



Grand Lodge of DC (Washington DC)
Committee on Masonic Recognitions
Report to the Grand Lodge
Semi-Annual Communication - May 12, 2004



Introduction & Recognition Standards

Each Grand Lodge decides for itself which other Grand Lodges it will “recognize” as being “masonic.” Thus, every time our Grand Lodge recognizes another Grand Lodge, we are helping to decide how we define Freemasonry.

Our Grand Lodge has standards with which to decide whether to grant recognition to other Grand Lodges. These standards were adopted by our Grand Lodge in 1953¹, and are titled “Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition.” In summary, these standards are:

1. A belief in the GAOTU and His revealed will is an essential qualification for membership.
2. Initiates take their Obligations on the Volume of the Sacred Law, meaning the revelation from above which is binding on the conscience of the initiate.
3. The 3 Great Lights of Freemasonry are always exhibited when the Grand Lodge and all its Lodges are at work.
4. Membership is exclusively of men, and no Masonic relations are had with lodges that admit women.
5. The Grand Lodge was established lawfully by a Grand Lodge or by 3 or more Lodges that have consistently practiced the principles of regular Masonry.
6. The Grand Lodge (a) has sovereign jurisdiction over the Lodges under its control, (b) is an independent organization with sole authority over the EA, FC, and MM degrees, (c) does not divide its authority over these degrees with a Supreme Council or any other group, (d) does not establish lodges in a territory occupied by a lawful Grand Lodge without that Grand Lodge’s consent.
7. The dominant purposes of Freemasonry are charitable, benevolent, and educational, discussion of religion and politics are prohibited, and the principles of the Ancient Landmarks, usages and customs are observed.

At about the same time that our Grand Lodge adopted the current “Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition,” in 1952 the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America created a Commission on Information for Recognition. Its purpose is to gather information about foreign Grand Lodges for transmission to U.S. Grand Lodges, as it was thought to be easier for a single group (the Commission) to make contacts with foreign Grand Lodges than it would be for each of the 51 U.S. Grand Lodges to do this individually.

The committee that recommended the establishment of this Commission reported: “We feel that it is not our prerogative, nor that of the organization whose frame work we set up in this report [the Commission on Information for Recognition] to decide what are, or should be, Universal Standards of Recognition.”² Nevertheless, during the 50 years that Commission has been in existence, it has reiterated what have become its standards for determining when a Grand Lodge is regular and, in the opinion of the Commission, entitled to be recognized. These standards, which appear to have become accepted by most U.S. Grand Lodges, even some of those that have adopted different standards for recognition, are:

1. Legitimacy of origin
2. Exclusive territorial jurisdiction (except where shared by agreement)³

¹ 1953 DC Grand Lodge Proceedings, at pages 47-48. These standards were adopted after a review of the previous standards, adopted by our Grand Lodge in 1930. (1930 DC Grand Lodge Proceedings, at pages 19-20.) In 1953, the Committees on Correspondence and on Jurisprudence reviewed the 1930 standards and concluded that they did not “fill the presently existing requirements of the Grand Lodge.” (1953 DC Grand Lodge Proceedings, at pages 47-48.)

² 1952 Conference of Grand Masters transactions, page 70

³ In the past the Commission has said that exclusive territorial jurisdiction does not mean that every lodge in a state or country must be under one Grand Lodge. There can be several grand lodges in a single country or state, all with many lodges under them, each giving its loyalty to only one of the grand lodges, and the doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction is not violated. See *Conference of Grand Masters of North America, 1975*, Report of the Commission on Information for Recognition, page 142. Also see, an article by M.:W.: Stewart W. Miner, “The American Doctrine: A Concept Under Siege,” *1992 Transactions of the Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777*, pp. 11–25 (paper delivered at that lodge on March 28, 1992), where he concludes, writing about the Doctrine of Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction, “(a) that the Doctrine, as originally conceived, no longer exists; (b) that the historic application of the Doctrine, especially in the 19th Century, has been selective; (c) that inconsistent applications of the Doctrine have encouraged challenge, and (d) that when it has seemed prudent, American grand lodges have modified their interpretations

