

His Generation

Evelyn O. Shih

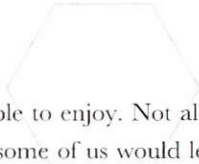
Many years ago, a friend gave us a papaya tree as a housewarming gift. He told us that papaya trees have only three years of life, so he advised us to remember to save some seeds for the new tree at the end of the third year and just chop down the old one.

Surely, we enjoyed three years of fresh, sweet papaya, but we forgot the friend's advice. We didn't save any seeds the third year and since the tree looked healthy, we didn't chop it down either until years later when it had become a tall, awkward tree without any fruit.

Once I mentioned this incident to another friend. She replied; "Banana trees are worse. They produce only one bunch of bananas. After that, you better chop them down to give space for the new trees."

My first thought was of the preciousness of bananas. Each one was a fruit of its mother's whole life. I grieved for those banana trees whose lifetime was only one season. They seemed to use all their strength to produce that one bunch of green fruit and then couldn't do anything after that. Thus, the purpose and value of their lives was one bunch of bananas.

While pondering the circumstance of the banana trees, however, I realized that it is actually no toobad to be able to leave a bunch of sweet fruit



for people to enjoy. Not all of us could do that and maybe some of us would leave harmful things after we were gone.

The human lifetime is not so fixed as the trees. Let's say the average life span today is 85 years. In that 85 years, how many days are we able to produce fruit? Acts 13:36 says, "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep."

David reigned as king for 40 years, so we could say that his generation was 40 years. David was a man after God's heart, in that he left numerous bunches of fruit for us to enjoy, such as the psalms he wrote. His time was limited though; as he served his own generation, he fell on sleep.

Forty years is not a short time, if you and I could serve this length of time in the human history of several thousand years, it would be a blessed record and a blissful testimony.

At this, the real beginning of the 21st century, we are more aware of the shortness of our lives and the speeding of time. Soon our generation will be over, whether it is 40 years as was King David's, 3 years as is the papaya tree's, or just one season as is the banana trees.

God has different plans on each of us. We need not worry about that, rather, the important questions to ask ourselves are, "Am I serving today?" and "What shall I leave behind?"