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INTERVIEW

OF

DR. CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL

Conducted by Troy Cline

Thursday, March 21, 2013

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NASA GSFC

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2 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 MR. CLINE: Okay. If you could just tell us your name and your title, what you do. 3 DR. RUSSELL: I am Troy Cline --4 5 MR. CLINE: Hahaha. Wow, that's awesome. 6 DR. RUSSELL: Okay. Should we try that 7 again? 8 MR. CLINE: I could fill in a few stories 9 for you. 10 DR. RUSSELL: Okay. I am Chris Russell and I am Professor of Space Physics at the University of 11 California, Los Angeles, and I've had the fortune to 12 be involved in a lot of the early discoveries after 13 the beginning of the space age. 14 MR. CLINE: Okay. Thank you. And the first 15 16 question we have for you is if you could tell us what 17 your primary area of research interest is. 18 DR. RUSSELL: Okay. My primary area of 19 research interest is the physics of magnetized 20 plasmas, especially flowing plasmas. 21 I am interested in dynamos and how the 22 magnetic fields of the solar system are generated. Ι

1	am interested in reconnection, which is a process										
2	whereby magnetic fields get coupled together and										
3	enable the transfer of energy from one region to										
4	another, and they also can enable the annihilation of										
5	magnetic fields and the release of that magnetic										
6	energy into other forms of energy.										
7	I am interested in the formation of magnetic										
8	ropes. These are twisted bundles of ropes, especially										
9	ropes that can twist in such a way as they are self										
10	balancing. So they push outwards and pull inwards at										
11	the same time, and form just a rope very much like a										
12	rope that you might tie something up with.										
13	I am also interested in magnetic barriers of										
14	different types, and boundary layers that enable the										
15	pressure of say, the solar wind, to be transmitted to										
16	the Earth's magnetosphere.										
17	I am interested also in shocks, which are a										
18	non linear phenomena where the magnetic field changes										
19	very rapidly, and the plasma conditions change very										
20	rapidly, and there's a lot of dissipation of energy in										
21	these boundaries. And that's very important for a										
22	plasma because it makes very highly energetic										

1 particles.

2 And I'm also interested in waves. Both -the shock is a wave itself, but there are also smaller 3 waves that transmit energy. They do heating and they 4 change the space environment in many ways. 5 6 MR. CLINE: Okay. What I'm going to do -- let me pause this for just a second. 7 8 (Pause in recording.) 9 MR. CLINE: Okay. And I am un-paused. So we will back up just a few statements and cut out the 10 11 door slamming. I am interested in 12 DR. RUSSELL: Okay. magnetic barriers and boundary layers. 13 They enable the transmission of both force and pressure to various 14 15 regions in the plasma, like the Earth's magnetosphere 16 being pushed on by the solar wind. I am interested in shocks where there is a 17 nonlinear interaction. The shock is a very strong 18 19 wave. It heats the plasma and slows the plasma down 20 and compresses it, and is a very efficient way of 21 energizing particles. 22 I am interested in waves themselves. The

1	smaller, nonlinear waves that will interact with the
2	plasma, heat the plasma, scatter the plasma, and cause
3	a lot of dissipation that is important to the space
4	environment.
5	MR. CLINE: You may have actually already
6	touched on this second part of the question about what
7	do you like about it? If there is like a personal
8	interest that you take in some of these areas, you
9	might want to just touch on that.
10	DR. RUSSELL: Well, if you say, what was my
11	involvement in all of those things
12	MR. CLINE: Uh-huh.
13	DR. RUSSELL: That each one of them, I've
14	done a little bit of work on and pushed the field in a
15	little way. So I feel some involvement in each one of
16	these topics, but just like I have a couple of
17	children and I try not to favor one over the other,
18	even though one's no haha no, I try not to
19	favor one topic over the other. I am interested in
20	all of them.
21	MR. CLINE: That's a great answer, actually.
22	I like that. Now so you talked the second

question is with what, and when, were you involved in 1 2 space weather research? DR. RUSSELL: Well, I was very fortunate at 3 the time that I graduated. I got my bachelor's degree 4 5 and I just applied to the government for a summer job. I said, "You know, you've got this program for summer 6 7 jobs for college students. Just put me someplace." 8 Well, they put me on a space program, and so 9 my first summer job was studying solar radio waves from an ionospheric satellite that could also receive 10 the radio emissions from the sun. So I got to learn 11 about solar physics right from the get go when I got 12 13 my bachelor's degree. 14 I then left -- you know, after my summer job 15 -- and I went off to UCLA where I was going to major 16 in just ordinary physics, maybe high energy physics --17 and -- but I got interested in space by my summer job. 18 So when I got to UCLA, I looked around and I 19 said, "Is anybody here involved in the space program?" 20 And I found a professor who was in geophysics, rather 21 than the physics department, and then I transferred 22 over to geophysics and I became a graduate student

