



Welcome.

An integrated campaign to engage evangelical women.

Introduction

Approximately one year ago, we outlined a growth strategy for *Welcome*. along three concurrent tracks: Acquisition of a larger audience of conservative evangelical women, Amplification of the *Welcome*. message and Activation of women and allies in target states.

Reaching 100,000 white evangelical women through *Welcome*. is a significant achievement that has enabled us to better understand this community at a more granular level. We now appreciate that various segments of white evangelical women have different capacities for acting upon positive messages around immigration. In order to continue to develop a more nuanced understanding of how to interact with this community, we will continue to focus on building deeper relationships in addition to increasing the number of members in the community. However, given that the number of white evangelical women in the US is estimated to be around 31 million strong, and of that roughly 6 million are open to supporting a pathway to citizenship as long as specific measures are met, we see enormous potential in our ability to reach a large segment of this critical community who might be open to a more constructive conversation around immigration.

As we've learned from recent survey results presented in [Expanding the Coalition: How Micro-targeting and Message Testing are Building Support for Immigrants and Immigration](#), the evangelical community is in a period of transition. And evangelical women are a big part of this sea change. They are daring to lead the Church in a biblically convicted way while walking a tightrope between what is acceptable and what is true. They are excited about having a place like *Welcome*. to explore ways they might create transformational change, not just for immigrants in our country, but possibly beyond, by showing hospitality in all aspects of their lives.

Organizationally, we sought to integrate *Welcome*. into the Forum's overall approach; leverage our conservative grassroots network of faith, law enforcement and business leaders as trusted messengers to conservative and moderate evangelical women; and, grow *Welcome*. into a powerful advocacy tool for the movement.

More specifically, we planned to prioritize regions critical to the immigration debate with the highest numbers of evangelical women who fit our digital audience model or who are already members of the

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Welcome. community. And, we would create digital and in-person context and opportunities for members of *Welcome.* to become “champions” of a nuanced conversation on immigration while acting in ways that are familiar to them.

Throughout the evolution of *Welcome.*, we have come to understand the importance of offering this community the opportunity to see that another person who is like them and shares their values might think differently about immigration than they do. In our conversations, we have learned this opens a person up to reconsidering their perspective on immigrants and immigration – an issue they have not previously considered core to their cultural identity.

We are giving evangelical women the fundamental tools to reconsider how their faith connects with politics, culture and immigration. The immediate access point might be a level of compassion towards immigrants; however, it ends up having a broader ripple effect into the culture. We are equipping women to be more effective communicators and have difficult discussions about controversial topics. This is only the beginning.

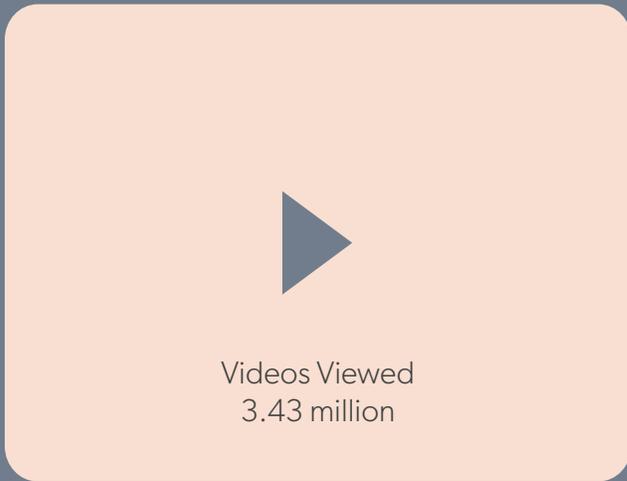
Below is a brief update on what we have learned over the past two years, strategic changes to the program given the current environment and our preliminary goals for the future. A detailed plan is available upon request.



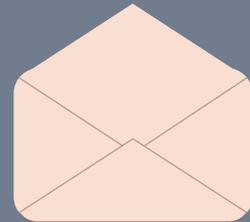
Building on What We Have Learned

Welcome. Benchmarks

The metrics below provide a baseline of what we have accomplished to date that is informing where we plan to go over the upcoming 2-3 years.



