

Do Viewers Support Moral Majority?

New York (RNS) — Most television viewers, including those identifying with the Moral Majority, oppose programming restrictions, according to two major TV network studies.

An NBC-TV survey, conducted by the Roper Organization, found that relatively small percentages of both the general public and those defined as "fundamentalist" wanted to purge

the airwaves deemed excessively violent, sex-oriented or profane.

In a poll of viewer attitudes toward the 16 television shows most often criticized by conservative religious groups, the survey found that "Dallas" aroused the greatest opposition. Still, only about 10 percent of the general public and 15 percent of those respondents identified as fundamentalist wanted to take it off the air.

A separate study released by ABC-TV found that the majority of the public, and even those describing themselves as members of the Moral Majority, favored individual discretion in television viewing options as opposed to oversight by the networks, government or religious groups.

When asked who should "determine what TV programs are acceptable," 52 percent of the Moral Majority members and 64 percent of the general public said the individual should bear that responsibility. The comparison was 27 percent and 23 percent in favor of network responsibility and 7 percent and 2 percent in favor of religious organizations assuming that role.

carrying high levels of sex, violence and profanity. The coalition of conservative, religious groups, including the Moral Majority, has generated perceptions of widespread support for its efforts to strip objectionable television programming of advertiser support.

According to ABC, those who identified themselves with the Moral Majority tended to watch sex-oriented and violent television programs as much as the general public. The study of the Moral Majority's own viewing habits was carried out among the 92 adults, or 6.6 percent, of the total national sampling of 1,600 persons who said "Yes" to the question: "Do you consider yourself to be a member of the Moral Majority?"

ABC's Social and Technical Research Unit designed the questionnaire and performed the analysis of the survey data, but the polling was done independently last March by the National Survey Research Group.

Asked how accurately the 92 Moral Majority respondents could represent the movement as a whole, ABC statisticians admitted that the margin of error is "large" for such a small sample.



Legate at Congress

Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, legate of Pope John Paul II, arrives at the altar to celebrate an open-air Mass in Lourdes for the 42nd international Eucharistic Congress.

Both studies represented network attempts to thwart a boycott that the conservative Coalition for a Better Television is planning against corporate advertisers of shows

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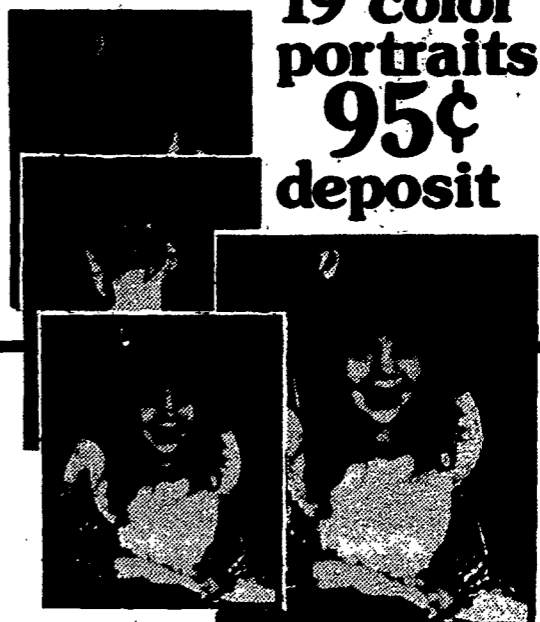
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