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*The Central Figures*

# Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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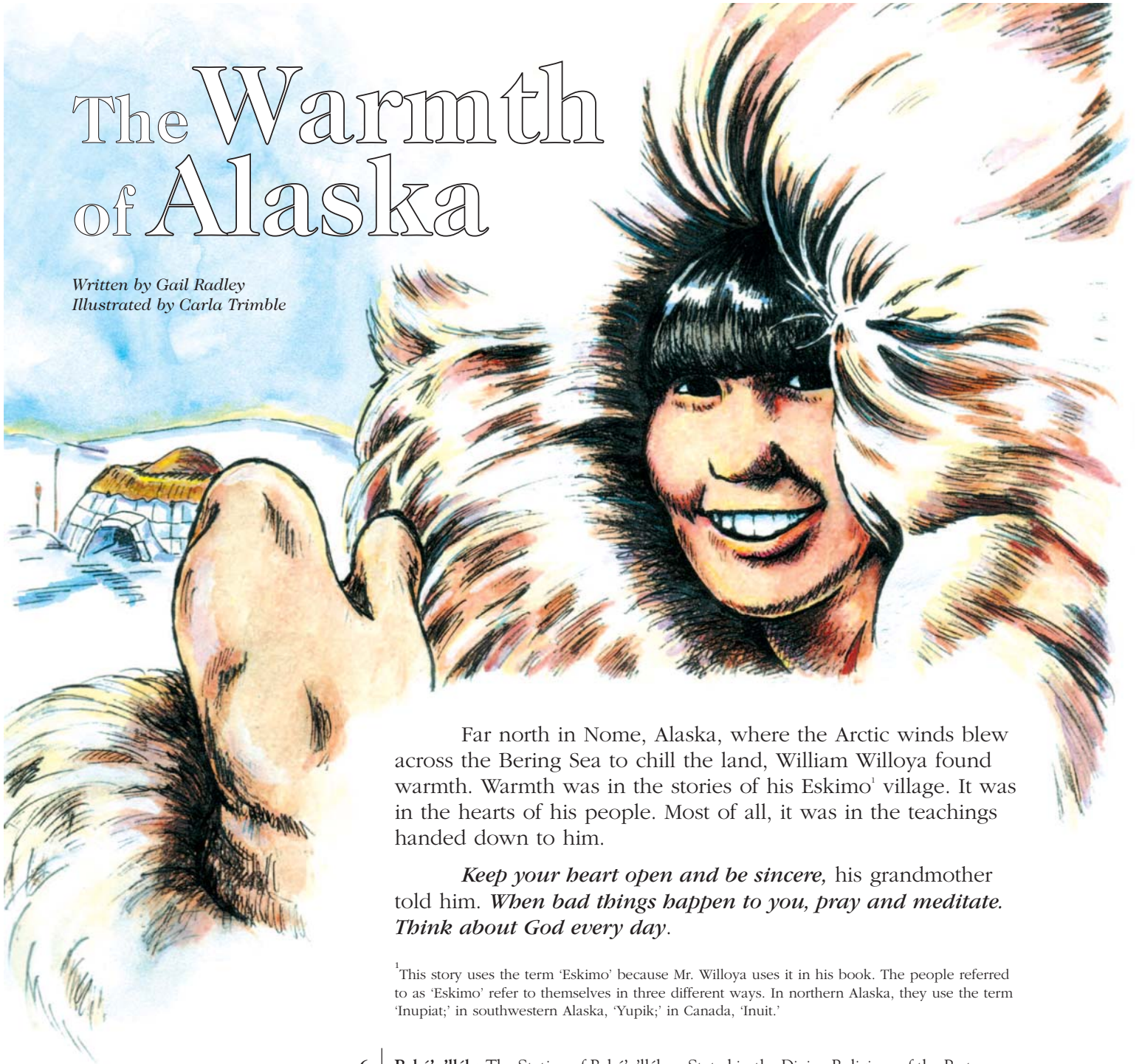
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# The Warmth of Alaska

