

You've Got Spam! is a refreshing collection of 37 e-mails regarding a café mercy ministry in Medina, Ohio. It's basically "spiritual" spam. These e-mail stories are absolutely true. They will inspire, encourage, and strengthen your faith in God.

You've Got Spam!

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**You've  
Got  
Spam!**

You've Got Spam! a refreshing collection of e-mails  
regarding mercy ministry.

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# You've Got Spam!

a refreshing collection  
**of e-mails**  
regarding mercy ministry.

**volume one**

Tim Van Arsdale

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## e-mail eleven: **contagious**

### **Café Recipients**

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**From:** Tim Van Arsdale [tim@youvegotsam.book]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2008 10:45 PM

**To:** Cafe Recipients

**Subject:** Café 41:11 e-news

Con'ta'gious: (ken-tā'jes) adj. communicable; spreading. This is the definition of contagious as found in Webster's Dictionary. Being a part of a ministry that gives freely is causing me to better understand the nature of giving. Giving has some of the same properties of a living organism. I liken it to a virus. Giving connects people and is dispersed. It can be extremely contagious. If you're not careful, you can catch it. Once you catch giving, the chances are good you'll test positive for giving and you'll give giving to someone else.

I think there are rare occasions when a person has giving, and gives giving, without even knowing it. Case in point: one of our Community Service helpers has been working at the café for a few weeks. Last week, this person showed up with a twelve pack of pop and bottles of water for us to give to the kids coming to the café. Nobody asked this person to give. I think this individual simply caught giving because of its prevalence at Café 41:11. I'm not even sure this person knows why he gave.

Giving is on everything at the café. It's so widespread we can't properly sterilize the environment. Giving has attached itself to the tile floor, light fixtures, door knobs, coffee cups, and cellophane wrapped desserts. It's in the soup, the hot

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chocolate, the popcorn, and music. Even scarier, giving has recently mutated into an air born contaminate that is now passed from person-to-person through conversation.

We shouldn't be surprised. Jesus said this would happen, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (NIV, Luke 6:38). This verse has been inaccurately associated with money. That is just wrong. Jesus wasn't promising that if you give money you'll receive a financial blessing in return. The context of the verse is about giving love and forgiveness to your neighbor. He was speaking about extending mercy. The measure of love and forgiveness you give will be given to you pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

Jesus also empowered his disciples with the free gift of the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus sent them out to proclaim the Gospel and perform miracles in His name, He said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (NIV, Matthew 10:8).

I guess I'm writing this as a warning. If you don't want to catch giving, don't touch a Café 41:11 pledge card, or answer a phone call from me, Christie, or anyone else associated with the cafe. Most importantly, do not enter the building at 126 N. Court St. during our hours of operation. Consider yourself warned by me and Jesus, because unfortunately, at this time, there is no cure.

Some of you may be thinking: "Good grief Tim...I've been at the café recently. Am I infected with giving? Are there any symptoms?"

The answer is: Yes. Understanding impulsive acts of giving can help you better understand if you have giving.

Giving can include, but is not limited to, the sudden onset of:

- fear leaving you wondering: will I be able to pay the bills?



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- a loss of appetite for the things of this world
- an itchy and uncomfortable case of vulnerability
- uncontrollable praying out loud while driving your car
- a numbing disregard for a return on investment
- swollen humility
- an aching consideration of others more highly than you consider yourself
- a palpitating desire to talk about Jesus
- trembling hands while baking or writing a check
- a feverish love for God and your neighbor

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important that you immediately contact me. The Medina café will not be able to continue its ministry unless those inflicted with this highly contagious disease join together.

Please pray about giving.

## e-mail fifteen: conversation

### Café Recipients

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**From:** Tim Van Arsdale [tim@youvegotsam.book]

**Sent:** Saturday, March 15, 2008 11:42 PM

**To:** Cafe Recipients

**Subject:** Café 41:11 e-news

Amid the busyness of serving guests and talking with people, I overheard a conversation at the café between a volunteer and two children. I stopped what I was doing to listen. Two kids were drinking hot chocolate, eating muffins together, smiling, and having a good time. With this volunteer's elbows on the counter, the conversation went something like this:

"You two look happy today," said the volunteer.

The children smiled. Child #1 sipped the hot chocolate.

With a muffin in hand and a little whip cream mustache, Child #1 said, "I love this place."

Child #2 said, "Me, too."

"Yeah there's lots of goodies, huh?" asked the volunteer.

The children sat by the pole near the donation box.

Child #1 happened to glance at the box and said, "And lot's of donating too."

"I love donations," said Child #2.

Child #1 agreed.

The volunteer said, "God is really good to us, huh?"

Child #1 smiled and said, "Yeah, I love God."

Child #2 agreed and said, "When I get some money. I want to donate."

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"I have three dollars at home. Am I allowed to donate it?" asked Child #1.

The volunteer answered, "You don't have to, but if that is what is on your little heart, and you want to give it to God. You can."

Child #1 with an even bigger smile said, "Yeah, I want to give it to God."

The café team wants you to know that we do not expect kids to give. We are not out soliciting them for donations. I share this conversation with you because through this conversation, it became clear to us that giving freely to the young people of Medina is igniting a desire in their hearts to give in return.

A simple conversation like this, over hot chocolate and muffins, is payment enough. Do you remember my e-mail about contagious giving? Our café friends have caught contagious giving. They're becoming infected with it.

Are you?

## e-mail sixteen: **directions**

### **Café Recipients**

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**From:** Tim Van Arsdale [tim@youvegotsam.book]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2008 7:35 PM  
**To:** Cafe Recipients  
**Subject:** Café 41:11 e-news

A guest entered the café and plopped down on a stool in front of the coffee bar. This guest asked for a glass of punch. One of the volunteers behind the counter poured the last few drops into a glass and handed it to the guest. The guest chugged it down and left.

The two male volunteers, who shall remain nameless, began the task of mixing more to refill the empty pitchers. There was a small amount of grape powder, but a few new packs of other various flavors.

These guys quickly combined the left over grape and five different flavors. They poured in some sugar and *voila!* A new Café 41:11 drink was born. It was thick and dark and purple. It smelled and tasted like cough syrup. It was a manly punch. Fine enough for the toughest band of pirates this side of the Atlantic.

Believing it was too potent, they poured some out and added water. Poured more out and added sugar, eventually making this concoction safe to consume. It still didn't look pretty, but they thought it did the trick.

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After all that work, they looked at each other and said, "We should've read the directions. It says here that one packet makes two quarts."  
We laughed.

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