3. Adherence to the ancient landmarks; specifically, a belief in God, the Volume of the Sacred Law as an indispensable part of the furniture of the Lodge, and the prohibition of the discussion of religion and politics.⁴

One final point is important to remember. In the report given by the DC Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Recognition (then called the Correspondence Committee) to our Grand Lodge in May 1998, we said:

“In the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia we hold that all men of good character are welcome to join Freemasonry, regardless of their race, color, religion, ethnic origin, political beliefs, lifestyle preference, or any consideration other than the content of their character. We regret that there are some Grand Lodges where these standards are not honored.⁵”

Grand Lodge of Niger

The Grand Lodge of Niger has requested recognition from our Grand Lodge, and it has stated that it meets the standards for recognition. The Commission on Information for Recognition has reported that this Grand Lodge meets its standards for “regularity,” and the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America ratified that report. There is no reason to doubt that this Grand Lodge meets the standards of our Grand Lodge for recognition.

The DC Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Recognitions recommends that our Grand Lodge recognize the Grand Lodge of Niger.

Grand Lodge of San Marino

The Grand Lodge of San Marino has requested recognition from our Grand Lodge, and it has stated that it meets the standards for recognition. Our Grand Lodge was instrumental in the formation of this Grand Lodge, and we insured that it was established and functions in a “regular” manner. There is no reason to doubt that this Grand Lodge meets the standards established by our Grand Lodge for recognition.

The DC Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Recognitions recommends that our Grand Lodge recognize the Grand Lodge of San Marino.⁶

Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Hawaii

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Hawaii has requested recognition from our Grand Lodge, and it has stated that it meets the standards for recognition. This Grand Lodge is recognized by the Grand Lodge of Hawaii, the Grand Lodge that our Grand Lodge already recognizes in that jurisdiction, and it is also recognized by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, our primary source of information and advice concerning Prince Hall Grand Lodges. There is no reason to doubt that this Grand Lodge meets the standards of our Grand Lodge for recognition.

The DC Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Recognitions recommends that our Grand Lodge recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Hawaii.

of the Doctrine to satisfy challenges at hand. This process, I believe, is irreversible, and despite the attempts of a few grand lodges to stem the tide by punitive action, their efforts will fail, in the long run, and change will unquestionably prevail.”

⁴ The United Grand Lodge of England, and some U.S. and foreign Grand Lodges, have their own set of standards to decide which other Grand Lodges should be recognized. Many of these can be found, read, copied, or printed at a website located at <http://www.bessel.org/masrec/recstand.htm>

⁵ Some Grand Lodges have, or had, official, written membership policies that prohibit men of certain religions or races from becoming Freemasons, and it is well known that in some U.S. states there are no African American members and any who apply are almost guaranteed to be blackballed.

⁶ There is some question whether a Grand Lodge established by our Grand Lodge needs a vote of our Grand Lodge to be recognized, or whether it is automatically recognized by our Grand Lodge since we were involved in its establishment. Our committee views this question as unnecessary to be resolved, as we are recommending that our Grand Lodge recognize this Grand Lodge and there is no need to discuss whether it would be recognized if we did not make his recommendation.

Recognition of Other Prince Hall Grand Lodges

The DC Grand Lodge 2004 Committee on Masonic Recognitions unanimously recommends that our Grand Lodge adopt the following motion concerning recognition of Prince Hall Grand Lodges:

Recognition of Prince Hall Grand Lodges

A. Our Grand Lodge hereby recognizes, and will in the future recognize without further Grand Lodge vote, each Prince Hall Grand Lodge that does not state that it does not want to be recognized by our Grand Lodge, and that is recognized, and continues to be recognized, by:

1. The Grand Lodge in its jurisdiction which our Grand Lodge already recognizes — so long as that Grand Lodge does not object to our Grand Lodge recognizing this Prince Hall Grand Lodge in its jurisdiction;
2. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia — so long as the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia does not object to our recognizing this Prince Hall Grand Lodge in another jurisdiction;

B. This recognition by our Grand Lodge of a Prince Hall Grand Lodge in another jurisdiction will be effective on the same dates and to the same extent as the recognition by the Grand Lodge that our Grand Lodge already recognizes in that jurisdiction.

