

# Traditional Virtues Semantic Implication in Contemporary Teenager Perception —Based on the Commandment *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*

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The article presents comparative analysis results pertaining to ingrained functionality demonstrated by Russian, Slovenian, and Slovak teenagers in explanation of the commandment *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*. In the present article, the authors do not detect any desemantization elements to the traditional Christian virtue and ask the question *What is going to happen to Europe, Russia, and world tomorrow?* They also hope that next generations aim at friendship and mutual understanding, and are ready to learn of each other, understand, and accept.

**Keywords:** religious discourse, Christian precepts, phraseological unit, cultural wealth, desemantization

## Introduction

Let us define a discourse as the aggregate of actualized connections to reality and consider the process taking place inside its axiological component. As it is known, concepts of reality and values themselves are ephemeral. The things that were sacred for majority yesterday seem to be trivial today. To European civilization, the Christian commandments have remained the most durable for a long time despite the test of time, e.g. “the refugee crisis” that caused confusion within the EC.

The decision by Angela Merkel, a member of Christian Democratic Party of Germany, to invite a million of refugees to the country, that seemed premature and unexpected—did it shatter Europeans’ confidence in consistency of traditional virtues? Certainly, the German Chancellor was pushed towards that act by necessity to solve economic, social, and political issues faced by the country. However, “invasion” instead of disciplined emigration in German tradition allows assuming that this decision was determined not only by the course of history that declared Germans guilty. Getting to the worldview structure<sup>1</sup>, one can see that this decision, most

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<sup>1</sup> Shchukina I. K vprašanju o nacionalni sliki sveta// Zbornik 12. Mednarodne multikonference “informa-cijskadružba” – IS 2009. Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2009. pp. 386-389; Shchukina I. The Image of an Addressee in Translational Discourse (Exemplified by the Texts Translated From Slovenian Language), *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, ISSN 2159-5836, USA. Issue 12, Vol. 3, 2013, City of Industry, pp. 798-809.

probably, has originated from the worldview religious level (society consciousness), the level that is responsible for emotions and assessment of moral condition and actions of individuals or environment. Thence there is a wish to act in accordance with Christian nurture i.e. to wash away the ancestors' guilt, to help the destitute in defending the suffered, etc. Undoubtedly, such action of the political leader to Europe which first passed a way of "God-deprivation"<sup>2</sup> that "does not exclude religious commitment; on the contrary, thanks to her, attitude towards gods for the first time becomes a religious experience"<sup>3</sup>—seemed not only normal but the only one possible. Responding to the German leader's call, the Europeans prepared for refugee admission: they provided meals, rendered medical care to diseased, brought warm clothes and food, vacated trains and buses for them... until the unavoidable culture clash happened. Regardless of what this crisis results in, the Europeans have faced a problem of "what's next?" What "old" and "new" inhabitants of the Old World may count upon? Is the commandment *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* still valid for contemporary efficient population? For the future generations, for those who have built the new values structure by desamentizing the old one.

The purpose of our research has been to detect evidence of desamentization of the commandment *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* in Slavic languages and the native language speakers' perception.

The semantic and style method used for processing the questionnaire data includes statistical and comparative analyses.

The desamentization (Latin prefix *de-* means *removal*; Greek *shmantikos* means *having significance*) is the process of losing the word meaning.

Without a doubt, idiomatic phraseological unit semantics is not the sum of separate word meanings. However, one of the monotheistic world's traditional values expressed by the phraseological unit *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* (Leviticus, 19:18) is not an idiom and its semantics is derived as a sum of component meanings.

As it is known, a personality is formed mostly by his/her family; moreover, a young person between ages of 10 and 13—when it comes time to have an independent opinion—becomes a translator of values acknowledged by his/her parents and closer family members and formed in school. The growing person "follows carefully everything that is disapproved or approved. ...actions on demand are approved, but in case the others dislike them, the person is made to correct his actions by observing the others"<sup>4</sup>.

