



# JOSEPH PINSON

The American Music Therapy Association recognizes the spiritual significance of music in this statement from its Standards of Practice: *"Spirituality and Cultural Background - An interrelationship among a client's musical experiences, personal belief system, and cultural background, which may be influenced by the client's geographical origin, language, religion, family experiences, and other environmental factors."*

In my professional experience, I have long recognized this interrelationship, because for many years I held a dual position, as music therapist and chapel musician in a facility for persons with developmental disabilities. I found it very useful to include spiritual songs and activities as a part of the music therapy regimen. The individuals whom I served, with I.Q.s between twenty and seventy, were very spiritual people. Their faith was not based upon the reading of Scripture but on a childlike connection to their Creator. For them acceptance of God's love was a very simple act of yielding to a heart-felt presence. They were immune from making money, climbing the social ladder, and the many other criteria associated with "success".

In my own personal experience, I would have left the church many years ago, if it were not for the music and the spiritual connection that this medium has always provided me. Martin Luther said, *"Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us."* The organization of music clearly resembles the organization of systems within and the universe without, and I believe that a lifetime of involvement in music, by listening, creating, recreating, moving and dancing, strengthens our relationship with



our Creator and with the world in which we live. The real time existence of music mirrors our own real time life experience.



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“MUSIC THERAPY IN PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE”**