

Christian clinics to offer contraceptives to singles

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AUSTIN (BP)—A network of Christian women's health centers in Texas will begin next March providing contraceptives to single women, according to the network's Southern Baptist CEO.

The Source, a merger of eight formerly independent Christian crisis pregnancy centers, sees the new service as the best way to fulfill the biblical mandate to love your neighbor as yourself, CEO Andy Schoonover told Baptist Press.

"For contraception specifically, I think it would be disobedient if we didn't," he said.

Reduce unplanned pregnancies and abortions

The Source, with six physical locations and two mobile units, reached the decision after intentional Bible study and prayer, said Schoonover, a member of a Southern Baptist church in Austin.

"We have all come to the conclusion that the decision that is most in line with 'love your neighbor as yourself' is to give women a tool, education and counseling that will help reduce unplanned pregnancies, therefore reduce abortions," Schoonover said.

"If a woman comes in, is sexually active, typically a nonbeliever, highly likely to get an abortion if she becomes pregnant, we believe that the most loving thing to do is to provide her with a tool while guiding her back to a

biblical view of sex.

“The alternative is, we could do nothing—in which case, she will probably get pregnant, have an abortion and have to deal with the spiritual, emotional and mental health complications that often follow that,” he added.

One service among many

The centers will offer an array of contraceptive measures to married and single women, but will not offer abortifacients nor abortions. With locations in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and Houston, the clinics expect to see 100,000 women by 2025, Schoonover said. Staff offer the gospel to every woman served.

“We just see that as a tremendous opportunity to introduce the gospel to women ... and families that may not have otherwise been introduced to the gospel,” he said. Women who refuse to hear the gospel are still served at the clinics.

“A key component of what we do is spiritual services, and we’ll include those services if the client is amenable. Every client that walks in, we ask them if we can share with them the gospel, and if they are amenable to that, we do. If not, then we don’t.”

Contraception will be only one component of the clinics’ services, Schoonover emphasized.

“We’re providing women who typically can’t find quality health care—so the new immigrant, the poor typically don’t have insurance or are on Medicaid—a loving place that will care for their physical, emotional and spiritual need,” he said. “Contraception ... is just one small piece of what we’re doing to try to help women that haven’t been loved very well

historically, especially by the healthcare system.

“Contraception is the controversial one, but I think what we’re doing generally is one that can be embraced by faithful and then the nonfaithful, the right or the left.”

Free ultrasounds, counseling regarding pregnancy options and adoption, parenting education, STI testing, pregnancy testing and prenatal services are among the clinic’s offerings, according to Schoonover and The Source’s [website](#).