Neurophysiologic research results indicate that the human brain completes its development by age of 20-22, and only then, it is possible to speak of e.g. responsibility for the said words<sup>5</sup>. Answers to our questionnaire correlate to opinion by certain part of population of Russia, Slovenia, and Slovakia. All three countries are Christian. Slovenia and Slovakia are populated with Catholics mostly, and Russia with Orthodox Christians, although most of the population is still unchurched. However, churchd citizens may be considered virtually Christian religiose in orthodox way.

The research was conducted for children and teenagers of 10-13 years old from three cities: Saint Petersburg, Russia; Košice, Slovakia; and Ljubljana, Slovenia. In total, 150 persons joined the study: 87 in Russia, 33 in Slovenia, and 30 in Slovakia.

The following questions were asked:

<sup>2</sup> Хайдеггер М. *Время картины мира*// *Время и бытие* (Heidegger, Martin. *Time of Worldview // Time and Being*. (in Russian translation). Saint Petersburg, 2003, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Kazanskaya V.G. *Teenager Suicidal Behaviour: Timely Succour*. Moscow, 2015, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Svaab, Dick. *We are our Brains: From the Womb to Alzheimer's*. Saint Petersburg, 2014.

1. Are you familiar with the commandment *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*?
2. How do you understand the word “love”?
3. Whom can you call your neighbor?
4. And more?
5. In your opinion, can we call all the people on the planet the neighbors?
6. Why do you think so?
7. Whom would you like to exclude from “neighbors”?
8. What can make a person be your neighbor?
9. What in your consciousness prevents you from accepting a person as your neighbor?
10. Who can help a person to overcome prejudice against *another*?
11. Your other ideas and observations.

### **Functioning of Phraseological Unit *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* in Slovenian and Slovak Languages**

The question *Are you familiar with the commandment “Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself”*? was answered *No* by a single Slovenian kid, which amounts to 3% of 33 respondents. All Slovak schoolchildren are familiar with the commandment. The question *How do you understand the word “love”*? was answered variably and the most frequent answers by Slovenians are: *as the word “dear”* and *the person I love*, 27% each; there were also answers: *become his/her friend* and *the one who I consider mine or respect*, 18% each. There were interesting isolated answers that cannot be accounted for this study: *the one who supports you*, *the one whom I think highly of*. Slovaks’ answers were vaguer, but still more definite: *love*, answered 27% schoolchildren; verb *to love* was used by another 40%. The above amounts to 67% of all answers. Answers *God, Jesus loves us, love God* amount to 17%. One interesting isolated answer is: *to help each other*. Four respondents preferred non-verbal answer and drew a heart for the answer.

The Russian verb *любить / возлюбить*<sup>6</sup> (obsolete) / *the same as полюбить*<sup>7</sup> (to love) as well as corresponding Slovenian *ljubiti / rad imeti* and Slovak *milovať* all have the same meanings: (1) deep affection, strong gut feeling; (2) deep disposition towards someone/something, self-sacrificing and sincere devotion; (3) permanent strong addiction, enthusiasm for something; etc. Collins English Dictionary gives similar definitions: *to love*: (1) to have a great attachment to and affection for; (2) to have passionate desire, longing, and feelings for; (3) to like or desire (to do something) very much; etc.

Orthodox and Catholic theologians define love as something high-spirited and self-sacrificing. “The love that Christ brought into our world has another new and more spiritual meaning: it is the love as Jesus understood it, sacrificing one’s life for neighbors”<sup>8</sup>.

As we can see, understanding of the term by Slovenian and Slovak schoolchildren is very close to that

<sup>6</sup> The 1861 translation of Christian Scriptures is considered canonical by the Russian Orthodox Church; this translation abounds in Old Church Slavonic. See in details: Shchukina, Irina. *The National Image of the World in an Objective Process of Globalization // Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems – INDECS № 8/2*. Zagreb, 2010, pp. 138-146.