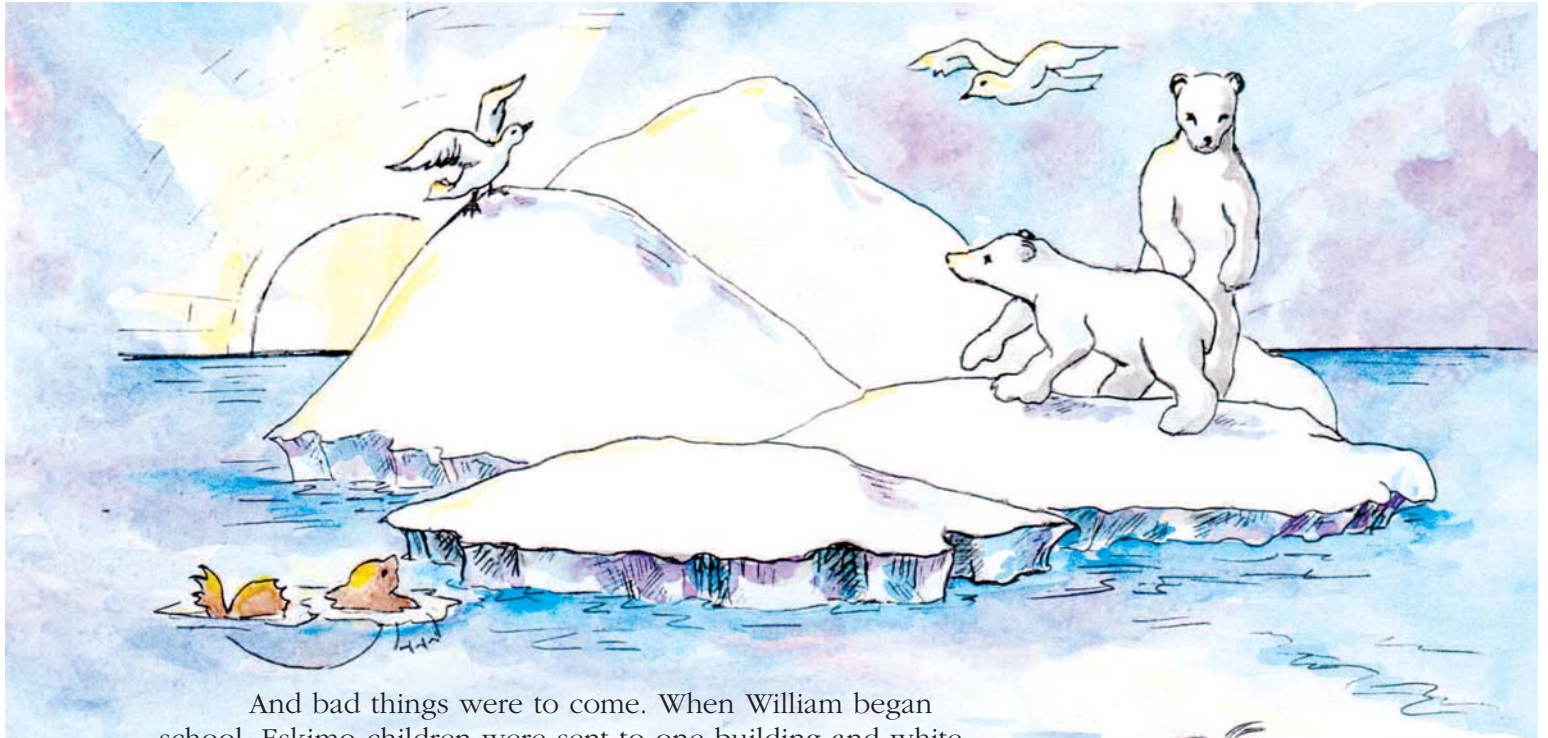
Written by Gail Radley  
Illustrated by Carla Trimble



Far north in Nome, Alaska, where the Arctic winds blew across the Bering Sea to chill the land, William Willoya found warmth. Warmth was in the stories of his Eskimo<sup>1</sup> village. It was in the hearts of his people. Most of all, it was in the teachings handed down to him.

