

America Is Not So Gay After All



If you watch television much this fall, you may come away with the impression that there are gay people in virtually every American family, but the statistics tell a different story.

The number of gay and bisexual characters on scripted network television programs is at its highest-ever level according to a study released in mid-October by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). The total on cable television has also risen.

The 17th annual “Where We Are On TV” report found that 4.4 percent of actors (31 of 701) appearing regularly on 97 scripted prime-time network and drama series during the 2012-2013 season will portray homosexual or transgender characters. That is up from 2.9 percent in 2011, which saw a dip in what had been a growing annual trend.

ABC leads with 10 out of 194, or 5.2 percent, of its regular characters identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT). After leading last year, Fox ranks second with 6 out of 118 total series regulars. The study saluted CBS’s fall lineup as “an authentic and conscious effort to improve its diversity” for having four homosexual characters, due to its new series “Partners.” The number of homosexual characters on so-called “mainstream” cable television has also increased this season to 35, up from 29 last season.

GLAAD President Herndon Graddick said such portrayals on TV reinforce cultural acceptance of homosexuality. As audiences tune in, said Graddick, “More and more Americans have come to accept their LGBT family members, friends, co-workers and peers.”

Hollywood and Homosexuality

Written by Ed Baswell

Monday, 03 December 2012 07:54 -

The topic of homosexuality has become so mainstream in recent years that the creators of TV programs no longer argue for its acceptance. Instead, they assume it, and homosexual actors reinforce that strategy with public pronouncements about their sexuality, according to a June 29th "Entertainment Weekly" cover story entitled, "By The Way, We're Gay."

"Pop culture is unmatched in its ability to lead a shift in the national mood," said Bob Waliszewski, director of Focus on the Family's Plugged In website, an Internet venue that seeks to "shine the light on the world of popular entertainment."

"We can't count on entertainment to depict activities like adultery, gossip, recreational drug use, rebellion and homosexual relations as anything but glamorous, fun, sexy and no big deal," said Waliszewski. "Until we follow Christ's example and despise the things that He died on the cross to save us from, it will be hard—perhaps impossible—to be truly discerning."

With all of that in mind, it appears America may not be as gay as Hollywood wants you to think. A blockbuster Gallup study concludes that only 3.4 percent of 312,000,000 million Americans self-identify as homosexual. There are other studies that put the number at less than 2 percent.

According to Gallup, this survey is the biggest single study of America's LGBT population ever conducted. Over a period of four months this year, from June 1 to September 30, Gallup canvassed the country by phone, interviewing more than 121,000 people.

The results were based on answers to this question, "Do you, personally, identify as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?" The new data is consistent with a Department of Health and Human Services study released last year which said only 3.8 percent of Americans are gay.

In addition, the results of the Gallup analysis run counter to some media stereotypes that portray the LGBT community as predominantly white, highly educated and very wealthy. The Gallup study broke down the percentages of people identifying themselves as LGBT across specific subgroups of the American population.

Hollywood and Homosexuality

Written by Ed Baswell

Monday, 03 December 2012 07:54 -

Nonwhites are more likely than white segments of the U.S. population to identify as LGBT. The survey results show that 4.6 percent of African-Americans identify as LGBT, along with 4 percent of Hispanics and 4.3 percent of Asians.

As far as gender, women are more likely to identify as LGBT than are men. Although the difference is not large, women are slightly more than likely to identify as LGBT than are men (3.6 percent vs. 3.3 percent). Put differently, more than 53 percent of LGBT individuals are women.

Younger Americans are more likely to identify as LGBT. Adults (6.4 percent), ages 18 to 29, are more than three times as likely as seniors (1.9 percent), ages 65 and older, to identify as LGBT. Among those aged 30 to 64, LGBT identity declines with age—at 3.2 percent for 30- to 49-year-olds and 2.6 percent for 50- to 64-year-olds.

What about LGBTs who are raising children? LGBT identification is lower among Americans with children under age 18 in their home (2.7 percent) than it is among those with no children younger than 18 in the home (3.9 percent).

Among women with children, 1.8 percent identify as LGBT, compared with 4.2 percent of men who do not have children under 18 in the home.

The Gallup poll also broke down LGBT identification by regions of the country. LGBT identification is slightly higher in the East (3.7 percent) and the West (3.6 percent) than in the Midwest (3.4 percent) and the South (3.2 percent).

This slightly higher incidence on both coasts could be a product of more LGBTs moving to the East and West coasts because they feel they will be more accepted there.

In contrast to some previous, smaller studies, the Gallup survey found that identification as LGBT is highest among Americans with the lowest levels of education. Among those with a high school education or less, 3.5 percent identify as LGBT, compared with 2.8 percent of those with a college degree and 3.2 percent of those with postgraduate education.

Hollywood and Homosexuality

Written by Ed Baswell

Monday, 03 December 2012 07:54 -

A similar pattern was found regarding income groups. More than 5 percent of those with annual incomes of less than \$24,000 identify as LGBT, compared to 2.8 percent of those making more than \$60,000 a year. Among those who report income, about 16 percent of LGBT individuals have incomes above \$90,000 per year, compared with 21 percent of those with a college degree and 3.2 percent of those with postgraduate education.

Safe to say, Hollywood is trying to sell the American people a bill of goods when it comes to homosexuality. LGBTs are not on every corner and in every household like the scripted network programs imply. LGBTs are not, by and large, white and rich and college educated. As are most of Hollywood's products, this is another marketing fantasy and I am not buying what the lords of television are trying to sell.

Ed Baswell is the host of "Crossfire Radio," Monday through Friday, 7-9 am, on The Promise, 90.7 FM. The show is streamed live at promisetalkradio.org.