<sup>7</sup> Ожегов С. И., Шведова Н. Ю. Токовый словарь русского языка (Ozhegov, S.I., Shvedova, N.Yu. *The Explanatory Dictionary of Russian Language*). Moscow, Yaz’, 1992; Slovenskopravopis. ISJ ZRC SAZU (Ur. J. Toporišič in dr.) Ljubljana, 2001; Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka, Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, Bratislava, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> See from [http://social-orthodox.info/pages/1\\_1\\_lubov\\_k\\_blizhnemu.htm](http://social-orthodox.info/pages/1_1_lubov_k_blizhnemu.htm). Retrieved: 15.08.2016.

describe in dictionaries. All shades of meaning that respondents mentioned in their answers may be found in First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13<sup>9</sup>.

To the question *Who can you call your neighbor?* Slovenians named their family members and relatives (64% respondents), *friends* and *those who are close to me* (27% respondents); *everyone* (18%). Slovak schoolchildren rather repeated the same answers: *family* was chosen by large majority (73%); and *classmates* (23%). Some Slovaks mentioned God as their neighbor (13%), that Slovenians failed to do. Since the respondents mentioned several neighbors, total sum is over 100%; *friends* were mentioned in 10% answers.

To the question *And more?* Slovenians answered: *acquaintances and friends*, 27%; *relatives*, 18%; *God*, 18%; *no answer*, 31%. Slovak students added to neighbors: *family*, 27%; *classmates*, 33%; *friends*, 20%. 13% pollees consider God their neighbor. Among isolate answers, we can mention: *those who I can trust / to whom I have deep friendly feelings / all classmates except for the Gypsies*. God appears in the same percentage of Slovenians' as in Slovaks' answers to first question, but Slovak students double this percentage. Although some Slovaks' classmates are Gypsies who are treated negatively, probably due to some adults' disparagement, only Slovaks distinguish the special group of classmates. Slovenians speak of friends only.

Each clergyman interprets meaning of the commandment in question in his own way. This applies especially to the question who *neighbor* is. Typically authors refer to biblical texts from which we can extract the following meaning: *true love doesn't know any limits invented by human mind with regard to concern for needs of distressed person; ergo, your neighbor is anyone who needs your help despite him being an adherent of another faith and hostile to you, do good to him, don't wait for someone to do the good, hurry up doing it yourself*. This is going to be execution of God's commandment of love to our neighbors<sup>10</sup>. Our respondents have intuitively found their neighbors through help and care, but focused on themselves: it is family, friends or classmates, and God, as we are going to see later with "Giver of good" function.

The question *Can we call all the people on the planet the neighbors?* was answered *Yes* by 18% Slovenian respondents, *No* by 54%; *all kind ones* by 3%. No answer was received from 26%. Slovak respondents slightly differ from their Slovenian colleagues. Their answers are: *yes, because we belong to the same family*, 33%; *no, it's hard / no, because some of them are evil people / no, because they have their own families / no, because not all of them are my relatives or friends*, 60%. 7% respondents have given no answer. As we can see, the most complicated component of the phraseological unit in question is not desemantized. It has absolutely the same meaning as in religious texts, without any semantic addition. Despite solitary rejection of other ethnic groups, Slovak respondents are more susceptible—than Slovenians—to the idea of calling all people the neighbors.

The latter question and the following ones were introduced to clarify presence or absence of phraseological unit spiritual value desemantization and called for thinking over the idea contained in the commandment.

The question *Why do you think so?* was answered by Slovenian schoolchildren as follows: *kindness connects us*, 18%; *for we all are the same*, 18%; *because some of the people are not good ones*, 27%; *because I don't know them*, 18%; *because we cannot trust everybody*, 10%. Of isolated answers, one is interesting: *all people are valuable*. Slovak children answered: *for we are all the same*, 26%; *because some of the people are not good ones*, 10%; *because I cannot embrace the whole planet / they are not my family / I don't know*, 10%

<sup>9</sup> First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13.

