



# UNIFICATION OF CUBAN FREEMASONRY



Interview granted by the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Cuba, Evaristo Rubén Gutiérrez Torres, to the Masonic Press Agency

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28 October 2013/6013  
Havana, Cuba



***Most Worshipful Grand Master Evaristo Rubén Gutiérrez Torres, first of all we want to thank you for your kindness in granting us this interview.***

***Cuban Freemasonry is known as one of the largest communities of Freemasons in Latin America and your Grand Lodge as the second largest in Latin America after the Grand Orient of Brazil. At the same time we know that there are many Cuban Freemasons in the United States, in particular in Florida.***

***What took you so long to decide the unification of Cuban Freemasons in one family?***

The process of the reunification of the Cuban Masonic Family is not something that has emerged now, suddenly, in the foreground, but rather is the result of a long journey started by us many years ago, when Past Grand Master José Ramón González Díaz addressed to the Grand Masters of Florida on three different occasions, inviting them to find together a solution to this conflict.

Unfortunately, these attempts did not succeed until today, despite the fact that in our Masonic Parliament we can hear the desire to close the gap on both sides of the banks of the Florida Strait. Proof of this are the successive annual reports of the President of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Brother Raimundo Gómez Cervantes, reports in which this issue stands out as one of the utmost importance, vital and strategic to be solved by the Grand Lodge of Cuba.

From a historically point of view we can also find the answer to the question WHY NOW? The situation took a different turn, things have changed, the condition that made the Grand Lodge of Cuba to fight no more for the unification of Cuban Freemasons, wherever they are located, does not exist anymore. Today we are living historic moments and our effort of unity is a response for that era.

The cohesion between all parties and the people who have a genuine interest in finding a solution also greatly influenced in making this moment come true. On one part we have the reconciling work of the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the 33° and Last Degree for the Republic of Cuba, Illustrious and Most Powerful Brother Lázaro Faustino Cuesta Valdés and on the other side we have the real interest of the Most Worshipful Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Cuba and of the Grand Lodge of Cuba in Exile in terms of resolving this matter of utmost importance to us.



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If we add to this also the good will of the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Florida, Illustrious Brother Danny R. Griffith, in finding a solution to this conflict, then we have the favorable prerequisites for a constructive and promising dialogue.



***We know that the tour conducted in the United States by the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of Cuba, Lázaro Faustino Cuesta Valdés, was an important action in this regard. So what do you think about the results of this visit?***

As I said earlier, the visit of Illustrious and Powerful Brother Lázaro F. Cuesta Valdés on North American soil has opened a new perspective on this topic. Until now it was impossible for a high ranking of the Cuban Freemasonry on North American soil due to migration restrictions that existed in our country until January 2013 and because of the always existent difficulties regarding the process of obtaining a Visa to travel in the United States of America, without mentioning the difficult financial situation with which the Grand Lodge of Cuba is facing, issues not allowing us to have a face-to-face approach, as could have our Brother and Sovereign Grand Commander.

He had the magnificent opportunity to speak directly with Brethren living in the United States in order to know from the source their anxieties and aspirations, and also held private talks with the Grand Master of Florida, with Past Grand Masters and Grand Officials of the Supreme Councils of Northern and Southern Jurisdictions. These conversations have led to a very important base for the whole process that we have started in October of this year 2013.



***What role, symbolism, has the Scottish Cathedral, for being chosen to host this event?***

The Scottish Cathedral of Havana is a symbol of Cuban Freemasonry. The building, originally built as the headquarters of Washington Lodge, hosted years later the Supreme Council of 33° and Last Degree for the Republic of Cuba and several other Lodges.

The meeting between Cuban Freemasons residents in the United States and those of the Grand Lodge of Cuba could not have a more appropriate location than this one, given the role played by the Supreme Council, a role which was that of "building bridges" so that Freemasons can transit from side to side to shake their hands.



