

MARIA MONTESSORI AND THE NEW AGE 1870-1952

The prophet Jeremiah tells us that we are not to learn the way of the heathen (Jeremiah 10:2).

This brief study will chronicle the life, the work and the writings of the pagan Maria Montessori.

Maria Montessori, 1870-1952, was an Italian physician and educator. She was also the originator of the Montessori method of education for children. She was educated at the University of Rome, where she was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree (1894). She became interested in education as assistant physician at a university psychiatric clinic, and studied psychiatry and pedagogy. She was the founder and principal (1898ff.) of Orthophrenic School for feeble-minded and defective children. She successfully put into practice the educational ideals of Edouard Sequin, and she determined to apply similar principles and methods to education of normal children. She lectured on pedagogy at the University of Rome (1900-07). She opened the first Montessori school for children (*casa dei bambini*) in the slum districts of Rome (1907). Dr. Montessori featured the development of the child's initiative and sense and muscle training by means of specially prepared teaching materials and games, and stressed the freedom of the child with the teacher being merely the guide and supervisor rather than the formal instructor. She was Director of the Montessori Institute, Barcelona (1917), and of the training courses in London (1919). She was the government inspector of schools in Italy (1922). She was also the found of the Montessori Training Centre, Laren, the Netherlands in 1938. Maria Montessori was the Author of the *The Montessori Method* (1912), *Pedagogical Anthropology* (1913), *Advanced Montessori Method* (1917), and *The Child in the Church*. [Webster's Biographical Dictionary, 1043-1044]

The following information is taken from a Concise Dictionary of the Occult and New Age, 174.

Montessori is a method instructing children that stresses the development of a child's own initiative. This approach was developed in 1907 by Maria Montessori... The core of the method consists of self-motivation and individualized learning. Advocates believe the techniques inspire children to unlock hidden mysteries within themselves, ultimately resulting in the emergence of a new type of person. Montessori foresaw a spiritual evolution in the thinking of people in which everyone would recognize the interdependence of all life. She believed it was imperative to instruct children concerning their place in the transformational process that would ultimately usher in global peace.

The Montessori Method found favour with the Italian fascist premier Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), who popularised the teaching throughout Italy during the 1920's and 1930's.

While the pedagogy is frequently practiced today by educators who would not accept its original New Age message, the technique remains popular with occult Theosophy organizations and Eastern religious leaders. Montessori education has been adopted by more than three thousand public schools across the United States.