



Our entire ministry philosophy is based upon a simple biblical premise: That male or female, young or old, we are all created by God as bearers of His image, and that means how we function in this world reflects some attributes of God's nature. That reflection is not merely spiritual, but also physical. We can see that each one of us is different, so how do these differences reflect God's image?

## **The image of the One Triune God**

God is one, but the Bible teaches that our one God is expressed through three distinct personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each personality of God has specific roles and relates to humanity in unique ways.

### **God the Father – The Administrative Manager**

Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer to address our needs to God the Father, our *Provider*. When humanity displays administrative functions, they do so because they emulate God the Father's nature. This is by design, not an accident.

### **God the Son – The Creator of All Things & Founder of Our Kingdom Mission**

God the Son demonstrates both Creative and Missional qualities. He is Creative in that the Bible teaches all things were made through Him. He is Missional in that He came to earth to teach us, die for us, and ultimately resurrect us from mortal to immortal. But while we live on earth, He has given us a mission to make more disciples. Furthermore, He has told us that He will forever be with us as we seek to carry out His mission.

### **God the Holy Spirit – The Comforter, Encourager, Teacher & Guide**

The Holy Spirit has been called by the Apostle John, our 'Paraclete'. Theologically, this term has come to be understood also as the One who comes along side of us, our Comforter, our Nurturer, and our Guide. Highly social and empathic people emulate the third person of the godhead, the Holy Spirit.

## **Temperament first, Giftedness second**

All too often church leaders are quick to use simple paper or online spiritual gift assessments when they really do not understand what they are doing. They mistakenly believe these are spiritual tools because spiritual gifts are taught in the New Testament. And, yes, this is true to a point. But long before the subject of spiritual gifts was revealed in scripture, the Bible clearly emphasized the importance of how our natures reflect God's image. This is why AssessME.org has the slogan: "***Temperament first, giftedness second***". We cannot get the order of priority confused. Not only because this is the order taught by scripture, but because for many of the spiritual gifts, our temperaments will determine how we prefer to utilize our gifts. God's gifts, then are filtered through

God's gift of temperament. Sadly, many church leaders will ignore human temperament (i.e., personality) because they mistakenly believe this is a subject created by humanistic psychology. This is an erroneous perception. We find human temperament rooted first in the theology of scripture, given to us thousands of years before Christ. Then humans, called sociologists (i.e., those who study human society), began to notice that humanity tended to fall into various groups of like behaviors.

The first non-biblical sociologist to formulate a pattern for human temperament was the Greek philosopher Theophrastus (c 371 to c 287 BC) in his book called *The Characters*. Sociological philosophers study humanity in the same way arboriculturist studies trees. When I look at a forest, all I see is a bunch of trees, but when an arboriculturist looks at a forest, they clearly see each individually unique type of tree...oaks, maples, olive trees, etc., all created by God and possessing differing traits. Likewise, wise church leaders will be educated regarding the many differing types of people, and what each type needs to thrive spiritually and serve impactfully.

As sociologist began to identify people types, and then create simple assessments to help sort and categorize people types, only later in the 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries did members of the new profession called psychology begin to construct tests in an effort to validate the accuracy of the tools created by sociologists. This effort is not a negative influence, because assessment tools must utilize proven internal and external validation systems in order to ensure the accuracy of the assessment tool. However, many Christian cultures interpreted the works of psychologists as hijacking and humanizing temperament theory, stripping it away from its foundation in biblical theology. And while it is true many psychologists rejected God, their false belief systems in no way negates the fact that human temperament is first and foremost rooted in the image of our triune Creator.

## **The Four-Quadrant Assessment Construct**

The oldest temperament assessments were based upon a three-quadrant assessment construct, following the three personalities embodied in the one true God. In fact, AssessMe.org makes use of a version of the three-quadrant temperament assessment construct in our Leadership Style Assessment. This model is effective for identifying people's preferred kinds of service roles, because these roles are based upon the functions of each member of the godhead. However, this model is insufficient for assessing deeper emotional and mental processes such as perception differences, judgement differences, decision-making differences, and so forth.