*Keep your heart open and be sincere*, his grandmother told him. *When bad things happen to you, pray and meditate. Think about God every day.*

<sup>1</sup>This story uses the term 'Eskimo' because Mr. Willoya uses it in his book. The people referred to as 'Eskimo' refer to themselves in three different ways. In northern Alaska, they use the term 'Inupiat;' in southwestern Alaska, 'Yupik;' in Canada, 'Inuit.'



And bad things were to come. When William began school, Eskimo children were sent to one building and white children to another. *Why*, William wondered. William felt hate for the first time when white children called the Eskimos names.

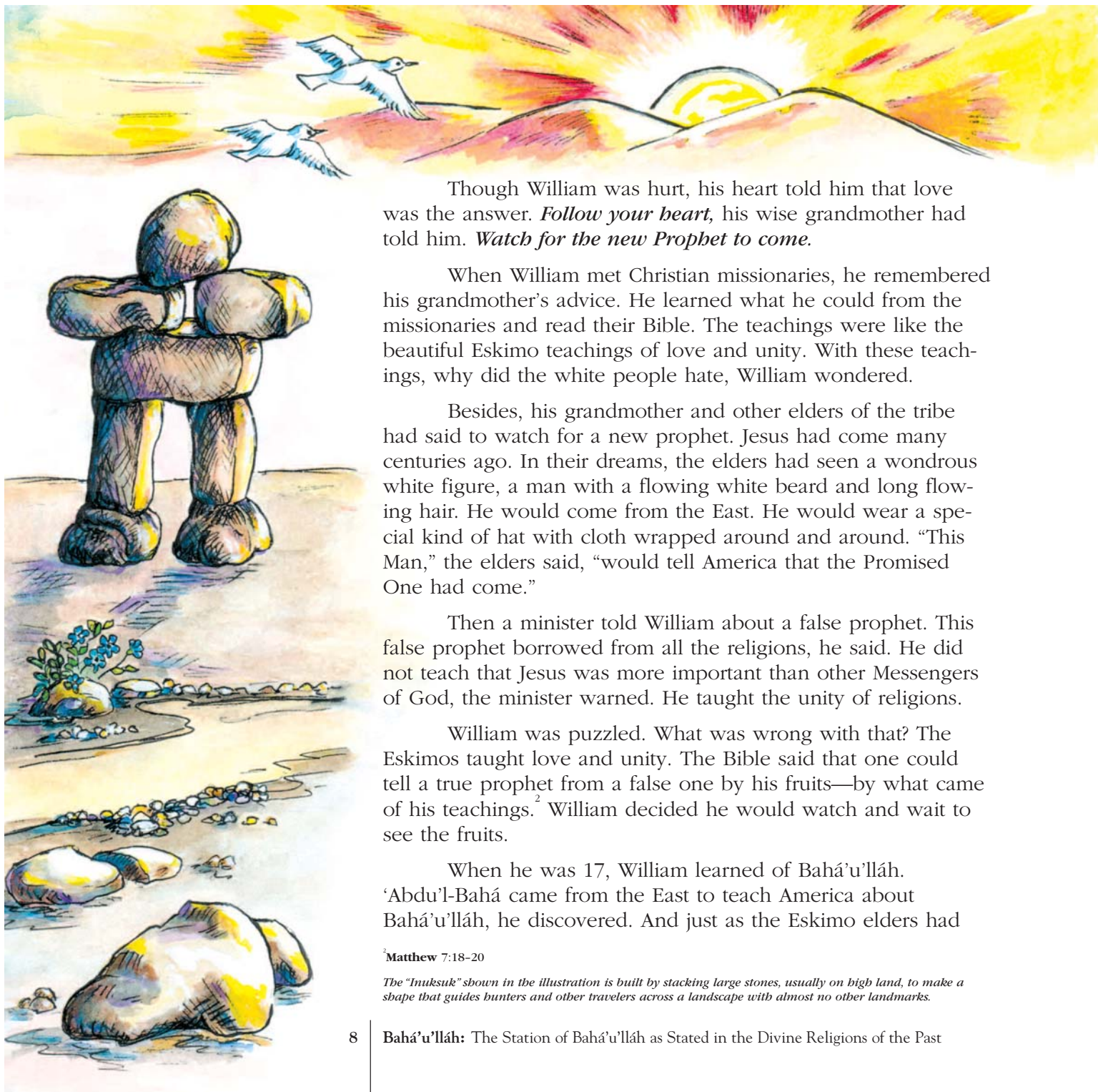
“I can still remember their faces twisting with meanness and the shrill hate in their shouts,” William wrote years later. “Blinded with tears and feeling I was not loved nor wanted, I asked my mother if I could leave this school.”