<sup>10</sup> See in details from <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/75365.html> and [http://social-orthodox.info/pages/1\\_1\\_lubov\\_k\\_blizhnemu.htm](http://social-orthodox.info/pages/1_1_lubov_k_blizhnemu.htm).

each; *no answer*, 50%. Interesting isolated answers include: *everyone is different*. It is worth mentioning that inquired Slovenians answered *Yes* to the previous question in 18% cases only, but explained why yes in 36%. Most likely, it is attributed to implicit uncertainty in correctness of the answer and wish to “soothe” the teacher.

The question *Who would you like to exclude from “neighbors”?* was answered by Slovenian schoolchildren in typical ways: *thieves and villains*, 27%; *those who are against me because I don’t know them / strangers/ those who sins / those who doesn’t like me / nobody*, 3% each; there were also unexpected answers: *relatives* and *friends*, 18% each; *no answer*, 9%. Here are some single answers: *Japanese, they are far away; Chinese*. Slovak children have a different approach to the world: *nobody*, 23%. Single answers include: *terrorists; some of the classmates; Gypsies*. In their answers, Slovenian kids apparently tend to substitute concept of *neighbor* by *nearby*. Here we can again observe negative attitude to other ethnic groups: “bad ones” are Japanese and Chinese for Slovenians, and Gypsies—for Slovaks. Such answers are solitary.

Slovenians’ answers to the question *What should happen to make a person your neighbor?* include: *it is necessary to become friends*, 36%; *to do good, to trust*, 9%; *to know him/her better*, 36%; *we have to confide in each other*, 6%. Here are some single answers: *wonder; he should feel affection to me*. Slovak students are sure that: *he has to be tender/happy*, 7%; *he has to protect me / help me / play with me / take care of me / be close to me / to love me* and *to be a Christian*, 13%. *Kind*, 43%; *well-mannered*, 10%; *sweet*, 17%; *having a nice heart*, 7%. Here are some single answers: *merciful; with God in his heart*. Note the “ought to” focus shift from the subject to the object: someone else ought to, not me.

Slovenians’ answers to the question *What in your consciousness prevents you from accepting a person as your neighbor?* include: *nothing*, 27%; *hostility*, 18%; *deception*, 9%. There are some interesting isolated answers: *temper; his malignity; that we cannot understand his malice; we see the world differently; ill acts; he is misbehaving*; *no answer*, 18%. Slovak kids answered somewhat differently: *I don’t know*, 10%; *they are bad and proud*, 17%. There are a lot of solitary answers, among those: *he is a friend of someone I don’t like / his behavior / he is Gypsy / if he hates each another / he cheats / he has no good heart / they are lazy / he’s bad: he doesn’t love me / he is unjust, greedy, criticizes other people*. These are sincere answers by little persons who are sure that relationship concord is spoiled by external reasons only. Surely, this is result of children’s perception of the world where the child is the center of his/her family, society, and the Earth. But how soon this naïve egocentrism will disappear from minds of adult people, parents, politicians?

The question *Who can help a person to overcome prejudice against another?* Slovenian respondents answered: *relatives*, 27%; *God / friends, family, truth/has to know Him*, 18% each. Among solitary answers: *all together*. Slovak respondents answered: *angels*, 17%; *Mary*, 10%; *God*, 60%; *Jesus*, 37%; *senior priest*, 7%; *family*, 10%; *neighbor*, 10%. Interesting isolated answers: *has to know Him; truth*.

