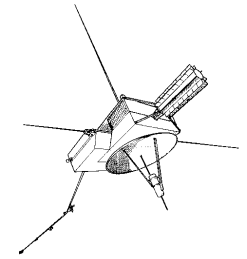
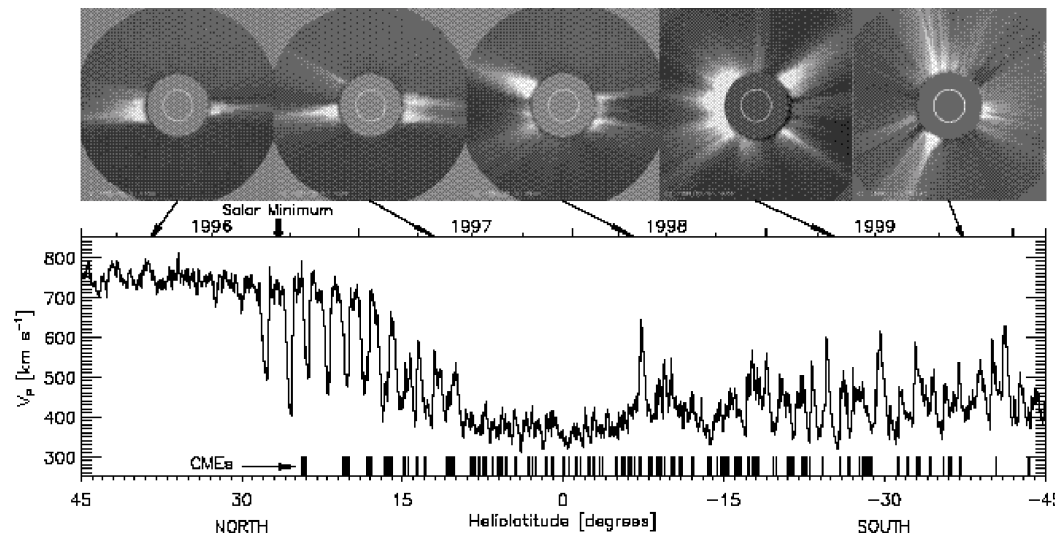




Ulysses observes irregular solar wind as solar maximum approaches



Solar wind observations taken recently by Ulysses near solar maximum differ greatly from earlier data. During solar minimum, Ulysses sampled fast and slow solar wind and encountered a persistent corotating interaction region (CIR) on each solar rotation. In contrast, as Ulysses now climbs to mid-latitudes in its second orbit, it observes highly irregular solar wind that is much less periodic, and without entries thus far into fast solar wind. Recent data include more coronal mass ejections (CMEs) than earlier data, as well as numerous shocks associated with CMEs and CIRs. The mid-latitude solar wind structure is increasingly complex as solar activity increases and the Sun is dominated by coronal streamers, small-scale coronal holes, and frequent CMEs.



Comparison of Ulysses' solar wind speed from March 1996 to February 2000 with five SOHO/LASCO C2 coronagraph images. Vertical lines at the bottom indicate CMEs. The rapidly increasing complexity of the corona as it evolves toward solar maximum, and appearance of streamers at higher latitudes caused Ulysses to remain in the highly structured slow and intermediate solar wind.