

50 years after Apollo 8, its astronauts' Genesis Christmas message lives on

1968 was a unique box office year as the entertainment industry was pumping the crowds with enthusiasm for cosmic exploration.

From the original *Planet of the Apes*, Stan Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* to the three -year-old *Star Trek* series on TV, North American's space race started on the big screen. Despite its enthusiasm and popularity, the best was saved for last on Christmas Eve when Apollo 8 astronauts Bill Anders, Jimi Lovell and Frank Borman broadcast this message, which included a reciting of part of the Book of Genesis.

Anders: "We are now approaching lunar sunrise, and for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you:

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

Lovell: "And God called the light



Neel Roberts

The Sky's the Limit

Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Borman: "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good."

"And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth."

Public event

There's a special meeting Saturday, Dec. 15 at Ambrose University on the origins of the Star of Bethlehem. The meeting takes place from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Calgary, at the Airhart Theater, 150 Ambrose Circle SW. The presentation by Dr. Stephen Jeans, developer and instructor of Ambrose University's Earth and Space Science courses, is about an hour of full-colour space images (mainly from ground-based astrophotographers and space-based NASA telescopes) and includes some analysis of biblical accounts to suggest how/what might have been the Christmas star of the Magi. Members of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) will help point out Comet 46P/Wirtanen. Visit www.casca.ca/events/event/cal-jeans-18 for more information on this presentation.

Neel Roberts, a member of the Calgary chapter of RASC, welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574 and Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.