C. Our Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Recognitions will provide the office of the Grand Secretary with a list, and future updates, of Prince Hall Grand Lodges in other jurisdictions that meet the standards described in this resolution and which are thus recognized by our Grand Lodge. A copy of the list of recognized Prince Hall Grand Lodges, and future updates, will be distributed regularly by the Grand Secretary's office to each Lodge in our jurisdiction.

D. The office of the Grand Secretary will contact each Prince Hall Grand Lodge in another jurisdiction that is on the list of Prince Hall Grand Lodges recognized by our Grand Lodge, and attempt to establish the exchange of Grand Representatives.

Explanation:

When one of our sister U.S. Grand Lodges recognizes the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in its jurisdiction, and that Prince Hall Grand Lodge is also recognized by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, our Grand Lodge will routinely approve a request for recognition by that Prince Hall Grand Lodge. However, doing this one at a time is time-consuming (nationwide, 2,295 separate recognitions would be needed), creates unnecessary paperwork, and is disrespectful to Grand Lodges we already recognize.

Since the local "mainstream" Grand Lodge (the one we already recognize in each jurisdiction) has already investigated the regularity of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in its jurisdiction and has recognized it, and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia has also investigated that Prince Hall Grand Lodge and recognized it, our Grand Lodge recognition of that Prince Hall Grand Lodge would be a sign of respect to those two Grand Lodges which we already recognize and respect.

It is becoming a common practice for Grand Lodges to recognize all Prince Hall Grand Lodges that are recognized by "mainstream" Grand Lodges in their jurisdictions. The Grand Lodge of New Jersey adopted this policy a couple of weeks ago, and the Grand Lodges of Nebraska and Kansas, among others, have had it in effect for several years, and they all report enthusiastic support for this policy and no adverse consequences.

No "mainstream" Grand Lodge has or will recognize a Prince Hall Grand Lodge that is not regular, nor would the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. However, in case either would in the future feel it necessary to withdraw recognition, or to object to our Grand Lodge recognizing or continue recognizing, a particular Prince Hall Grand Lodge for any reason, our recognition would terminate.

If this resolution is adopted, it will mean that since, for example, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts now fully recognizes the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, our Grand Lodge will fully recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts so long as the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District

of Columbia do not object.

And in the future, if, for example, the Grand Lodge of Texas recognizes the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas, our Grand Lodge would recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas effective on the same date and to the same extent as the recognition by the Grand Lodge of Texas, so long as the Grand Lodge of Texas and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia did not object.

The following 28 Prince Hall Grand Lodges are recognized by the "mainstream" Grand Lodge in their jurisdiction, plus the DC Prince Hall Grand Lodge, as of May 2004, and thus would be recognized by our Grand Lodge:

Alaska	Massachusetts
Arizona	(also covers New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont)
California	Michigan
Colorado	Minnesota
(also covers Wyoming and Utah)	(also covers North Dakota)
(already recognized by our Grand Lodge)	Missouri
Connecticut	Nebraska
(already recognized by our Grand Lodge)	Nevada
DC	New Jersey
(already recognized by our Grand Lodge)	New Mexico
Hawaii	New York
(request for recognition by our Grand Lodge	Ohio
currently under consideration)	Oregon
Illinois	(also covers Idaho and Montana)
Indiana	Pennsylvania
Iowa	Rhode Island
Kansas	Virginia
(also covers South Dakota)	Washington
Maryland	Wisconsin

The following 14 Prince Hall Grand Lodges are recognized by the DC Prince Hall Grand Lodge but are not, as of May 2004, recognized by the "mainstream" Grand Lodge that our Grand Lodge already recognizes in their jurisdiction, so they would not be recognized by our Grand Lodge until they become recognized by that Grand Lodge in their jurisdiction and thus meet the standards of this resolution:

Alabama	Mississippi
Arkansas	(called the Stringer Grand Lodge)
Delaware	North Carolina
Florida	Oklahoma
(called the Union Grand Lodge)	South Carolina
Georgia	Tennessee
Kentucky	Texas
Louisiana	West Virginia

Other Items

Our committee is not recommending any action on the following matters, but merely reports them for the benefit of our Grand Lodge:

Mexico - In Mexico there are 31 states, just as the U.S. has 50 states. However, while the U.S. has 51 Grand Lodges (one for each state plus DC) and no national Grand Lodges, in Mexico there are some Grand Lodges that claim national jurisdiction and there are also individual Grand Lodges in most of the 31 states.⁷ Some U.S. Grand Lodges

⁷ It is common in countries outside the U.S. (and even in the U.S.) for there to be two or more Grand Lodges in the same jurisdiction, some with conflicting claims of jurisdiction. This is the case in Brazil, Colombia, France, Germany, and other countries. Our Grand Lodge has often in the past, and the present, recognized more than one Grand Lodge in the same jurisdiction.

recognize some of the Mexican state Grand Lodges, some recognize Mexican state Grand Lodges plus one or more of the Mexican national Grand Lodges, and some have other recognition policies. The DC Grand Lodges now recognizes 3 of the Mexican state Grand Lodges plus 2 of the Mexican national Grand Lodges. Currently, there are several disputes among Mexican Grand Lodges, state and national, with allegations of invasion of territory, which have what proper jurisdiction, and other subjects. The Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America did not recommend any action by U.S. Grand Lodges, and the DC Committee on Masonic Recognitions recommends that our Grand Lodge not now make any changes in our recognitions of Mexican Grand Lodges. As more information becomes available, this may change.

Morocco - The Grand Lodge of Morocco was established by the GLNF (National Grand Lodge of France), which our Grand Lodge recognizes, and our Grand Lodge recognized the Grand Lodge of Morocco in the year 2000. The GLNF has recently withdrawn its recognition of the Grand Lodge of Morocco and recommended that other Grand Lodges take similar action, alleging irregularities in this Grand Lodge. The Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Lodges of Masons in North America has not reported on this subject, and the DC Grand Lodge Recognition Committee recommends that our Grand Lodge not take any action on this subject at this time. Again, as more information becomes available, this may change.

Worshipful Brother Dr. John Greenwood

For over 25 years, Worshipful Brother Dr. John Greenwood, recipient of our Grand Lodge Distinguished Service Award and Medal in 1990 and Grand Chaplain Emeritus of our Grand Lodge, was the Chairman of the DC Grand Lodge Correspondence Committee, now called the DC Grand Lodge Masonic Recognitions Committee.



He invested uncounted hours in the work of this committee, thoroughly reading and investigating all the reports of the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America, plus huge numbers of Grand Lodge Proceedings, letters, reports, and other information. His reports to our Grand Lodge were always extremely thorough, and often dramatic as well, and there was no doubt in the minds of all Brethren in our jurisdiction that John cared deeply about Masonic Recognition issues and all aspects of Freemasonry, and was willing to do whatever he could to promote and improve our Craft.

Worshipful Brother Greenwood moved to Arizona in 2002 because of his wife's health problems, and, to the sorrow of all DC Masons, John himself is now suffering from a very serious illness.

This committee, and especially its current chairman, want all Brethren to know that the work of Masonic recognitions in our Grand Lodge, as well as Freemasonry in general, will benefit long into the future from the tremendous work performed by Worshipful Brother Dr. John Greenwood throughout his long and distinguished masonic career. He will be remembered always and, in a deep sense, the work of the DC Grand Lodge Masonic Recognitions committee will always be dedicated to his memory.

Respectfully submitted by the Committee on Masonic Recognitions

Paul M. Bessel - Chairman
Kwame Acquah
Alfred C. Boswell, Jr.
Harold Grainger
Robert B. Heyat
Carlos Landazuri
Paul Najarian
Robert H. Starr