Answers by Slovenian and Slovak students demonstrate no desemantization of the entire phraseological unit or its components. When discussing the commandment’s essence, there is substitution of action subject for object. The Scripture says that your neighbor is not only the one who cares about you (Luke 10; 25-37), but also the one whom you should care about. The students’ answers show that the former is more important than the latter. Schoolchildren are sure that to make humankind to feel like a monolithic society it is necessary for people to get closer, be friends, know each other better, do good to each other; but the other should also protect, help, play (that means “to be a friend”), care, be close, and love. Many pollees are not prevented from acceptance another for his/her neighbor at all, but it has to be a Christian. Some isolate answers indicate

seedlings of nationalism. Slovenian and Slovak students both have refused to include in number of neighbors the representatives of other ethnicities: Gypsies (classmates), Japanese (they are too far away), and Chinese (noexplanation).

### Functioning of Phraseological Unit “*Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*” in Russian Language

Without a doubt, the “God-deprivation” process goes on with variable success. Science and modern technologies on the move greatly facilitate it. For example, our study has demonstrated that in Russian mega-metropolis, despite the introduction of mandatory school course “Basic principles of religious culture and secular ethics”, over than half of the respondents are not familiar with the commandment in question, whereas in the provincial Slovak town all students know the commandment and specify when they have gotten familiar with it: during preparation for the First Communion. In more educated Slovenia<sup>11</sup>, where we questioned students from the capital city and provincials both, there was received only one negative answer to the question *Are you familiar with the commandment?*; but answers by other respondents (3 students of 6th grade) make clear that *Yes* answer does not always reflect the real situation. In some cases, the pollees know the commandment itself, but they never bothered about it.

Of Russian high-school students, 87 persons participated in the study: 59 fourth-graders and 28 fifth-graders. 57.5% Russian schoolchildren are not familiar with the commandment “*Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*”, and 42.5% are familiar, accordingly.

For this reason we have divided the pollees’ answers into YES-group (those who are familiar with the commandment) and NO-group (those who are not) to make assessment if the results demonstrated by secular-educated children differ from those by children brought up as a Christian.

First question, *How do you understand the word “love”?* In YES-group, the verb “love” was the most widely used and variably presented in 43% answers; *respect*, 17%; *to accept the person, his/her point of view, etc.*, 14%; *to be friends*, 34%; *family relations, treat as yourself, good fellowship, equal attitude to all people*, 18% total. Single answers: *commence listening*.

In NO-group, the answers were as follows: answers including the name “love” amount to 52%; *to catch fancy, friendship*, 6% each. Single answers include: *understand, get to know*. The obtained results are tabulated below.

Table 1

*Answers to Question How Do You Understand the Word “Love”? By YES-Group and NO-Group*

YES-group	%	NO-group	%
Love	43	Love	52
Respect	17	Respect	2
Friendship	34	Friendship	6
Accept	14	Accept, understand	8
Family relations / treat as yourself / good fellowship / equal attitude to all people	18	No answer	12

As the table clearly demonstrates, members of opposite groups have significant disagreement in interpreting of this word when it comes to *respect* (17% against 2%) and *friendship* (34% against 6%).

Answers to the question *Whom can you call your neighbor?* by YES-group: *family / relatives*, 63%. This

<sup>11</sup> Shchukina I. The Image of an Addressee in Translational Discourse (Exemplified by the Texts Translated From Slovenian Language) // *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, ISSN 2159-5836, USA. Issue 12, Vol. 3, 2013, City of Industry, pp. 798-809.

answer includes several variants with most common “*mother and father*”. *Friends*, 37%; *people of Russia / all of the people around / all people / all people are alike*, 6%. The pupils definitely understand the word “*neighbor*” in its primary sense. Answers given by NO-group: *relatives*, 71%; *friends*, 17%; *those who are spiritually close to me*, 7%. Single answers include: *good people*; *whoever is always next to me*.

