

Bus Ride Gone Bad

When the airbrakes hissed and let teens off a bus at a local mall Tyquan and Lamar were in an argument supposedly over what Lamar said to Tyquan's sister. According to police Lamar ended the vocal exchange by shooting Tyquan dead. Lamar goes to jail and may be reached by a prison ministry. But what about Tyquan's buddies or the dudes Lamar used to run with?

The mayor says they need more mentors. My broken record's stuck in a groove and repeating the refrain, "They need mamas... they need mamas."

One of the problems with mentoring is the proclivity for it to be on again -- off again. People start out with all sorts of good intentions. But things happen. If you are thinking about mentoring, tutoring, or teaching a Good News Club, keep in mind that it shouldn't be viewed as a noble, one-time service project, or just something to fulfill a volunteer requirement and pad the resume'. Don't reduce these young people to puppies that make cute Christmas gifts then are otherwise neglected. Yet even mentors who stay the course can't replace mom and dad.

Even a bad dad is better than no dad at all, says Dr. John Perkins. A mother with four kids, who mentors a troubled teen, soon going to college, recalls a day when her husband came home from work. She watched the teen as her four kids go running out to meet their daddy. At which the young lady became dejected, lamenting that the frolicking kids looked like a scene from "Little House on the Prairie" or something. "I fix a lot of stuff," the mentor said, "but there was no replacing mom and dad."

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