The Eskimo people were not surprised that they were treated badly. Their teachings had told them that strangers would take over. They knew that many Eskimos would become confused. They would lose touch with the Eskimo ways of love, unity, and godliness.

A long time passed before William could open his heart to the people who taught him about hate.

*The races don't know each other yet*, a friend told him.  
*Be patient.*

*There will always be evil*, said another.



Though William was hurt, his heart told him that love was the answer. *Follow your heart*, his wise grandmother had told him. *Watch for the new Prophet to come.*

When William met Christian missionaries, he remembered his grandmother's advice. He learned what he could from the missionaries and read their Bible. The teachings were like the beautiful Eskimo teachings of love and unity. With these teachings, why did the white people hate, William wondered.

Besides, his grandmother and other elders of the tribe had said to watch for a new prophet. Jesus had come many centuries ago. In their dreams, the elders had seen a wondrous white figure, a man with a flowing white beard and long flowing hair. He would come from the East. He would wear a special kind of hat with cloth wrapped around and around. "This Man," the elders said, "would tell America that the Promised One had come."

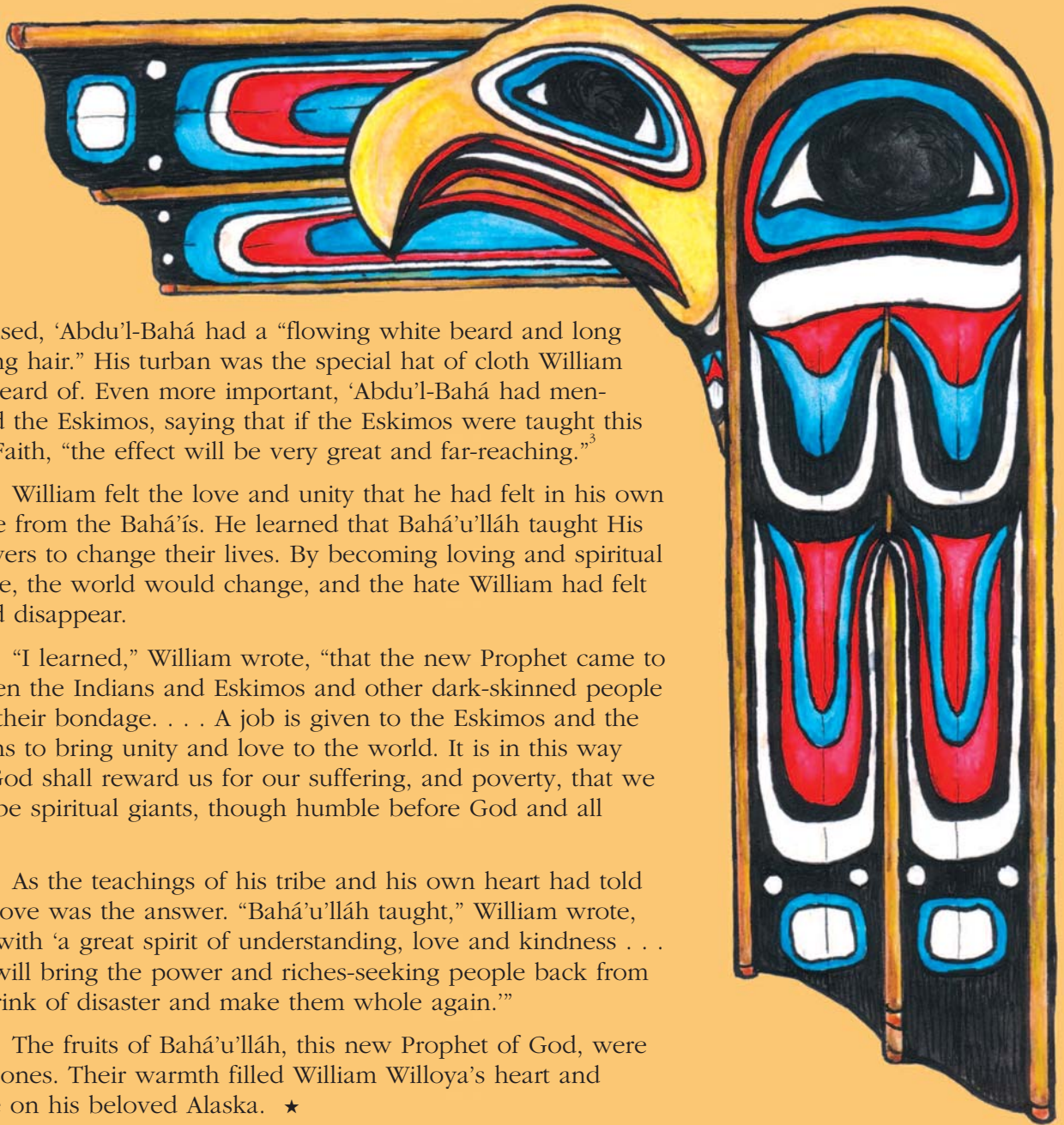
Then a minister told William about a false prophet. This false prophet borrowed from all the religions, he said. He did not teach that Jesus was more important than other Messengers of God, the minister warned. He taught the unity of religions.

William was puzzled. What was wrong with that? The Eskimos taught love and unity. The Bible said that one could tell a true prophet from a false one by his fruits—by what came of his teachings.<sup>2</sup> William decided he would watch and wait to see the fruits.