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with Professor Holzer and he was involved in the OGO
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    series, the satellites -- that's the Orbiting
    Geophysical Observatories -- and they had just
 3
    launched, the year before, the first of the OGO's --
 4
 5
   OGO-1 -- aptly named.
 6
              And I got a chance to work on that
   particular spacecraft with some other graduate
 7
 8
    students who were already in the group. I was the
 9
    third student, so I actually got to work on OGO-3.
10
              Now, in those days -- they were the glory
11
    days of space because we were launching an OGO
12
    spacecraft every year. Okay?
                                   So when the first one
13
   had a problem and spun up when it was supposed to be
    3-axis stabilized, they just -- you know, they said,
14
15
    "Okay, what went wrong?" And then they fixed it on
16
    the next one, and the next one worked better, and when
17
    that got to a failure mode, they figured out what went
18
    wrong, then they'd fix that on the next one.
19
              So each one was better than the others,
20
    okay? So I got number three, and that introduced me to
21
    the magnetopause, then the bow shock and the outer
22
    magnetosphere, and also the waves within the
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2 blessed because I got to work on an eccentric orbiting 3 spacecraft that went way out. 4 There were two types of OGO's. They were in 5 polar circular orbit, and then an eccentric orbit, and 6 if you are working on an eccentric orbiter, you got to 7 go through every region of the magnetosphere. 8 You know, so we went out into the solar 9 wind. We went into the bow shock. We went into the 10 magneto sheath, the magneto pause, the outer 11 magnetosphere, and in the tail, and so we got to 12 explore all of the various regions of the	
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10 magneto sheath, the magneto pause, the outer 11 magnetosphere, and in the tail, and so we got to	
11 magnetosphere, and in the tail, and so we got to	
12 explore all of the various regions of the	
13 magnetosphere where things were happening, and then we	
14 got a better sort of perspective of the whole	
15 magnetosphere than somebody who's just in one little	
16 spot and had to understand one little piece of the	
17 system. So I always felt blessed by that experience.	
18 So I like odd numbers now.	
19 And then, finally, after I graduated I	
20 changed jobs just ever so slightly. I had been	
21 working on the search coil magnetometer on the	
22 spacecraft, and I switched to a flux gate	

1	magnetometer, which would measure the entire Earth's										
2	field. And so I got a chance to do a few things that										
3	we weren't able to do with just the search coil										
4	magnetometer.										
5	And, in particular, we started looking at										
6	the motion of the magnetopause, and that led us to										
7	understanding the effect of the interplanetary										
8	magnetic field on the magnetosphere, and got me into										
9	studying the process we call reconnection.										
10	So, the erosion of the magnetosphere is a										
11	situation where the magnetic field in the										
12	interplanetary medium in the solar wind comes up to										
13	the Earth and it's southward. And the southward field										
14	is opposite of the Earth's magnetic field, and it										
15	reconnects or joins, or annihilates the Earth's										
16	magnetic field, and then the magnetopause, because										
17	it's been eaten away by this anti- parallel field,										
18	moves inward.										
19	People had a hard time with that. They										
20	could understand pressure pushing the magnetopause in,										
21	but they didn't understand erosion. So there's a										
22	little bit of, you know, paradigm changing sort of										

1	friction there. People do not like to have their										
2	paradigm's changed on them, and they resist as long as										
3	they can until they find out that this new paradigm										
4	explains more than the old paradigm did.										
5	So, then I got into the semiannual variation										
6	of geomagnetic activity. There was a whole bunch of										
7	silly ideas about why the aurora and geomagnetic										
8	activity was stronger at the equinoxes than it was at										
9	the solstices, and they didn't make good physical										
10	sense to me, but I understood that there was this										
11	erosion process associated with reconnection, and I										
12	figured out how that might end up being modulated by										
13	the time of year, just the pointing of the Earth's										
14	dipole would do it. And so I came up with that and										
15	that got me a little bit more notoriety.										
16	And then there was another phenomena, the										
17	ring current that also was modulated by reconnection,										
18	and so we explained how geomagnetic storms were just a										
19	process in which the coupling with the solar wind										
20	became greater for a period of time, energy flowed in										
21	to the magnetosphere, and then gradually decayed with										
22	time. And you could explain it with just a few simple										

parameters -- how geomagnetic storms worked. So that 1 2 got us a little bit more notoriety. Then, I thought -- well, I was about 29 3 years old -- what was I going to do with my life? 4 So 5 I sent a proposal in to NASA to build a couple of magnetometers for a new spacecraft called ISEE, the 6 International Sun Earth Explorer, and there are two 7 8 spacecraft in the same orbit -- and that's really very 9 useful, co-orbiting spacecraft, because the 10 magnetosphere is a very dynamic place and the magnetopause is moving in and moving out, moving in 11 12 and moving out -- the bow shock does the same thing. 13 And if you could just measure how fast these boundaries were moving back and forth, then you could 14 15 figure out how thick they were because we didn't know 16 on the OGO spacecraft -- it was just a one at a time 17 spacecraft -- that -- you know, how fast these 18 boundaries were moving. We made some models, but it 19 wasn't as good as actually measuring it. 20 And so that was good. NASA said sure, 21 Chris, and so I became a magnetometer PI, and sure 22 enough there are a whole bunch of things that were

