

Book offers church's latest response to AIDS

AIDS and the Church: The Second Decade, by Earl E. Shelp and Ronald H. Sunderland; Westminster/John Knox Press (Louisville, 1992); 238 pages (paperback); \$11.95.

By Father Sebastian A. Falcone
Guest contributor

Two general features commend this revision of Shelp and Sunderland's 1987 original edition. Noted in the added subtitle, the updating reflects a need to keep pace with the recent developments in the field. The expanded format offers the reader at least a third more material.

Specifically, chapters 4 and 5, which present biblical and theological perspectives, show the least revision. The historical introduction (chapter 1) and the ministerial strategies (chapter 6) have been considerably expanded — understandably so.

In addition, the medical and scientific data, now separated into chapters 2 and 3, are also augmented. Chapter 7, which is entirely new, deals with the global impact of this multifaceted crisis now affecting an estimated 10 to 20 million people in the 176 nations linked through the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS. Chapter 8 (titled "The Conclusion") elaborates on the earlier wrap-up reflections.

As outlined, this work takes a broad-ranging, if introductory, approach to the pandemic of HIV (human immunodeficiency viruses) and AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

While the medical information's presentation is somewhat technical, the other chapters are within the grasp of anyone who shares a concern for this alarming phenomenon and the

lives it touches.

The book should be recommended reading for all who serve ministerially (and even medically) individuals affected by HIV/AIDS and that larger network of family, friends, and caregivers.

The authors have done their research well, as indicated by their exposition, notes, and selected references. Their presentation is critical, as it avoids the myths and the crusading plaguing such works. Their intent is carefully stated and consistently carried out: "to interpret Christian identity and mission in a world with HIV/AIDS." (Preface)

Earl E. Shelp is executive director of the Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry in Houston, Texas. In addition to being associate director, Ronald H. Sunderland serves as executive director of Equipping Laypeo-

ple for Ministry, Inc., which is located in the same city. Over the last dozen years, they have co-authored and co-edited many other books on medical-ministerial issues.

Their earlier contributions to AIDS literature include: *AIDS: A Manual for Pastoral Care* (1987) and *AIDS: Personal Stories in Pastoral Perspective* (1986), written with Peter W.A. Mansell.

Their co-editorship has enriched the pastoral ministry field with six titles: *The Pastor As Prophet* (1985); *As Servant* (1986); *As Priest* (1987); *As Theologian* (1988); *As Teacher* (1989); and *As Counselor* (1991).

Shelp and Sunderland have a message to share and a knack for communicating it with conviction and competence.

Father Falcone is on the faculty of St. Bernard's Institute.

Thriller lacks even a 'sliver' of suspense

Characters are lifeless, shallow

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Trying to cash in on her notorious sexpot image in *Basic Instinct*, Sharon Stone stars in another erotic thriller, *Sliver* (Paramount), which brings boredom to a new high — or low — depending on how you look at it. Not looking at it at all is the wisest choice.

Portraying newly divorced book editor Carly Norris, Stone moves into a sliver — a slender Manhattan high-rise — where the apartment's previous occupant is shown being pushed off the 20th floor balcony by person unknown in the opening frames.

Two sliver residents show interest in her: Zeke Hawkins (William Baldwin), who actually owns the building and secretly videotapes all the units, and arrogant author Jack Landsford (Tom Berenger), who warns her against getting involved with sneaky Zeke.

Naturally, she opts for Zeke and

after some rough physical encounters she shares his fascination for a little vicarious kinky pleasure supplied by 50 monitors, listening to and watching what the other residents are doing behind closed doors.

She starts sweating, however, when her next-door neighbor (Polly Walker) is also murdered. Looks like Zeke or Jack did it — and might she be next?

Director Phillip Noyce's would-be potboiler barely has a pulse, so shallow and lifeless are the three central characters. A threadbare story, based on Ira Levin's (*Rosemary's Baby*) novel, also lacks momentum, and the suspenseful turns a thriller requires just aren't there.

The movie's whole point seems to be to showcase Stone, so much so she is seen slyly removing her panties in a restaurant, a blatant reminder of a even cruder scene from *Basic Instinct*.

Pretentious in the extreme, the movie also assumes that the theme of voyeurism is a real audience turn-on. Hard to imagine that many viewers would care about the dull, nameless residents seen on grainy TV monitors with their sexual hang-ups on display.

The Stone character never seems to work at the office; it is simply the set-

ting for women to indulge in crass sex talk that would rival any male locker room for rampant sexism. Ditto on the gutter language quotient used by Stone's sultry neighbor (Polly Walker).

With no feeling for romance, no goose-bump-raising thrills, and dialogue so phony the preview audience laughed at tense moments, *Sliver* and the silver screen shouldn't be a match for long.

Because of several graphic sex scenes, recurring nudity, many sexist references, some violence and intermittent rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is O — morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.



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Sharon Stone stars as Carly Norris
in the psychosexual thriller *Sliver*.

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