Over eighty years ago, in 1943, Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers created the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which became the standard bearer for the four-quadrant assessment construct. Many variants of this model ensued including DiSC, Keirsey Temperament, John Trent's Four Animals Test, and of course, the ePersonality by AssessME.org. Only the ePersonality is designed exclusively for Christians and communicates a single purpose: *How did God design you to serve Him and others*. While the four-quadrant temperament construct has proven highly accurate and effective since 1943, many other theoreticians like Jordan Peterson have advocated for a five-quadrant assessment construct which he calls, "The Big Five". Certainly, God's human creation is so amazing that assessments using many quadrants could not explain all our

complexities. But that’s just the problem, the more quadrants of questions asked, the longer, more time consuming, and more complex the reporting becomes. And so, for AssessME.org, we have settled on a variant of the proven four-quadrant assessment construct for our personality tool.

## The ePersonality purpose

The ePersonality is a Christian four-quadrant temperament assessment designed not with a generic report as is so common with other personality tools, but rather a purposed report specifying one objective: “How did God design you to serve Him and others”. Years ago, when I attended seminary at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Now Trinity University), I, like all students, was required to take the complex version of the Meyer’s Briggs assessment, and then pay a trained consultant \$750 to interpret the generic report and apply it to my pastoral ministry aspirations. This is because the Myers-Briggs assessment and other assessments like it do not know how the assessment information will be applied. And so, they rely upon trained consultants to bridge that gap. The ePersonality does not have this problem, because our assessment was built from the ground-up for one exclusive purpose...ministry mobilization. It is not designed for use in any other manner. Therefore, we can avoid the utilization of trained consultants. Our reports are clear and concise, easily understood by any lay person.

## The ePersonality Construct

The ePersonality is our preeminent and by far the most popular assessment. The reason for this is because it answers for people their #1 question: “Why did God make me like this”? Our temperament assessment construct is comprised of four categories of two opposing states of being...

1. How I relate to people:	<i>Independent</i> vs. <i>Social</i>
2. How I process information:	<i>Concrete</i> vs. <i>Abstract</i>
3. How I process decisions:	<i>Head</i> vs <i>Heart</i>
4. How I relate to the world around me:	<i>Systematic</i> vs <i>Adaptive</i>

## Human Relations

The ePersonality assessment identifies people in two opposing categories: People with ***Independent*** temperaments, and people with ***Social*** temperaments. While theoretically there may be a few people who exhibit pure ***Independent*** or ***Social*** traits, in reality most people are a blend with a dominant preference.

Human ***Independent*** types are often incorrectly labeled anti-social. This is unfortunate, because “anti-social” is actually a label used to identify psychologically unstable individuals. Independents are not anti-social. Rather, for them, their social circles usually involve the people who share their hobbies or participate within their business or ministry teams. Independents are the people types who most often do much of the work that has advanced our society in business, technology, and the arts. From their perspective, they have so much to do, that unless you are willing to chip in and

help, they simply do not have much time to sacrifice to social niceties. Fellow-workers tend to comprise the **Independent's** social circle.

Human **Social** types value relationships over completing tasks. In fact, for many **Social** types, the worst thing they can imagine in life is being stuck in an office in front of a computer all day. **Social** types can range from party people to highly empathic and sensitive individuals. They are adept at building social networks that connect people to other people. They are warm and inviting. They are a joy to be around and to relax with. But they are generally task avoidant unless the task is to mix with other people.

### **Processing Information**

Second, the ePersonality identifies people in two opposing categories: People who process information **Concretely** compared with people who possess **Abstractly**. In most cases, people are some blend-combination of the two categories with a dominant preference, but pure profiles do exist.

My wife Tamara and I each represent one of these categories. Tamara is a **Concrete** thinker. She thinks in terms of right or wrong, accurate and inaccurate, data versus opinion. As a result, she is a rule follower. Her career has often required her to write training or instruction manuals. Her preferred subjects in school were math and English. Tamara is creative by following sewing patterns to create theatrical costumes.

In contrast, I am an **Abstract** thinker. I prefer theoretical ideas over concrete facts. I prefer theories, philosophy, and technology. I prefer to think of what “could be” over what “should be”. I am less of a rule follower than a rule creator. I am entrepreneurial in my creativity: I build my own electronic systems and I design software solutions to address problems that exist. My preferred subjects in school were social sciences and technology.

### **Processing Decisions**

Third, the ePersonality assessment identifies people’s decision-making preferences according to two opposing categories: **Head** versus **Heart**. Again, most people are a blend with a dominant preference, but in rare cases pure profiles of either **Head** decision makers or **Heart** decision makers may exist. This opposition category is one that many people readily identify with.

