



“333”

A Documentary Film about the West African Islamic Nation of
MALI
And the Teachings of
The Peaceful Resolution of Conflict

By Justine Benanty

Shown at GWU on Tuesday, February 5, 2014

This program at GWU was not my first experience with 333. I was privileged to see this beautiful, inspiring and impeccably-crafted 96-minute Documentary film in its entirety, together with 591 fellow viewers, at its Premier held in United Nations headquarters in New York City. That audience was as amazing as the film. They came from around the world --- Ambassadors, celebrities, award-winning film makers, and people from a variety of faiths and all walks of life. At that premier, Michael Covitt, Producer of 333 and Founder and Chairman of Malian Manuscript Foundation, was introduced to the spellbound audience by Mali’s Ambassador to the United Nations as an “Ambassador of Peace.” And the award-winning documentary film-maker and Director of United Nations television, Chaim Litewski said, “333 should win an Academy Award for Best Documentary film.”

On February 5th, George Washington University’s Capitol Archeological Institute (“CAI”), together with the Africa Working Group for Global & International Studies, hosted the knowledgeable Mr. Covitt, who presented a 5-minute trailer of 333 followed by a question-and-answer session about the film and his experiences in its creation. The trailer was absolutely riveting, and Mr. Covitt’s remarks were thought-provoking. Most of the give-and-take focused upon Mali’s Ancient Manuscripts, which were written during Mali’s Golden Age from the 12th through 16th Centuries, when Mali was one of the world’s wealthiest nations. Long after the talk had ended, the audience was still galvanized, talking about Manuscripts.

According to Covitt, “The Manuscripts cover nearly every topic under the sun.” But he is predominantly interested in the Manuscripts’ centuries-old tenets for the peaceful resolution of conflict through dialogue, tolerance, understanding and forgiveness, for they provide hope for the future of our planet and its inhabitants. That same day, a National Review Online article quoted Covitt, declaring “We are confronted with extinction, and preparations are underway to spread this curse across the globe. Civilization and, indeed, our planet are at risk. But a roadmap to peace exists, which derives from Mali’s centuries old tenets for the peaceful resolution of conflict through

dialogue.”

Praise for Covitt’s presentation came from Randall Fort, Former Assistant Secretary of State, who said, "333 is a fascinating documentary about a trove of historic documents and their enduring influence on how people should think and behave towards one another. Rather than "curse the darkness" of violence and inhumanity, Michael Covitt has "lit a candle" of hope for the future with his presentation of this extraordinary story." Douglas Park, Ph.D., agreed: “Michael, I want to thank you for the many years of work you have put into this documentary. I truly believe that its message of peaceful resolution of conflict through dialogue will not only showcase the fine qualities of West African democratic culture, but will also serve as a major contribution to the study of modern conflict resolution in Africa, and ever further abroad. Well done!”

And CAI’s Director, Dr. Eric H. Cline, commented, “The 333 trailer was compelling to watch, and Michael Covitt was attention-grabbing. I hope to see the completed 333 film in the very near future. And we hope Michael will soon return to CAI, to keep us abreast of all that is happening in Mali.”