		12									
1	unexpected. Whenever you do something new you might										
2	get the explanation for what you were expecting, but										
3	sometimes a whole bunch of new things come up.										
4	And in this particular case, we found flux										
5	ropes. These were essentially bundles of magnetic										
6	field rolled up that were on the magnetopause, and we										
7	see those now on Mercury we see them not only on										
8	the Earth, but we also see them at Jupiter. So they										
9	are a common magnetopause phenomena and they are										
10	associated with reconnection, but we didn't										
11	necessarily solve it perfectly the first time, we just										
12	understood its general terms. It's still being worked										
13	on and even today new models or at least old models										
14	are being tested, and it looks like maybe it's										
15	multiple reconnection points on the magnetopause										
16	simultaneously.										
17	I wasn't satisfied with just sending in one										
18	proposal. The next year I sent in another proposal to										
19	study Venus, and when we got to Venus we saw flux										
20	ropes again, but Venus didn't have intrinsic fields so										
21	that puzzled us somewhat.										
22	And then we started to understand the										

	1
1	macroscopic cause of these geomagnetic storms that we
2	had explained in terms of energizing the
3	magnetosphere. We found out that the sun was doing
4	something making magnetic clouds and these
5	magnetic clouds also were wrapped up in ropes so that
6	the sun was sending out giant magnetic ropes at the
7	Earth, and that was what was causing these storms.
8	So magnetic ropes in a lot of forms, from
9	the sun, then the Venus ionosphere, and also at the
10	Earth's magnetopause, have influenced my thinking and
11	my research quite a bit.
12	MR. CLINE: I've learned quite a bit. I
13	haven't actually heard a lot about the magnetic ropes
14	that you're talking about, especially at the
15	magnetopause, and I know that MMS hopefully will be
16	seeing a lot of that.
17	DR. RUSSELL: I expect so. We're trying to
18	aim at the right spot.
19	MR. CLINE: I hope so. Yeah. I am
20	thinking what I'm going to do is pause
21	(Pause in recording.)
22	MR. CLINE: All right. We're recording, so

1 we'll start that again.

2	DR. RUSSELL: Okay. Let me take you back to										
3	1908 when we discovered that the sun was magnetic.										
4	Now, I wasn't around at that particular time, but it										
5	was a very important time for my research because it										
6	helped explain to the community, eventually, why the										
7	sun does influence the Earth's magnetic field.										
8	And it's the interaction of the solar										
9	magnetic field with the Earth's magnetic field that										
10	allows us to have all the beautiful aurora and other										
11	phenomena that occur on the sun or occur on the										
12	Earth because of the sun. But it was very										
13	controversial and very difficult to understand because										
14	people did understand a little bit about plasmas, and										
15	especially magnetized plasmas, and could not										
16	understand one particular important point, and that is										
17	how fast the sun can release that energy.										
18	The sun can build up the energy in its										
19	magnetic field with its internal dynamo and building										
20	up magnetic constructs on the surface, but it has a										
21	way of getting rid of that energy in a hurry and then										
22	launching it off towards Earth. And that became a										

1 very controversial subject.

2 There were a couple of people in the field. 3 One was Giovanelli an Australian researcher, and another was Jim Dungy (ph,) who became his post doc 4 after Jim Dungy's graduation from college -- or 5 getting his PhD in England. And so Jim went off to 6 Australia, joined Giovanelli, and they started looking 7 8 at what process could launch this energy quickly, and 9 they came up with neutral points and centered their 10 study around the physics of magnetic regions in which 11 the magnetic field went to zero, and you had antiparallel fields coming into this point. 12

That turns out to be what I consider the 13 14 very breakthrough idea. However, other people, like 15 Sweet and Parker, were trying to get rapid 16 energization out of sheets of anti-parallel magnetic 17 field, rather than points of anti-parallel fields, and they were unable to get the same speed as Giovanelli 18 19 and Jim Dungy were aiming at. However, eventually --20 we understand it much better now and we understand the 21 geometry of the situation that is all very important. 22 Now, there was one other important

