

BY WENDY KENNEY

An *Open House*



Opened My Heart

Eternal marriage just felt right to me.

I was 14 years old when I moved from California to the Salt Lake Valley, and I was more than a little worried about how I was going to fit in with all those Mormons I had heard about. One of the few things I knew about Latter-day Saints was that they didn't let people from other churches into their temples. That had been a big disappointment to me when my family stopped at Temple Square on our way through Salt Lake City on vacation. My parents had warned me that we wouldn't be allowed inside the temple, but I thought maybe they had changed the rules. "Sorry. Because the temple is so sacred, only people with a current temple recommend can go inside," the missionary told me.

A couple of years later the Jordan River Temple was nearing completion, and my LDS friends were excited to have a new temple close by. I didn't pay much attention to it until a man my father worked with invited our family to the temple open house. I hadn't realized that during an open house the temple is open to the public and that anyone could go inside. In a way, the rules had changed for me, at least until the temple was dedicated.

From the moment I stepped into the Jordan River Temple, I could tell there was something special about this new building. It was more than the physical beauty of the exterior or the lovely decor inside. Instead, it was the unique work that went on inside that most intrigued me.

At one point our guide led us into a sealing room and

showed us an altar where couples would kneel across from each other to be married for time and all eternity. As I gazed into the mirrors hanging on opposite walls in that room and saw countless images of my face, I knew in my heart that God intended for marriage to last forever. I was at the age when I was beginning to envision my future as a wife and mother, but I had never even considered that marriage could last longer than "till death do you part." My whole philosophy of marriage changed that day, and I decided then and there that I would marry someone for eternity.

There was one small problem. I didn't belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Fortunately, my LDS friends recognized a "golden opportunity," and began slowly teaching me about the Church. Though it took me a few years to feel comfortable meeting with the missionaries, I eventually overcame my anxiety, took the missionary lessons, and was baptized.

As I look back on the many people and events that led to my conversion, one event stands above the rest—the tour of the Jordan River Temple. That open house opened my mind to the sacred sealing ordinances performed in the temple and opened my heart to the dream of eternal marriage. A few years later when I went to the Salt Lake Temple to be married, I looked again into the endless succession of mirrors and knew my dream had become a reality. **NE**