People who make decisions based upon their **Head** do so because of the information they have gathered. For them, the decisions they make are based in logic and reason. In contrast, people who make decisions based upon the **Heart**, do so because of how they feel about the matter as well as how they perceive the decision will impact other people. This is an important distinction. It is not just an issue of how **Heart** people feel about a decision, but they also tend to have empathic abilities, enabling them to sense how a decision may positively or negatively affect other people, either directly or indirectly. These are attributes that a **Head** decision-maker cannot understand nor

comprehend. To **Head** decision-makers, the objections raised on a matter by a **Heart** decision-maker feel irrational because there are no facts or evidence to support their perspectives.

How common it is for a church leadership team to gather information and make an important and rational decision regarding their church ministry, only to have “irrational” congregation members raise objections and concerns. Yet, these concerns often prove to be rational. God designed **Heart**-people with the ability to sense when a decision will have a positive impact on people, and when a decision may have a negative impact. This intuitive ability ought to be respected and such perspectives considered carefully. In general, when **Heart** decision-makers raise concerns on a matter, and if **Head** decision-makers push forward regardless, time will often prove the concerns raised to be valid. However, the counter is also true. When **Heart** decision-makers decide solely based upon their feelings, without considering facts, such decisions may be proved to be foolish in the long run. God created this tension of types to serve as a check and balance in the decision-making process.

### **Relating to the world around me**

Fourth, the ePersonality assessment identifies how people relate to the world around them according to two opposing categories: **Systematic** versus **Adaptive**. While pure **Systematic** or **Adaptive** types theoretically exist, most people are a blend with a dominant preference.

**Systematic** people types prefer to have a plan. Before proceeding on any task or venture, they want to know where they are going and how they will get there. For them, there is comfort in the knowledge of what to expect. Theologically, **Systematics** would argue that the Holy Spirit guides people through the planning process. It is not uncommon that **Systematic** types also score high on *Concrete* information processing.

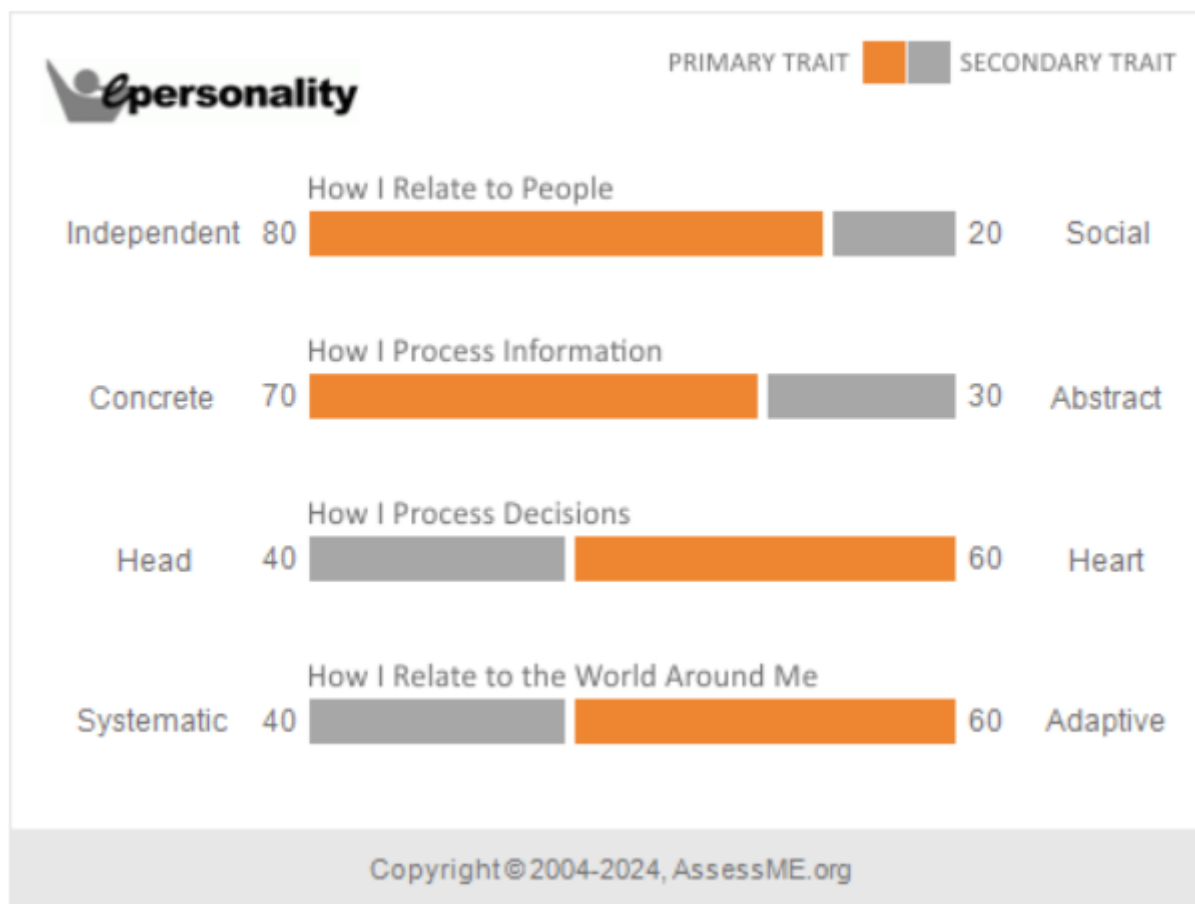
**Adaptives** are free spirits. They tend to despise plans and prefer to take life as it comes, “no expectations, no disappointments”. Theologically, **Adaptives** would argue that the Holy spirit moves in the moment, and so we ought to be ever sensitive to His leadership. Quite often creative temperament-types are among those who score high as **Adaptives**.

