

Cultivating a Revolutionary Spirit

Stories of Solidarity, Solar Cooking, and Women's Leadership in Central America

Laura Snyder Brown & William Fleet Lankford

An exemplary story of solidarity in action, *Cultivating a Revolutionary Spirit* conveys the exhilarating experience of being part of paradigm-changing revolutions.

Bill Lankford visited Nicaragua in 1984 to see the Sandinista revolution for himself. What he found led this physics professor to volunteer his skills teaching at the Central American University in Managua. There, he and his students developed a solar cooking project which took on a life of its own, spreading throughout the five countries of Central America.

In *Cultivating a Revolutionary Spirit*, Bill describes how local women used the tools of carpentry to build solar ovens and how they used the tools of feminism to take more control over their own lives and their communities. Bill leveraged his personal resources as a white North American man—professionally educated, fluent in English, with access to money and connections—to facilitate the work of Central American women who started by building ovens and went on to create an array of projects to meet basic needs, improve health, and increase access to educational and leadership opportunities for women.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

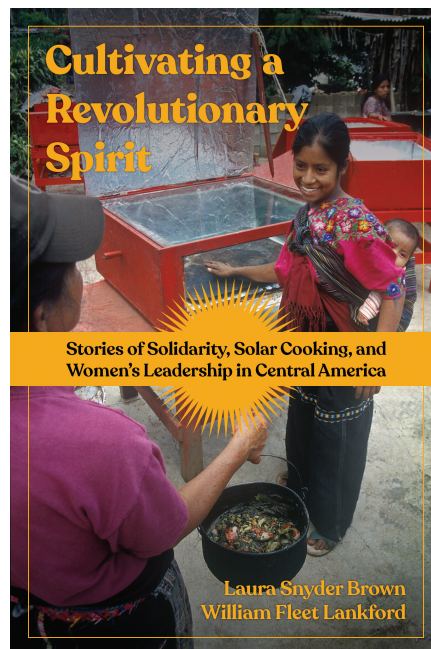
Laura Snyder Brown has worked with community-based organizations for nearly three decades, supporting women and women-led justice efforts in the US, and in Central and South America. She holds a master's degree in social work, is a graduate of the Living School at the Center for Action and Contemplation, and served with Maryknoll Lay Missioners (Chile, 2005). Laura is the co-founder of Casa Alma, a Catholic Worker community in Charlottesville, VA; there, she and her husband have raised three children while cultivating an urban homestead and providing hospitality for low-income families.

Born in Charlottesville, Virginia, **William Lankford** taught physics at George Mason University for 32 years. Midway through his career at George Mason, he was transformed by a study tour to Nicaragua, devoting increasingly more energy to the Central American solidarity movement. William taught introductory physics at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua for two years, which led to a Fulbright to study the solar cooking project he developed there. Throughout the 1990s, Bill wrangled several semester-long leaves from GMU and spent every vacation for 20 years expanding the Central American Solar Energy Project (CASEP) to all five Central American countries, directing the organization through 2022.

ACCOLADES

"This is a story of extraordinary commitment, deep solidarity, uncommon integrity, and humility—of learning about struggle and transformation from strong and courageous Central American women. Beautifully told. Hopeful. Rooted in reality."

—Marie Dennis, author of *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence*



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