Average Email Open Rate
12%



Private Facebook Members
1,101



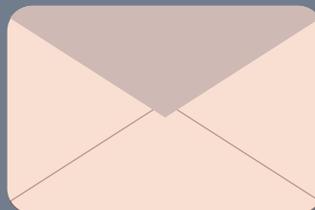
Webinars Hosted
16



Digital Engagement
(likes, clicks, comments)
332,118



Active Email Addresses
114,569



Social Media Followers
63,272



Leadership Transition

Over the last year as *Welcome.* grew in size and scope, we hired the campaign's first dedicated Director: Briana Stensrud a human dignity advocate. Bri, is a conservative evangelical herself, is passionate about equipping the Church to engage more consistently and tangibly in holistic human dignity issues. Throughout her work in the pro-life movement, recently having served at Focus on the Family for six years, she continually faced questions from those concerned about immigrants and refugees. Understanding that many of these concerns (from other conservatives) were rooted in fear and misinformation, she started a journey to re-discover

God's heart for the sojourner. Bri holds a Master of Biblical & Theological Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary and lives in Colorado Springs with her husband and two children.

Under Bri's leadership, we took the first quarter of 2020 to revisit *Welcome's.* strategy in order to build on what we've learned over the past two years. This included understanding and developing ways to grow the *Welcome.* audience, building a more cohesive communication strategy and content library, refreshing and re-establishing the *Welcome.* brand (to launch this coming fall), and identifying realistic goals for expansion.

Understanding and Developing the Welcome Audience

Our deeper and more enriched relationships with white evangelical women have offered additional insights. We're continuing to learn that personal connection and touchpoints are the best ways to start a relationship with a community member. An email list and/or a Facebook like are a start – but they are not enough. As we describe below, the personal touch can be as intensive as a conversation. But, in February 2019 we launched a private Facebook group for members, which allows for direct connections and a more honest dialogue. Once there is a sense of familiarity, their commitment deepens.

We have also seen how deeply culture matters. Connecting the story of immigration into the broader faith body is essential for longevity and effectiveness. We are learning the community responds best when they feel they are growing as a Christian more holistically, rather than simply just learning about immigration (i.e. continuation of biblical, holistic pro-life worldview).

The more they feel that the campaign serves them as a whole person, the better results we see on immigration specifically. We might be able to get a woman to convert onto our email list around the issue of immigration initially, but not many will stay engaged over the long run unless they feel they are being engaged in multiple areas of their lives and the lessons are applicable beyond just one issue.

When *Welcome.* first launched, the focus was on white college-educated evangelical women. Over time, it became increasingly apparent that while this group was the right one to engage with, they are not a monolith. As a result, we have identified sub-audiences, all of which under the *Welcome.* umbrella are approached differently to foster a greater sense of community within each group. A rebranding effort is underway to build a stronger visual identity, a more user-friendly platform in order to offer a more consistent brand value proposition and improved engagement.

A brief description of the sub-audiences:

- Tier 1** Evangelical and Republican—unlikely to change their party affiliation and would be highly suspicious of anyone who said they should. Regularly engaged in their church, they care a lot about educating themselves about the Bible and serving their community. This group has a generally positive view of legal immigrants but strong negative reactions towards anyone here not legally. They have a concern for community safety and the rule of law. They likely would have a positive view of refugees but concern for national security would outweigh humanitarian concerns.
- Tier 2** This group skews younger than Tier 1. They may/may not identify as evangelical but were raised and formed in distinctly evangelical institutions. They are also likely to have international experience; they were more likely to have their faith formed by broader social engagement. They also don't think of themselves as political but may have started to question if they truly consider themselves conservative or Republican. More likely, they have started to feel politically homeless. They are more likely to be conservative on social issues but reject what they view as polarizing rhetoric.
- Tier 3** This group falls into the 20% of white evangelicals that did not vote for Donald Trump. In fact, if they still call themselves evangelical, it is always with an asterisk. They were raised in evangelical culture but have decided consciously to reject some of its primary political and social stances while maintaining a high view of scripture and emphasis on a personal faith. They might still have conservative evangelical circles that they live and work in but get excited when they find communities of people who share their commitment to faith but also a belief in social action on issues like immigration, poverty or environmental issues. While there are some Tier 3 women involved in *Welcome*, many other women who are ready for advanced action gravitate towards or are funneled to We Welcome Refugees.

As our understanding of the community became more sophisticated, so did our infrastructure. In early 2019, we finished the *Welcome* database migration to Nation Builder in order to segment and adapt engagement to individuals rather than the community as a whole. This robust CRM allows us to invest the time and resources necessary to customize our communication based on what we know about our audience and the previous actions they have taken.

Expanding the Community - 10K Conversations Initiative

Even before the onset of COVID-19, we saw opportunities to deepen engagement of the community through one-on-one conversations and applying lessons learned through “deep canvassing” practices and research. In response to the pandemic this strategy will be more important than ever.

