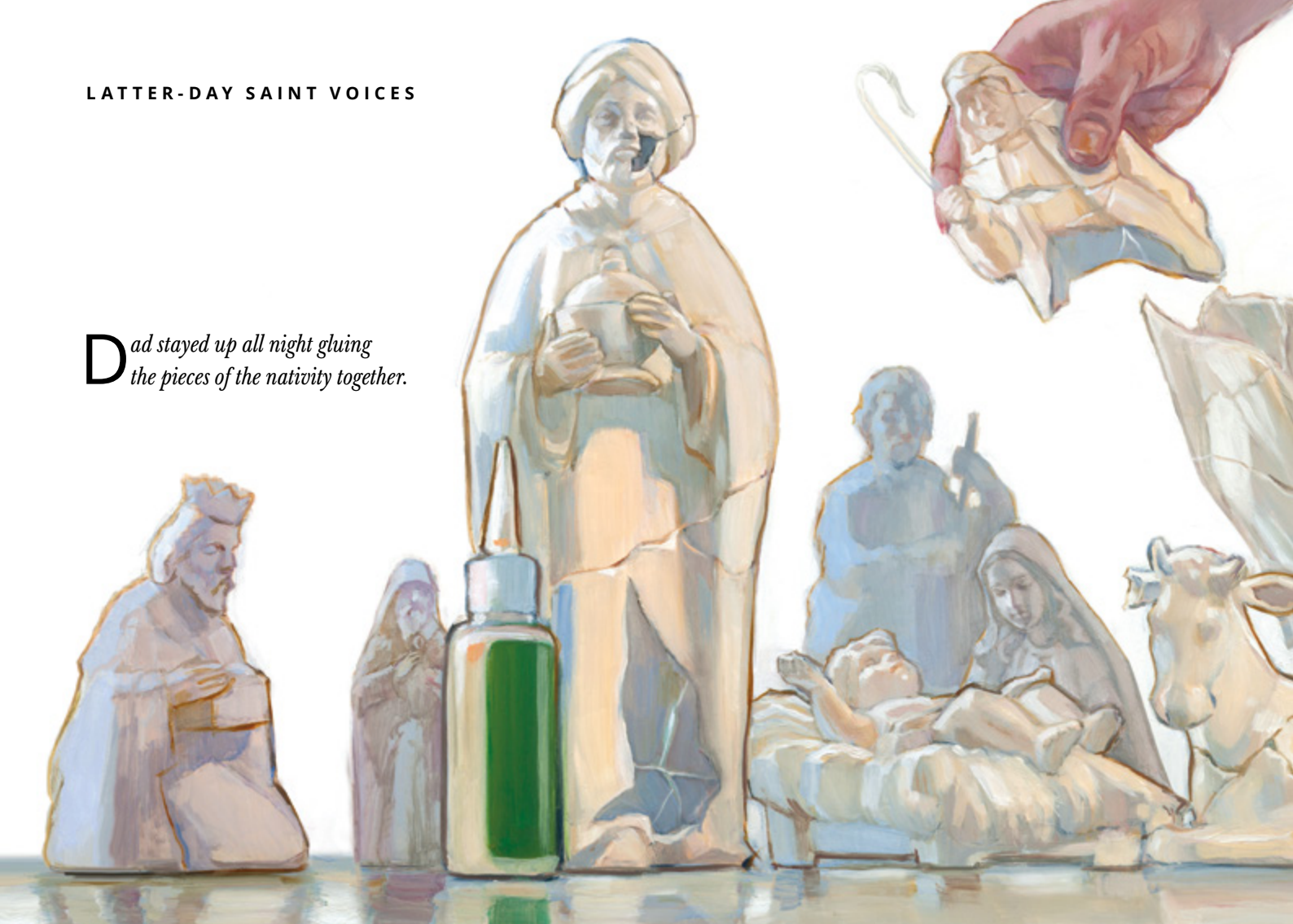


Dad stayed up all night gluing the pieces of the nativity together.



The Broken Nativity

As a child, I couldn't wait for Christmas. When Mom brought out the boxes of decorations, my five brothers and I knew that Christmas had begun. We would always set up the tree as a family. I still remember the handmade ornaments and the many shiny colored glass balls.

One part of the decorating, however, Mom took care of herself. My grandmother had made Mom a beautiful white porcelain nativity. Every year, Mom would set the nativity on the large mantel in the living room. I loved to sit and watch her put each figure in place. Under each figure, she put a tiny white

light from a string of lights. She taped one end of the lights to the mantel to secure them, and then she plugged them into the outlet behind the chair in the corner. When the mantel lit up, it was a beautiful sight!

One night, close to Christmas, my brothers got a little rowdy. The older ones chased my younger brother. In the midst of the chase, he hid behind the chair next to the mantel. When my brothers found him, he rushed to escape, but his foot caught the string of lights underneath the nativity. The small pieces of tape were no match for the pull of his foot. The delicate

nativity shot down from the mantel onto the red brick below, shattering into pieces.

Mom rushed into the living room. When she saw what had happened, she burst into tears and went to her room. She knew it was an accident, but the damage was done.

That night, after we were all in bed, Dad got out the dustpan and the broom and carefully swept up the broken pieces. Then he stayed up all night gluing the pieces together.

The nativity still bears some scars. The cow is missing an ear. One wise man is missing a piece from his face.



One shepherd is more glue than porcelain in some places. But, miraculously, the broken figures were mended.

Grandmother offered to make a new nativity, but Mom declined. She said her nativity means even more to her now. It serves as a symbol of the devotion of her loving husband and as a reminder of our loving Savior.

As we each muddle through this life, we may become broken in some way. We may even feel shattered into irreparable pieces. But we have a Savior, and we can become whole through His loving hands. ■

Elizabeth Lloyd Lund, Utah, USA