***Armando Salas Amaro. Is he a symbol of Cuban Freemasonry, generally speaking, or just a symbol of Cuban Freemasons in the United States?***

Illustrious Brother Armando Salas Amaro, Founder and Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Cuba in Exile, is considered the "Patriarch" of Cuban Freemasonry in the United States and especially in Miami. He was the one who worked closely with Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Cuba, Illustrious Brother Carlos Manuel Piñeiro y del Cueto, in reorganizing the various factions that formed the Cuban Masonic spectrum in exile, among them the Grand Lodge of Cuba in Exile, founded by Past Grand Master Tarajano González under the false assumption that Freemasonry in Cuba deceased. Salas Amaro's work in forming the Grand Lodge of Cuba in Exile was a titanic work and its great value lies in trying by all means to keep alive the national identity of Cuban Freemasons in Florida.

Today we bring a deserved tribute to this Illustrious Brother who gave his life for Freemasonry and who, saying to his closest collaborators and friends, did not want to die before seeing the united all Cuban Freemasons from



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Cuba and abroad. We have already taken the first steps in this regard and Brother Salas Amaro will have the satisfaction of seeing concluded the process for which he worked so far.



***13 October is a historic day for Knights Templar and now also for Freemasons. The letter sent to the Grand Lodge of Florida is to explain this initiative or to request jurisdictional assistance for the project in the future?***

Indeed, this date will remain in the history of Cuban Freemasonry as the start of the reunion with our Brethren living and working abroad, and especially with those in Florida. It will be remembered as the day we first broke down the barrier that made impossible the communication for starting together a new path for the future.

Our letter to the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Florida, Illustrious Brother Danny R. Griffith, has the dual purpose as expressed by you. We have informed him of the results obtained during the discussions with Brethren from Florida, but also invited him to a collaboration within the meaning of signing a Treaty by which the Grand Lodge of Florida will allow the Grand Lodge of Cuba in Exile (the new structure created and based on the existing organizations) to work within its territory, but not having a territorial Jurisdiction, but a functional jurisdiction in terms of its members and Lodges.



***February 27, 1955, can be considered a day of the future or the past in the history of Cuban Freemasonry?***

This was the day of the consecration of our National Grand Masonic Temple in Havana which today bears the name of "Illustrious Brother Carlos Manuel Piñeiro y del Cueto," as our Parliament Masonic agreed to be a just tribute of recognition of the man who was the greatest promoter and champion of this colossal work.

Carlos M. Piñeiro finished the work begun by his father and Grand Master Piñeiro Crespo, when, in the 20s of last century he began the patient and titanic work to raise funds; funds given by Cuban Freemasons to purchase plot by plot until having the entire land that on which today stands the Grand Temple. It took many years of effort and sacrifice to raise the money needed to start the work, amount obtained almost exclusively from donations of Brethren and Lodges by buying bonds issued for the occasion.

That is why Cuban Freemasons, wherever they are, feel deeply proud of the headquarters of the Grand Lodge of Cuba, despite the ominous circumstances that caused us the loss of control of a part of the building, but we are sure that in the future we can retrieve it.

Hence, the handing over process of one of the Cuban flags hoisted on that glorious day of February 27, 1955, by a group of Freemasons of the new generation (also promoters of the unification process) to Most Worshipful Brother Moris Bosakewich as sacred depository, which symbolizes the most valued desire of all Cuban Freemasons to be again united, firm and strong as we once were in the glorious moment of the consecration of our Temple.

Therefore this gesture and this flag are also symbols of the past, present and future.



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***The statement of the Sovereign Grand Commander dated October 13, 2013. Is Cuba today a freer and more united country? Is looking Cuba towards a strong and viable democracy for its citizens?***

As I explained earlier the historical conditions experienced today by our country are different and this allows us to consider that all the steps we do to unite all Cuban Freemasons can be a beneficial example for the civil society.

Therefore our haste to fasten and solidify the process; given that Cuban Freemasonry has always been a social vanguard in ethics and patriotism. And when it comes to "do patriotism", we, the Cuban Freemasons, wish to be in the forefront..



***Message № 5 of the Grand Master of Cuba dated 13 October 2013. You are talking about the "indissoluble unity of the Cuban Freemasons." What do you mean by that?***

Deepening in the subject of the unity, we recall that respect for our laws, as well as for the customs of Masonic Regularity which prevents us from promoting Stated Communications with Brethren often departing from our Lodges.

We still can not open our Temples to Cuban Freemasons visiting us and wanting to share our works. The main wall that stands between Cuban Freemasons inside and outside the island is a direct obstacle which we hope to demolish so that we can unite what should never be divided, the Cuban Family of Universal Freemasonry.