We developed the 10K Conversations campaign, a systemized way to scale having hundreds of personal conversations with our target audience every month by employing leaders in the *Welcome*. community to reach out and engage members online or by phone. Each conversation will build personal connection, trust and give women the confidence to take whatever action they are ready for. Nation Builder allows us to easily identify prospects, contact them, track the conversations and follow up with additional resources and opportunities for action.

The most influential people in your life are the ones you already know and trust. We can't reach everyone through the *Welcome*. brand, but we can reach the right people. We need to ensure that women across the country are equipped and confident to have the conversations with the people they know, love and trust that can help change minds and open up hearts.

Through an initial pilot program of one on one conversations with those on our email list and Facebook group, we developed a community of 24 women who committed to regular social media

actions. Out of this group, we equipped/trained 8 women with strategies for having more effective conversations with their peers on the issue of immigration based in insight from deep canvassing and “Motivational Interviewing.”

We hired three of these women to work 15 hours a week to hold conversations with women in our community. They answer questions, provide encouragement and give tips to others on being effective communicators. We have found Tier 3 women can naturally help a Tier 2 woman feel more confident and excited in their concern for immigrants. But often, Tier 3 women need training and encouragement on how to bring along their Tier 1 friends and loved ones.

We believe these efforts to not just “message” to a constituency, but train and engage them on effective modes of communication and persuasion will allow our message and effectiveness to expand far beyond the people we talk to directly.

Sometimes, this looks like large advertising campaigns to identify those who already resonate with the message we are sending out. But in the next phase, it is going to look like thousands and thousands of individual intentional conversations that connect with people's values and address their fears. 2020 is the year of 10,000 conversations for *Welcome*.

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Pathways

We plan to build on the existing pathway system we've designed for *Welcome*. to include more avenues of engagement for those who:

- Have above-average email open rates.
- Download multiple resources.
- Join the Facebook group.
- Comment on page posts.
- Engage through Facebook messenger.
- Participate in an advanced webinar.
- Engage in a one-on-one phone call.

Ladder of Engagement

We will continue to build a more constructive conversation on immigration throughout the *Welcome*. community by offering progressive levels of engagement as follows:

Step 1 Like the Facebook page or join the email list.

Step 2 Demonstrate engagement by commenting, asking questions, opening email consistently or downloading additional resources.

Step 3 Outreach from an ambassador inviting to join the Facebook group. In key areas, invite to a one-on-one phone call.

Step 4 Each phone call ends with a list of possible actions that could include:

- Commitment to personal education.
 - Read the study guide.
 - Watch the film.
 - Read a book.
- Commitment to personal service.
 - ESL tutor.
 - Volunteer with refugee resettlement.
- Commitment to community education.
 - Study guide in a small group or Sunday school class.
 - Film in small group or Sunday school class.
- Commitment to community event.
 - Organize a church wide screening of a film.
 - Invite a speaker.
 - Engage their pastor.
- Join the year of 10,000 conversations.

During each one-on-one outreach we will ask people to make a specific commitment to a next step. The ambassador will record the commitment in Nation Builder and set a time for follow-up with that person.

Preliminary Goals for the Future

Re-evaluating Metrics

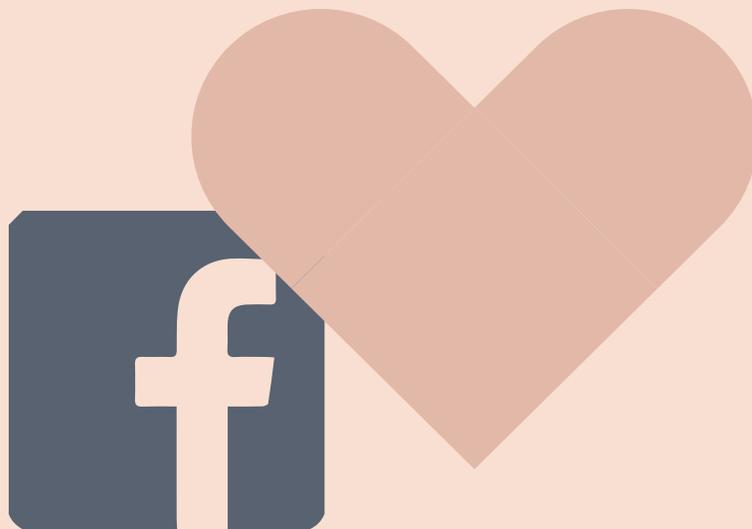
In order to adapt to this new approach as well as other goals for deepening engagement within the community, we will need to adjust the goals we created in 2019 as shown in the table below.