So, which is it? Does the Holy Spirit move through our planning? Yes! Does the Holy Spirit move in the moment? Yes! Once again, this tension of temperament types is intended by God to provide a check and balance in our interface with the world around us. We cannot plan every aspect of our lives. Neither can we exist safely in this world without planning anything. So, both means of relating to the world are equally valid and important.

### **Evaluating Profile Scores**

Beyond simply reading people’s ePersonality reports, church leaders ought to also carefully assess how a prospective candidate scored on the four oppositional states of being. This information is presented in a bar graph report. See an example below...

# Adjutant



Dominant traits are expressed in the color orange in our example report. Why explore the bar graph and not rely solely upon the summary report? For two reasons: 1) Examining how intensely people have scored in each oppositional statement will tell us what behaviors we may expect from this person when he or she is serving; 2) the scores may reveal the existence of *Flex Reports*. I will explain *Flex Reports* shortly. Let's first look at the actual scores.

By looking at our sample report, I can deduce that a score of 80 on Independent means that I cannot expect this person to exude a warm personality. Rather, this person will be highly focused upon their assigned tasks and will likely view their co-workers as his or her social circle. I can also deduce that this person is moderately strong as a **Concrete** thinker, and as such will likely value following the rules and guidelines established. However, the second two oppositional categories are not so clear. 60/40 scores mean that this person will possess some of the traits associated with **Heart** decision makers, and some traits of **Head** decision makers. The same is true for how this person relates to the world, they will possess some of the traits of an **Adaptive** type, and some of the traits of a **Systematic** type. So how do we know what traits this person will exhibit in real life? Get this: **You will only learn**

**this information through a personal interview with the candidate!** Every person is different. Even two people who may score similarly, their trait mix will likely be different. This is why you should always interview your ministry candidates based upon their scores represented in this bar graph report.

### **Appropriate Flex Reports**

As previously stated, people who have scores ranging from 60/40 to 50/50 will generate a *Flex Report*. One Flex Report is generated for each of the four oppositional statements in which a candidate scores accordingly. Now get this important point: One or two *Flex Reports* are appropriate. But when a ministry candidate scores three or four *Flex Reports*, this is a red flag that there is a problem. So why do these scores generate *Flex Reports* and what determines appropriate *Flex Reports*?

1. **Flex Reports may be generated when people do not perfectly fit one of the 16 standard reports.** Think of a pie chart with 16 slices.



Some people will assess with a dominant report (slice), and then also possess some of the traits of the next closest report (slice). Two closely related reports will share some common traits and differ slightly in other traits. In contrast, reports some distance from one another on the pie chart will have completely unrelated traits. Only through an interview with the ministry candidate, you can discover together what traits in the secondary report (i.e., Flex Report), apply.

