"I share the Good News because, after hearing it, I cannot help but tell others!"

(1 Corinthians 9:16, paraphrased)

100 United Years

Joseph Vessot

Joseph Vessot was born on January 31, 1810, in Saint-Albain, France. In those days, the Bible and religious books were distributed by peddlers. These people travelled from house to house, even to the most hard-to-reach places, to bring the good news.

When Joseph heard that peddlers were needed in Canada, he offered to help. Hired by the Geneva Missionary Society, he arrived in Montreal on October 12, 1840, after a three-month journey by boat.

Joseph talked about the gospel wherever he could. For many years, he ran a stall at the Joliette market, selling Bibles, New Testaments, and other religious books. Joseph always knew how to get people's attention in creative ways. One day, children and teenagers destroyed his stand and scattered the pages of his books and brochures over hundreds of metres. But despite some people's anger, he never gave up.

Joseph became a pastor in 1874. He was 64, an age when others usually stopped working. He worked in Congregational and Presbyterian churches and missions for more than twenty years.

Joseph Vessot died on April 9, 1898, at the age of 88. Thanks to the work of peddlers like him, the Protestant faith grew. By 1880, there were over 9,000 French-speaking Protestants in Canada, and some 135 pastors and pastoral workers, most of whom grew up locally. Many of these people were still alive when The United Church of Canada was founded in 1925.

He left the parishes he visited with the memory of an honest and sincere man, always happy, proud to tell others the good news and to make himself useful.
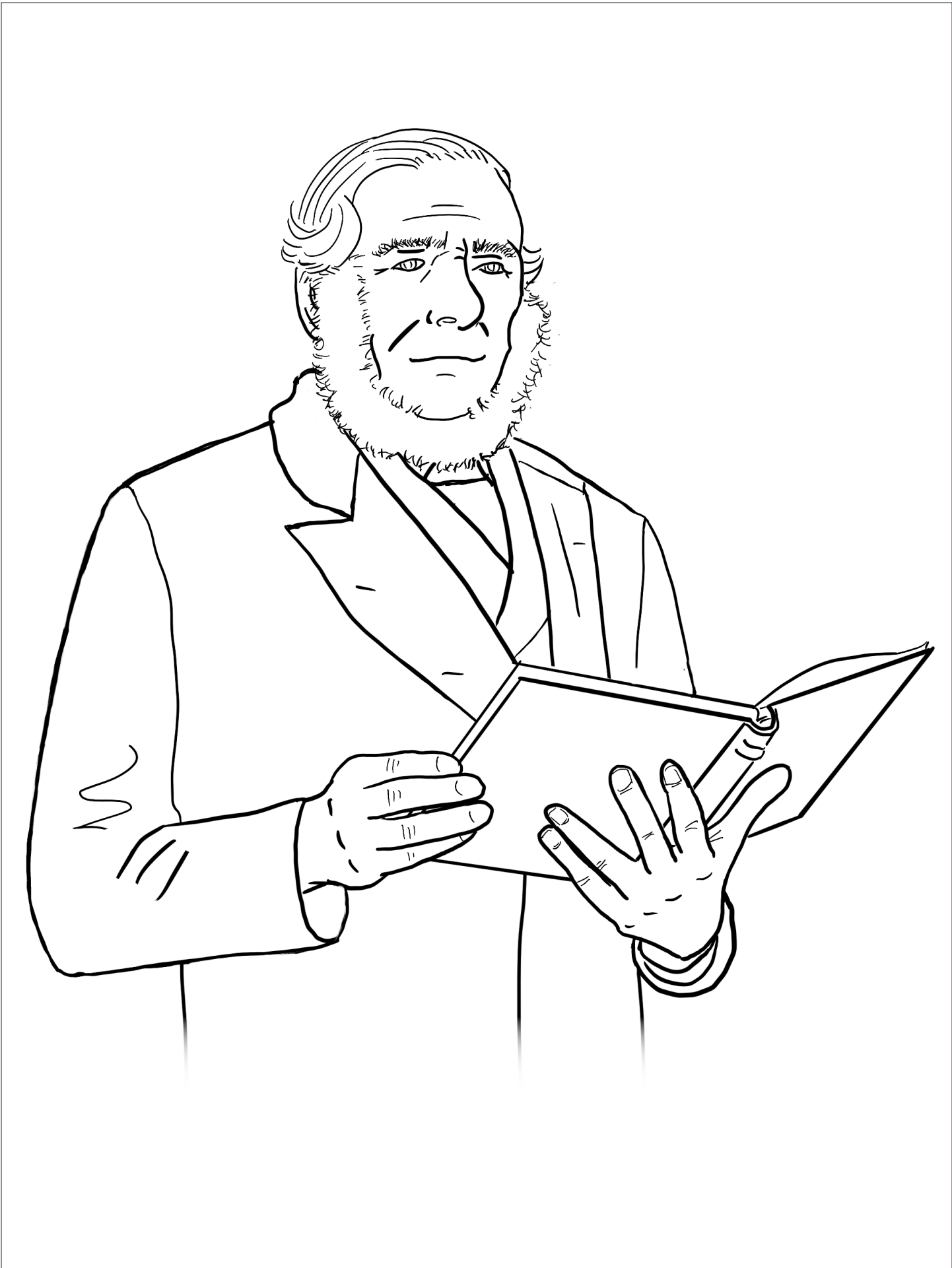
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