When he was 17, William learned of Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá came from the East to teach America about Bahá'u'lláh, he discovered. And just as the Eskimo elders had

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 7:18-20

*The "Inuksuk" shown in the illustration is built by stacking large stones, usually on high land, to make a shape that guides hunters and other travelers across a landscape with almost no other landmarks.*



promised, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had a “flowing white beard and long flowing hair.” His turban was the special hat of cloth William had heard of. Even more important, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had mentioned the Eskimos, saying that if the Eskimos were taught this new Faith, “the effect will be very great and far-reaching.”<sup>3</sup>

William felt the love and unity that he had felt in his own village from the Bahá’ís. He learned that Bahá’u’lláh taught His followers to change their lives. By becoming loving and spiritual people, the world would change, and the hate William had felt would disappear.

“I learned,” William wrote, “that the new Prophet came to awaken the Indians and Eskimos and other dark-skinned people from their bondage. . . . A job is given to the Eskimos and the Indians to bring unity and love to the world. It is in this way that God shall reward us for our suffering, and poverty, that we shall be spiritual giants, though humble before God and all men.”

As the teachings of his tribe and his own heart had told him, love was the answer. “Bahá’u’lláh taught,” William wrote, “that with ‘a great spirit of understanding, love and kindness . . . they will bring the power and riches-seeking people back from the brink of disaster and make them whole again.’”

The fruits of Bahá’u’lláh, this new Prophet of God, were good ones. Their warmth filled William Willoya’s heart and shone on his beloved Alaska. ★

<sup>3</sup>Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 28