Table 2

*Answers to Question Who Can you Call Your Neighbor? By YES-Group and NO-Group*

YES-group	%	NO-group	%
Family/relatives	63	Relatives	71
Friends	37	Friends	17
People of Russia/all people around/all people, they are all alike	6	Those who are spiritually close to me	3

Answering first and second questions both, NO-group disregarded friendship. As opposed to those who are familiar with the commandment and indicate friends and friendship (37%), the pollees who answered *No* to the first question indicate friends only in 17% answers. In other cases results of two groups show little difference.

The question *And more?* was answered as follows: *friends* was again the most popular answer in YES-group with 37%, and in NO-group it amounts to 25%. The answers make clear that the students intuitively correctly divide *neighbors* into outer circle and inner circle. *Relatives* and *acquaintances* received 14% each. 5% answers mention animals and 8% pollees give no answer to this question. In NO-group leading answers are: *relatives*, 31%; *nobody*, 25%; *classmates*, 20%; *everybody*, 13%. Some of isolated answers include: *teachers*, *coaches*; *those who are attached to me*; *God*; *those who are not against us*; *those who understands us* (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Answers to Question And More? By YES-Group and NO-Group*

YES-group	%	NO-group	%
Friends	37	Friends	25
Relatives	14	Relatives	31
Acquaintances	14	Classmates	20
Teachers	14	Everybody	13
Animals	5	Nobody	25
No answer	8	No answer	13

Pay attention here to 13% answers containing word *everybody* in anticipation for the next question.

Answering to the question *Can we call all the people on the planet the neighbors?*: agreed to include *all the people*, 20%; *no*, 70%; *yes, but not all of them*, 3%; *yes and no*, 7%.

The answer “*yes and no*” was accompanied with the following comments: (1) *For instance, I watch the Olympics or championship and I think “We are so strong and so cool!”, and it seems to me that this sportsman is kinda my relative and I know him well, and I mean a lot to him, too! However as I shut my TV off I understand that I don’t know him at all, and there are a million kids like me in the world who think they mean something to that athlete.* (2) *We do not know every single person, and that’s why we do not dig them; but we are human, all of us, we are alive, and any person in the street may help you without even knowing your name.*

In YES-group, practically all the answers complement one another: *all of us are alike*, 51%; *we all trace*

origin from the same entity, 27%; *all of us are people*, 10%; *we all live on the same planet*, 8%. Isolated answers are also aligned: *we have to help one another*; *we are a chain of acquaintances and everybody knows everybody*; *we can change the bad people*; *because we all live on the same planet*. In NO-group, the answers comprise: *we are not acquainted*, 45%; *some people are ruthless/wicked*, 14%; these answers pretty stay within traditional child-rearing practices. Interesting is the solitary answer: *mercenaries, killers, collectors* that witnesses that the kid is involved in modern society information realm and these widely discussed topics could not help but sticking in the kid's mind. *All of us are different*, 5%; *scum of society / I don't like them*, 4% each. Single answers include: *they cannot help*; *he can sell me out*; *some people are against Russians*; *I don't trust everyone*; *mercenaries, killers, collectors*; *they believe meanly of me*; *they are for their country and I am for mine*; *they don't want to be neighbors*. The state-attributed answers may result from false patriotism within the family. Obtained data are tabulated below.

Table 4

*Answers to Question Can We Call All the People on the Planet the Neighbors? By YES-Group and NO-Group*

YES-group	%	NO-group	%
We all trace origin from the same entity	27	We are not acquainted	45
We are all alike	51	Scum of society	4
All of us are people	10	I don't like them	4
We all live on the same planet	8	All of us are different	5
		Some people are ruthless	14

As the table shows, answer to this question reflects expected difference between moral educations in YES- and NO-groups. However, answers to the following questions differ insignificantly, so the further dividing into two groups made no sense, and we unified them.