1	breakthrough that Dungy is associated with, and that
2	was realizing how that process of reconnection that
3	they were studying, because of its solar implication,
4	could be used to power the aurora at Earth.
5	And Jim tells the story that he was invited
6	to give a seminar in Paris, and he was sitting there,
7	you know, at a coffee cafon the streets of Paris, and
8	they're trying to think what the heck he could say in
9	this seminar. And he realized that the anti-parallel
10	fields, when they reached the Earth's magnetosphere,
11	would set up a circulation pattern. They would
12	reconnect with the Earth's magnetic field, transport a
13	flux over the pole, and come in and cause circulation
14	from a neutral point in the tail that would cause the
15	flow to come back at the magnetosphere and set up this
16	overall circulating pattern of flows within the
17	magnetosphere.
18	And so the rest is history, but it took many
19	years for Dungy's ideas to be accepted. Dungy was a
20	person who had very you know, off the mainstream
21	out of the mainstream ideas, and he wasn't always
22	appreciated because of his personality and because of

his, you know, odd way of thinking out of the 1 2 mainstream. 3 And so it was many years. That was 1961. Ι came along doing my work in this particular area in 4 the regime of about 1968 to '73, approximately, and we 5 were - - we knew the name that Dungy had been using 6 for this effect, "Reconnection," but when we started 7 8 publishing papers in support of these ideas -- that 9 were consistent with his ideas -- we didn't use 10 "Reconnection." In fact, embarrassingly enough to say, we didn't even reference Dungy, but eventually we 11 12 proved Dungy to be right. One of the first concepts that supported 13 Dungy was the erosion of the magnetopause. That's 14 15 where the interplanetary field turns southward, the 16 solar wind pressure doesn't increase, but this 17 magnetopause moves in because flux is being 18 transferred to the tail. 19 It was an amazing --20 MR. CLINE: I am going to pause now. 21 (Pause in recording.) 22 DR. RUSSELL: Okay. Let me say a little bit

about the erosion of the magnetopause and how that 1 2 supported Dungy's model -- that we found that when the 3 interplanetary field turns southward, opposite the direction of the Earth's magnetic field at the forward 4 magnetopause, that the two fields merged or joined 5 together, and that eroded or pulled flux from the day 6 side to the night side, and then later we found how 7 8 that returned. Now, people didn't accept that right away 9 because they understood that a pressure could move the 10 11 magnetopause, but they didn't understand how this 12 magnetic force, that magnetic stress that was being 13 applied to the magnetopause, would work. 14 Fortunately, there were some bright 15 theoreticians around who were able to understand that 16 and explain it, but that erosion of the magnetopause 17 was a key observation for us that Dungy was right. 18 I'm a little embarrassed to say that we did 19 not give Dungy the proper credit at that particular 20 time. His ideas were known, but they weren't very much 21 accepted, but eventually we got Dungy the credit that 22 he deserved.

		19
1	Then the spacecraft it was an	
2	(Interruption in recording.)	
3	MR. CLINE: There we go.	
4	DR. RUSSELL: OGO-5, which we were using to	
5	study the erosion of the magnetopause six months	
6	after it was on the day side it was on the night side	
7	of the Earth, because the Earth goes around the sun	
8	and the orbit stays fixed in inertial space.	
9	And so we started to measure what was	
10	happening in the geomagnetic tail, and we could then	
11	see that these dynamic features were also happening in	
12	the tail of the Earth, that were returning the flux	
13	from the tail that had been transferred to the tail	
14	into the Earth's magnetosphere.	
15	That gave us the idea that there was a	
16	neutral point, like Dungy had predicted, but that	
17	neutral point was much closer to the Earth. Now, we	
18	call that neutral point now a plasmoid, but that's	
19	what basically the plasmoid is centered around or	
20	formed by the neutral point that Dungy had proposed	
21	many years ahead of time.	
22	That was very important in putting together	

1	an overall phenomenology of what we call a substorm,
2	and that's the standard explanation of the substorm
3	today. And in fact, I think at the present time I can
4	say that there is very little controversy now about
5	the origin of a substorm, that people held out until
6	the recent THEMIS mission, but when the THEMIS mission
7	went off a few years back now, then the opposition to
8	that finally died away.
9	But the acceptance of Reconnection at the
10	front of the magnetosphere took not just the magnetic
11	energy evidence but it also took us to
12	demonstrate that there were flows of the plasma, so
13	that the nice thing that the ICEE spacecraft had that
14	the OGO spacecraft didn't have were detectors that
15	could look along the field line and see the plasma
16	that was accelerated flow away from the equatorial
17	regions.
18	And when the flow measurements came, then we
19	were brave enough to use the word "Reconnection" in
20	the title of our article. And so the nature paper
21	that discovered these flows said "Evidence for
22	Reconnection" in the title, and we were brave finally.

											21
1	We	had	won	in the	para	digm	fight.				
2				(Where	upon,	the	interview	was	concluded	d.)	
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8	am I interested in the outcome of this action.	
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