

Waving the flags of capitalism and patriotism, they stand behind the motto of truth, justice, and the American way.

Every Saturday morning, bright-eyed and early, they gather at 2M Associates in Kirkland to hear the virtues of their way laid out and applauded by a man whose fires are fed by Christ and Amway.

The two complement each other, Christ and Amway that is, because according to Jim Galbraith, the truth comes from the soul as well as the pocketbook.

"Americans have lost their faith and hope," says the owner of 2M Associates, one of the area's largest Amway distributorships. "It's corny. But I don't sell soap, I sell hope."

Galbraith, a former television commercial actor and part-time evangelist, is one of many who discuss Christianity and Amway in the same breath treating both with a certain degree of reverence.

The gospel according to Amway is spreading like wildfire in a time when economic depression and spiraling unemployment are daily front-page news. Currently the Michigan-based firm counts 500,000 distributors in 18 countries and expects to top $1 billion this year in sales of over 2,000 products including everything from laundry soap to fertilizers.

Amway distributors claim their products - SAB laundry compound, Redu stain remover and Artistry II makeup - give consumers more for their money, as well as a money-back guarantee and door to door service.

This is a direct sales operation in which every employee is an independent dealer. Profits are made two ways: commissions on personal sales and percentages based on the number of other distributors.
'When faced with a mountain, I will not quit. I will keep on striving until I climb over, find a pass through, tunnel underneath — or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine, with God's help.' — Robert Schuller

Bob Marks, UW engineering Professor, describes how Amway can fulfill people's hopes and dreams

Roj Bjorklund gave up successful business to run Amway

story by EVELYN IRITANI

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Amway distributors are encouraged to purchase inspirational tapes and reading materials.
Amway: Soap and Hope

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Jim Galbraith says Amway 'family members' not only have dreams but a way to achieve them.

Amway family members not only have dreams but a way to achieve them, Galbraith says. Dwayne Mah-nar, a taxicab driver, foresaw world travel in the near future. Bob and Colleen Brooks, both in their early 20s, are working towards early retirement on their own ranch. Ron Fowler, a 9-year-old former salesman, has designs on a little piece of land tucked away on the nearby mountains.

"I've got a little spot picked out next to a little creek kind of filled with trout and steelhead," the grey-haired man says with a twinkle in his eye. "I'd like to build a mobile home there and just relax." Some people apparently achieve those dreams. The Amwayian, Amway's in-house magazine, is filled with pictures of smiling couples who have reached the "diamond" or "double-diamond" level and are earning at least several thousand dollars a month.

But others won't. Last year, the Federal Trade Commission found Amway guilty of misrepresenting its distributors' earning potential and fixing wholesale and retail prices on its products. The company was cleared, however, of charges of operating a pyramid scheme because it didn't require a large entry fee and offered a money-back guarantee.

Amway provides the plan and the products. The people provide the techniques. Some use door to door selling. Others hold Amway parties, along the Papperware mode. Many use random phone or letter solicitation. But most, at least on their network of family, friends and neighbors.

It is this use, or misuse, of social and familial ties that strikes fear or fear in the hearts of many. One Seattle woman says those ties were thin when out-of-town relatives turned a Mother's Day brunch into a sales pitch that wouldn't stop.

"I wanted to talk about her daugh-
ter who was very fond of," the woman says. "I wanted to gossip about other things. She didn't ask about our family or anything. It was right to the point of Amway forever. Turn it on and sell, sell, sell."

There is more than a hint of anger, resentment and betrayal in her voice, as she recalls that day. "I am angry, oh you bet I am, that they turned this reunion into a hustle. I still can't believe they were so insensitive to our feelings."

Others tell similar stories of the hard and soft sell hustle. Old friends inviting them over for a few cocktails and then pulling out the Amway growth charts and company brochures. The neighbor who holds a block party and turns the conversation into a pep talk on how to make a few more bucks with "Have I got something for you."

Amway distributors are drilled on successful direct selling techniques. Some use them and some won't. Don't tell potential customers too much over the phone or in the first part of the conversation. Find out what they like and dislike. Get them interested in the idea of making some extra money. Don't mention Amway too soon.

"I'm not trying to sell them something they don't want," Galbraith says of his potential customers. "I just want them to listen with an open mind."

Amway is not for everyone, he concedes, the bright smile fading momentarily. But not for long.

"This is not for people who aren't ambitious," he says enthusiastically, the broad grin back in place. "This is not a get rich scheme."

"I believe in me. I believe in America. I believe in Amway. Anybody can do it, but only if they are honest, have integrity and are willing to work."

Singer Pat Boone has been with Amway for years and his eldest daughter, Cherry Boone O'Neil, is a local distributor.