It is also an appeal for an "inward" Unity, given that we are nor being exempt of internal problems which divide us. We want this process to continue in our Workshops, in the

Lodges who have decided to separate themselves of the Confederation of the Grand Lodge of Cuba and to those who once were inconsistent in form, but not in principles. We want that this process of unification to reach them all because otherwise we can not consider it fully realized.



***Message № 6 of the Grand Master of Cuba dated 14 October 2013. This message is an open letter to all the leaders of Universal Freemasonry. In section 2 you are talking about a possible future recognition of the Cuban Freemasons in the United States by the Inter-American Masonic Confederation and the other Grand Lodges. Must we understand that the two Cuban Grand Lodges will not unite, but will work together separately as two independent Grand Lodges?***

In the settlement of variants assessed as viable, we always took into account that it is absolutely impossible to subordinate the Cuban Masonic factions of Florida to the Grand Lodge of Cuba, first because it would mean a territorial invasion, thing which we have always rejected.

Hence the proposal to form a new independent Regular Grand Lodge other than the Grand Lodge of Cuba, one that, as I indicated, will not have territorial Jurisdiction, but shall have a FUNCTIONAL jurisdiction, regarding its Lodges and members. This Grand Lodge would find itself in the conditions to ask universal recognition from the Regular Grand Lodges and will have the right to be part of the Inter-American Masonic Confederation.

Broken those barriers of the qualification of "irregular" received once by all Cuban Masonic factions in Florida will open a new era for a close cooperation and a real Brotherhood between the two Grand Lodges: that of the Cubans living in Cuba and that of the Cubans living and Masonically working outside of Cuba.



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***Are you saying in section 3 of the same message that the institution of Cuban Freemasons in the United States must be recognized as regular by the Inter-American Masonic Confederation? What do you mean by that?***

This is not necessarily the effect of what we want. In reality we resume a principle expressed in the "Consulting Mason" of Aurelio Almeida from 1883, which, by defining the ways in which it can be formed a regular Grand Lodge recognizes that: "three or more Lodges founded by an irregular body of any kind, as long as a regular Grand Lodge assumed the responsibility and they were prior broken and separated from the body of origin, that Grand Lodge may confer a Charter of Authorization to become a Grand Lodge, and thus providing a Regular condition."

Since those Cuban Masonic factions in Florida have been declared "irregular" by the Conference of Grand Masters of North America and the Inter-American Masonic Confederation, fall to opt for this path of which we have heard that it was recognized by the Conference of Montevideo (Uruguay, 1947) of IMC.

Obviously, given the absolutely exceptional situation of today regarding Cuban Brethren who work Masonically outside Cuba, we do not know the existence of an antecedent of the application of that method in another Jurisdiction, therefore not being invalid and can be applied in special circumstances such as those present in this case.

It is also evident that the Grand Lodge of Cuba assumes responsibility as the guarantor of the orthodoxy of the regularity of the Lodges that compose the new Grand Lodge, especially through the historic commitment we have to our Brethren to whom we owe this recognition and support.

Achieved this essential requirement of regularity of origin, it accomplishes all 8 requirements expressed by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1935 to define the regularity of a Grand Lodge.



***At the end of this interview what message do you want to send to the International Masonic Community?***

Our only message is the one we had supported since long ago and the one which we will still support as long as necessary. The Cuban Freemasonry is one and as ONE it needs to move forward on the path of building a genuine and well-educated family.

There are many steps that still remain to be done, both outside and inside Cuba, but we are confident that the future is promising and the dream of all who one day have dedicated their lives to the Brotherhood will be realized.

To all the other regular Masonic Powers in amity with us we ask them to support this important proposal in the belief that we can put together new bases and precedents of the unity and brotherhood.



***Most Worshipful Grand Master Evaristo Rubén Gutiérrez Torres, we thank you for your kindness in granting us this interview and we wish you, on behalf of our F & Secretary-General, and to all Cubans Freemasons in the country and abroad that this project to be today future and tomorrow present.***



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In the realization of this interview participated also the  
International Relations Commissioner of the Grand Lodge of Cuba,

Raimundo Gómez Cervantes

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### INTERVIEW

### GRAND MASTER

### EVARISTO RUBÉN GUTIÉRREZ TORRES