

# ***Swedish, African, American, Christian***

## ***Celebrating the life and legacy of Matthew Robert Manning***

What does it mean to  
be born in Sweden  
partly African,  
then to be nurtured  
an American,  
who by grace became  
also a Christian?

All one needs to do,  
as I often have,  
is to gaze on you  
to experience  
and begin to grasp  
the deeper meaning,  
hidden and revealed.

You are my grandson,  
thus flesh of my flesh,  
yet not of my flesh  
or blood line alone--  
carefully woven  
out of many strands  
by our common Lord.

Son of a black man  
and a Swedish girl,  
both Americans  
surrounded by love,  
now seeking your way  
to a whole new world  
waiting to be born.

All these strands are seen  
outside and within  
you as a young man,  
as in your sisters  
framed in the same way  
by grace over time,  
providentially.

You are a leader,  
both in your being  
so diverse yet one,  
and in your stretching  
toward the future  
that God has in mind  
for all his people.

God bless and keep you,  
make his face to shine  
upon you and within,  
that in your being  
you may, Spirit led,  
become the witness  
he calls you to be.