Neighbor category should exclude: *nobody*, 23%; the categories excluded most frequently are *scum of society*, 20%; *strangers*, 10%; *enemies*, 10%. 5% answers contain ambiguous information: *everybody except for... traitors / those who don't understand me / who treats be badly / everybody whom I don't love*, 7% each. Of singular answers: *those who invaded our country in 1941 / foreigners who are different from us / those whom I don't live with / mother* (obviously, this is due to in-family problems: adopted children, family violence, etc.).

Most of the pollees understand that to make a person your neighbor it needs: *to make friends with him/her* (26%); *to get to know another and to win confidence*, 10% each; *consensus / to get through hard times together / intercommunication*, 8% each; *confidence and to prove that I'm worthy of friendship*, 7% each. However, there are some answers that shift the responsibility for getting closer entirely to other shoulders: *to change the other's temper/behavior*, 5%; *he has to do something for me*, 5%; *he has to be liked by me / he has to become my own one / the person has to change*, 7% each. Of singular answers worth mentioning: *good deeds; equality; to make friends with me*. Note that Russian schoolchildren have given more answers where responsibility for actions is undertaken by respondent than Slovenians and Slovaks, yet it is obvious that here again subject to object relationship leaves much to be desired.

Acceptance of another person is also hindered by: *uncertainty on positive attitude*, 19%; *nothing*, 7%; the same percentage *he's bad*, 7%; *stranger / mistrust / wariness*, 7% each; *lack of friendship*, 5%. Of singular answers worth mentioning: *conscience / negative personal experience / communication failure / wider public; they are extraterrestrial beings and live at another planet / self-preservation instinct*. Answers to this question reflect doubts and reflections over this issue or it may be brought up by discussion during a social science

lesson. Our children again, like Slovenians and Slovaks, lodge claims to another person: *he's bad / I don't know him / I don't trust him*, etc., but there are also signs of thinking: thus, *uncertainty of positive attitude* was mentioned by 19% respondents. Note that singular answer: *wider public*. It is true. It is hard to remain Christian-way tolerant in the atmosphere of total mistrust.

The question *Who/what can help a person to overcome prejudice against another?* shifted kids' minds to constructive stand. 29% answers indicate *friendship*, but responsibility is pinned entirely to *the person-actor*, 22%. 16% still bank on *neighbor*. 5% answers each describe fairly grown-up thinking: *confidence*, *understanding*, and *psychology*. Yet 3% answers reflect fatality in Russian way: *nobody*. Of singular answers worth mentioning: *to break the stereotype / self-assurance / God / creed / hope / love*.

Unlike Slovenian and Slovak schoolchildren, most of whom left the last field for additional comments blank, Russian kids left some interesting comments. Some of these we cite here: *To have a lot of friends one has to be a good friend himself / all people live on the same planet and they have to live in peace / one needs more new friends / there is no ideal in the world, but there is goodness. I have read extracts from the Scripture. People are not like it is supposed by God, commandments, Jesus / People have to believe in God, have to be kind and gentle, to know their faith and prayers to be able, in case of sickness, heal themselves or hear God / I am afraid of people, I accept them by their looks, but I need to see their souls... what if we cannot understand each other? It's hard to get new connections because of that / Why should we compare everybody? It might be even a druggie or a person of another ethnicity. All of us are equal, and everyone acts in his/her own manner. I do not rule out that someone enjoys the situation, everything should be changed / We are of one blood!*

### Conclusion

The conducted research allows for the following results:

- Neither of the polled groups has demonstrated desemantization of main idea of biblical commandment “*Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*”;
- Slovenian, Slovak, and Russian schoolchildren understand words “love” and “neighbor” in full compliance with basic ideas of Catholic and Orthodox churches and secular society brought up within European civilization;
- Secular education with addition of course in “Basic principles of religious culture and secular ethics” allows thinking over essential questions of life without emasculating moral bearings.

What is going to happen to Europe, Russia, and world tomorrow? How this violent start of the century is going to end? We can be sure that next generations aim at friendship, mutual understanding, are ready to learn of each other, understand, and accept. Let us give them that chance!

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