rather than creating well-rounded citizens of the country and the world.

All is not lost-yet. Our rapid descent into a "Might Makes Right" authoritarianism is being countered by so many Americans in many nonviolent actions, and we are hopeful that this year's elections will turn the tide—although it looks like we will have a fight to maintain our election system. In the meanwhile, the influence of this president and his ruthless henchmen is having a profound effect on other nations and their people.



As signers of the Assisi Manifesto, we have pledged ourselves to a just world for all peoples, one in which families and individuals can thrive. We value an internationalism of the spirit, a belief that the fortunes of all are more important than the enhancement of a few. Now we, all of us, are being tested by a turn toward totalitarianism, a denial of the humanity of this people or that, a privileging of greed, and a disregard for knowledge and fact. It has never been more important that we maintain our stance and that we stay connected to each other as a true community of friends and professionals as we seek to right this dangerous tilt in the axis of the world.

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