Selling Ourselves Short

IN RECENT YEARS you’ve run articles about why young adults leave the Christian Reformed Church for nondenominational churches and about keeping young adults in the CRC. From my perspective as a member of 30-odd years, I think the main thing that turns people off is that members who grow up in the CRC tend to sell it short.

If you don’t believe in your product, who do you think is going to “buy” it?

As someone who became a Christian and joined the CRC at the age of 17, I think this denomination has a lot going for it. The warmth of the fellowship is the first thing that comes to my mind, because that’s what drew me in the first place. The first day I visited First Christian Reformed Church in Montreal, Quebec—Dec. 21, 1975—one of the minister’s daughters, Anneke Geleynse, introduced me to people who included me and made me feel I belonged right away.

I also appreciate the quality of teaching in the CRC. It is biblical and meaty, and the CRC produces a wealth of resource material. Compared to other denominations, our pastors undergo rigorous training to qualify for ordination. For example, they must master both Greek and Hebrew. These are only a few examples of the wealth at our disposal—if only we would avail ourselves of it, let alone encourage young people to do so.

For the 150th anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church, in 2007, I wrote this magazine a letter in which I challenged fellow members to flood the office of The Banner with love letters for the CRC. It never got published, even though this denomination does not exactly receive a plethora of affection from its members. If anything, I see a lot more bellyaching in letters to The Banner.

I would have thought a mountain of fan mail would be a problem most people would love to have. After all, who complains at having piles of love letters once in 150 years? Go figure.

I don’t understand the attitudes of people born in this denomination, but I’m sure that if we don’t do something to change them, young adults will keep leaving the CRC for churches that are more positive.

Let’s stop taking what we have for granted. God doesn’t owe us anything—not even a rich spiritual heritage! And let’s remember, relationships don’t just happen. You have to work at them.

Trick or Treat?
I am writing to express my disappointment with the article concerning Halloween by Robert Evan VandePolder (“Trick or Treat? Our Halloween Dilemma,” October 2011). The Bible says “the wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored,” and it is written, “I will set no vile thing before my eyes.” Christians have a mandate to be a light on a hill. We glorify God by celebrating life, not by participating in a holiday that celebrates death.

—Paula Kamerman
Manhattan, Montana

Calvin Prof’s in the News
It is stunning to read the story of John R. Schneider’s exit from the college (“Calvin College Religion Prof’s in the News; One Alleges College Is Being Dishonest,” October 2011). Scary, in fact, that the college cut a deal in the hopes the matter re the historicity of Adam and Eve would quietly go away. It won’t unless the college administration exhibits the necessary courage and takes the leap of faith required to promote honest scholarship. . . . Let the hounds of research roam freely in search of truth wherever it may be found. It is the Reformed way of doing business.

—Bill Lenters
Rockford, Ill.