2. **Flex Reports may be generated by people who work best under positive stress.** Some people-types display one aspect of their temperament when relaxing or playing and require positive stress as a motivator to help them perform effectively at work, utilizing another set of temperament traits in this capacity. These people do not have two personalities. Rather, the traits they require for work or when at play, may bridge between two closely related personality profiles. In this manner, they are very similar to our Flex profile example addressed in our first point. The only difference is they flip-flop between the two trait categories based upon states of work or play.

### **Inappropriate Flex Reports**

Inappropriate *Flex Reports* are typically generated when three or four *Flex Reports* exist for a ministry candidate. While theoretically it is possible that a person could rightly possess three or four *Flex Reports*, in real life, you should immediately be dubious. Why? Because such scores typically convey one of three reasons for the scores:

1. **The ministry candidate does not understand who they are.** This may be a legitimate problem when issuing the assessment to high school students. They lack sufficient life experience to fully discern what activities they like or dislike. This is why we recommend that when using our assessments with high school students, they must be at least sixteen years old, and they ought to take the assessment with the assistance of the parent that they feel best understands them.

In some rare cases, traditional housewives who have lived to raise their children, and who never worked outside the home, and now take the assessment after their children have grown and left the home, may find themselves confused and ill-equipped to respond to the questions and so may generate multiple ***Flex Reports***.

2. **The ministry candidate has experienced, or is experiencing, some kind of abuse.** This is a very serious matter, and no responsible church leader would automatically label people as being abused based upon three or four ***Flex Reports***. However, through interpersonal consultation, this matter should be brought to light if applicable. Why? So that the abused person may receive counseling and eventually find healing in Christ. But also, because abused people often become abusers. Because abused people lose sight of who God created them to be. They become chameleons, transforming themselves to become whatever their authority (i.e., abuser) expects of them, in an attempt to avoid additional pain. But this transformation is highly stressful and painful for the ministry candidate. Unfortunately, church leaders who do not bother to explore this matter tend to love having chameleons working for them, because they will do whatever is expected.
3. **The final reason a ministry candidate may generate three or four Flex Reports, is because they were trying to manipulate the assessment.** There is a real-life story of an



elder in a church who did not believe in using assessments in the church, and because assessments were required of every leader in the church, he thought he would prove to everybody that they could not be trusted. And so, he began to lie in his assessment responses. When the elders gathered together to share their reports and discuss the results, this elder's report clearly did not reflect the personality everyone knew him to be, and his report generated multiple **Flex Reports** due to the inconsistency of his responses to the question pool. People who try to manipulate the assessment cannot respond to the questions consistently so as to fit one of the sixteen standard reports. The ePersonality will reveal liars and deceivers.

### **Why Flex Reports are not currently reported to staff**

To date, we have not made Flex Reports viewable to church staff apart from analyzing a ministry candidate's bar graph report. The reason is because we are concerned that ill-informed church staff will mobilize people based upon a secondary Flex Report as if it were a dominant report. We may modify the software in the future to reveal Flex Reports, but if we do so, there will be clear warnings to church staff on the software interface to not mobilize people based exclusively on these reports. Flex Reports are a secondary and supportive report in which only some of the traits within these reports will apply to the ministry candidate. And those traits can only be revealed through an interpersonal interview.

### **ePersonality Conclusion:**

The goal of the ePersonality assessment is to help people understand how God designed them, and for what purpose. The assessment is not intended to reveal deep dark secrets in a person's life. That said, the tool can reveal manipulators of the assessment, as well as people suffering from abuse. We offer our assessments for ministry mobilization. But at the same time, they may serve to protect your church from potentially harmful individuals. Conversely, the assessment may also serve to protect people from potentially harmful and abusive church leaders. If your church is one of many who throw people into roles without an assessment process, just to plug your programming holes, then I am sorry to suggest that your church culture is abusive. When church leaders ask people to do things God never designed nor asked them to do, that is a sin against their created nature. We respect our God when we respect His creation. When we abuse His creation for the "benefit of ministry", we are using a spiritualized excuse to manipulate people to do what we need them to do. God knows the needs of *His* ministries, and *He* will provide the necessary people to enable *His* church to accomplish *His* will. As leaders, we need to trust our Lord for *His* provision. If God does not provide the human resources required, then it is time to pray and wait for His provision...this means a ministry program ought to be paused until God provides. Plugging warm bodies into our programming holes is simply wrong.