	Old Metric	New Metric
Acquisition	<p>Grow the <i>Welcome.</i> community to 175,000 active emails with average open rates between 15-20%.</p> <p>(See Facebook Likes section below for additional context)</p>	<p>Due to budget limitations, we have decided to deepen relationships with our 100k active members. This will lead to some organic growth in the list. Additional resources will allow us to return to a paid growth approach. Open rates remain at 12-15%.</p>
Amplification	<p>At least 100 leaders engaged in local grassroots organizing or on a volunteer social media team.</p>	<p>In light of COVID-19, we have pivoted to a digital rather than in-person approach to engaging our members called 10K Conversations (see above for more detail).</p>
	<p>Send learning delegations to communities across the U.S.</p>	<p>While we wait for the COVID-19 situation to settle out, we are using our documentary, <i>Who is Welcome Here</i>, as an online convening tool.</p> <p>In addition, we are increasing our influencer outreach and engagement. These relationships will be critical to develop and cultivate as we seek to connect and influence others without in person events.</p>
	<p>Local circles of “champions” are cultivated and moving toward self-sustainment.</p>	<p>Based on what we learned, we have developed the new “10K Conversations” strategy as outlined above.</p>
Activation	<p>At least 25,000 people will have taken a measurable advanced action (signing a petition, sending an email or making a phone call).</p>	<p>Since inception we have had over 25k people take measurable action within <i>Welcome.</i> & We Welcome Refugees. Going forward, the majority of action will come from We Welcome Refugees.</p>

Measuring Facebook Likes

After a primary focus on email acquisition in 2018 and 2019, we reoriented our efforts to Facebook likes in early 2020. Facebook likes are not always the most valuable form of connection with your audience, but we realized it could be an effective use of resources for the following reasons:

- Influencers are often hesitant to be vocal on issues of immigration because of the fear that there is not an audience of support that exists. A large Facebook following is a public demonstration of the audience that exists and creates legitimacy in the eyes of these leaders.
- With the addition of three new contractors, we have far greater capacity to turn Facebook likes into substantive conversations through engaging deeply in comments and through Facebook messenger.
- Facebook likes are a fraction of the cost of acquiring email addresses and still allow us the opportunity to create ongoing connection and opportunities for persuasion.



Next Steps

We see an opportunity for promising community growth and interaction by iterating on our ongoing efforts. While we aim for increasing the number of members in the *Welcome.* community in the coming years we also plan to focus more tangibly on increasing the depth of engagement with the community. Offering encouraging and educational content as well as other experiences to equip women to thoughtfully engage and share will help achieve the dual goals of breadth and depth within the community.

Our resources will focus on themes and content that consider the context in which women in the *Welcome.* community learn about immigrants and refugees. For example, we have learned that subjects that encourage peacemaking, courageous conversations, and Christ-like welcome will resonate. It's important that we not only encourage this community but provide specific educational milestones that help increase understanding of terminology, specific policies and processes. We will also share stories and non-partisan data to disciple women along this journey including tools such as advocacy kits to help women effectively engage their church, elected officials and community.

This fall we will offer a few new initiatives and promote several points of engagement surrounding the launch of our rebrand. We will also continue to add to our library of content under this new brand as resources permit. The 10K Conversations initiative will be ongoing into 2021. All live, face-to-face events will resume as the country opens back up and we feel we are able to do so safely. We plan to focus our time and resources on the following two areas:

Resource development to include:

- A variety of social videos
 - Educational
 - Influencer-based
 - Vision casting
- Bible Studies (2-3/year)
 - Downloadable
 - Physical (for purchase)
- Advocacy/Conversation Resources

Deepening Relationships & Experiences:

- 10K Conversations ambassador initiative
- Live film events with influencers & churches
- Border delegations
 - Community trips
 - Influencer trips

Conclusion

Over the course of a short two and a half years, in the midst of an unprecedented anti-immigrant policy agenda and debate, *Welcome.* has emerged as a sign of hope: There are conservative and moderate women of faith in America ready and willing to challenge the status quo of their communities. As the campaign's leadership grows and our team expands, we will continue to offer content and experiences that resonate with this unique audience and that encourage a nuanced conversation on immigration that fits into their worldview. This work is made possible by a dedicated group of funders who were willing to back a research-based idea that showed promise almost three years ago and who have stood beside us to help *Welcome.* become what it is today. We hope you will continue to support *Welcome.* as we help it reach its full potential.

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Welcome is a project of the [National Immigration Forum](#) and [World Relief](#).