

The Ideas That Use Us

by John A. Henschke

“Nothing is so powerful in this world as an idea whose time has come.”

- *Victor Hugo*

“The only distinction of the men and women who happen to represent an idea is: They are the implements and instrumentalities of an idea whose time is come – whose hour has struck.”

- *Harry Emerson Fosdick*

Many ordinary people who are not themselves very great, nevertheless are used by a great idea. If you and I wish not to assume the responsibility of allowing ourselves to be used by an idea whose time is come [whose hour has struck], not so easily can we evade it. We are used by ideas. It is an inescapable fact.

The real question that may challenge us here today – at this conference is: What idea am I willing to let use me? As and educator of adults – one who educates adult people in the business world – what idea in adult education am I willing to allow to take hold of me, and use me in shaping what I do in educating these people?

I have answered that question previously for myself, and as I was preparing for this session on “Teaching Adults and Helping Them Learn,” I answered it again, more firmly than ever: “Andragogy – The Art and Science of Teaching Adults and Helping Them Learn.” That’s the idea I am willing to have use me.

How about you? I invite you to be engaged in the idea I’ve decided to allow to use me. I think it is an idea whose time has come, whose hour has struck, and it has taken hold of me – Andragogy.