

Behind the Song: I Know Who Holds Tomorrow

Ira Stanphill was an accomplished musician and minister. He served with nine organizations in capacities of youth director, music director, and pastor. He preached across America and in 40 other countries and is credited with over 500 gospel songs.

In 1939, Ira married Zelma Lawson. Zelma, was a minister's daughter and a gifted musician who played piano by ear and accompanied her parents on a local radio program. Ira and Zelma had a son named Ray. For years, Zelma traveled with Ira and joined him in serving the Lord as they shared the gospel in many crusades. However, life was not perfect and Zelma became disillusioned with their lives. Eventually she decided that ministry was not for her and left Ira. He was said to be devastated and continued to try to reconcile with her, remain true to his marriage vows, and forgive her.

The couple were divorced 1948 after almost a decade of marriage. Zelma later married John E. Cowan. Sadly, Zelma died in a car accident in 1951.

During the years of separation, divorce, and Zelma's death, Ira sank into a deep depression. *I Know Who Holds Tomorrow* was written during this difficult and trying time in his life. Ace Collins wrote in "Turn Your Radio On" that Ira was driving when he began to hum and then sing a song. He sang about not knowing what the future held but trusting God with the future. Upon arriving home, Ira rushed to his office and his piano and jotted down the words.

Following Zelma's death, Ira married Gloria Hollingsworth and the couple had two daughters together.

Ira would continue to share the gospel and write hymns and songs of faith for the remainder of his life. He faced other difficult times when he had to trust in knowing Who holds tomorrow. In 1976, Ira was diagnosed with a malignant tumor in the right front quadrant of his brain. Even though the surgery was successful, it is said that following the surgery, his personality changed. Ira died in 1993 and met, face to face, the One who holds tomorrow. His widow, Gloria, joined him in heaven 2017.

Adapted from http://dianaleaghmatthews.com/i-know-who-holds-tomorrow/#.Xtg91hNKj_Q

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ira_Stanphill