

# LOCAL

# It's about accountability: McHale

'My goal is to expose that the government doesn't listen to the will of the people'

BY MARISSA NELSON

Born in Kingston, Ont., Gary McHale was the youngest of six boys. His mother died in a car crash when he was 10. He grew up in an atheist home with few rules.

Now the Baptist 44-year-old has become a flashpoint for the Caledonia dispute. The Richmond Hill book-keeper and website creator is holding another protest in town today where he expects to butt heads with the OPP.

Here is an excerpt of a question and answer session with McHale.

**Q: How did your childhood influence your life?**

... My father was really not around. With five boys and no supervision, we did what we wanted ...

I was raised a pagan, completely an atheist... It wasn't until my early 20s that I made the wilful decision that God exists and I'm a Christian ...

It might sound great — we had lots of fun as kids ... but the reality is without rules and boundaries, the system doesn't work ...

The reality is society has to have rules or there's just chaos ... There's a price I'm still paying today for the fact that I didn't learn proper discipline or proper self-control as a child.

**Q: So does your faith give you those rules?**

Absolutely. Once you realize you need rules, do you just make up your own rules? ... Our society is moving that way. There are no absolute rules, no absolute rights and wrongs and we're paying a price for it ...

If you think about evolution, there are no morals. Lions don't whine and complain because they steal some other lion's food. So within evolution, there are no morals ... If you flood your children with that concept, then we're no different than a mosquito or any other animal. Then lo and behold, they're surprised, kids have no real value for each other ...

**Q: How does your faith relate to your interest in Caledonia?**

... Christians believe — in fact, the vast majority of religions believe — that there's more to life and the world and your existence than whether you have a car, a white picket fence and 2.2 kids.

It's higher values of truth and justice and those things you strive for. You work for them your entire life.

You have to be willing to lay down your life for it because it's the only thing with real value. Without those things, nothing else matters. If we do not have truth and justice, then everything else in life is absolutely meaningless ...

**Q: So you have to be willing to fight for truth and justice. Is that what Caledonia is for you?**

Absolutely. And you have to be willing to fight for everybody. It isn't about truth and justice when someone is attacking your home.

The biggest battle in the 21st century, the biggest battle for the vast majority of us is that we don't give a darn about our neighbours ...

Society struggles with trying to understand Gary McHale. It's not that my views are hard to understand because I've stated them. They just can't believe that there's someone who believes them ... The doubt comes because they know they wouldn't do it.

**Q: You've had some interest in other issues before Caledonia, including former Liberal David Emerson crossing the floor. You've written letters to the editor about federal politics and the same-sex marriage bill. What's the connection between Caledonia and those other political issues?**

The absolute failure of leadership. We're all leaders at some point. You're a leader in your home, you're a leader of kids, women are leaders at times ...

Our concept of (leadership) now is totally wussy. No one will take a stand on anything anymore. Nothing is based on principles, it's about how do I skirt this, how do I pass the buck ...

In Caledonia, there's an absolute failure of leadership. If there was proper leadership, I wouldn't be involved ...

**Q: But there are plenty of police issues in the province. You don't take a stand on those.**

... What we have in the OPP (in Caledonia) is a systematic change where the powers that be — not an officer disobeying orders and doing something wrong — used the powers that be in the OPP have used their position to deviate from their responsibilities.

Their job is to uphold the Criminal Code of this country. Their job is to follow the laws passed by our elected officials ...



HAMILTON SPECTATOR  
FILE PHOTO

**Gary McHale holds another protest today. He was arrested over his plan to put a Canadian flag near the disputed site.**

If they can arrest me for putting up a flag for a potential breach of the peace, then they can arrest anybody in the province ...

**Q: How do you support yourself and your wife?**

Since August, we've received about \$11,000 in donations ... We're below the poverty line by any standard ... We cut corners. We don't go out to eat ...

At times, we were two months behind in our mortgage ... We are a couple of months behind in our car payments right now.

**Q: How long can you continue financially?**

My fundamental belief is I'll continue until God doesn't want me to. If God wants me to stop, then he can dry up the money until the point where I can't continue. I don't look at the money issue as the deciding factor on whether we should continue. I leave this in God's hands. I don't determine the future.

**Q: Before Caledonia, did you have any problems with the law?**

I was raised in an amoral family. I have a shoplifting charge from when I was a kid, which I often talk to people about ... When I preach and teach, I use it as an example that when you're a teenager you may not know the consequences of your actions but they can have long effects ...

**Q: You had a run-in with the MP for Oak Ridges Moraine about faxes being sent repeatedly to his office. What happened?**

It was just after 9/11... There was a motion by the Alliance to put in place tougher anti-terrorism laws ... The Liberal party didn't want to be embarrassed, so voted it down and the very next day put the exact same motion forward and passed it ... I contacted my local MP, not telling him I knew how he voted, just asking "How did you vote on that Alliance (anti-terrorism) bill?"

He didn't want to answer. He didn't want to say that he didn't vote for being tougher on terrorism. It wouldn't look good ... I sent a fax, one page long "How did you vote? Gary McHale" and my phone number. He didn't want to tell me. After a week, I'm faxing it three times a day ...

He had York Regional Police come to my home. He signed an agreement that said I'd faxed him 600 times a day and as a result I shut down his office and he wasn't capable of carrying on his business. So they arrested me for public mischief, I spent the night in jail... the charges were dropped ...

The faxing thing really was the first real example that people in positions of power will use their power and their police force ... it was intimidation. And that's what goes on in Caledonia.

**Q: How much contact do you have with Caledonia residents? Are you a lone wolf or do you have widespread support?**

I have widespread support. All I can say is in the past two months, I've got 4,100 e-mails. The vast majority are from people in Caledonia ...

**Q: How many phone calls?**

From my direct contacts, so the people who work with me, I'm on the phone with them on a daily basis.

**Q: Is there a core group of people in Caledonia?**

There are 50 people I have direct contact on a weekly basis ... I have an e-mail list of 293 people within Caledonia, people I send out e-mails to on a daily basis. They receive an e-mail every day.

**Q: Do you have any contact with Rotary or business associations?**

I willfully avoid them ... You're not going to believe it — I honestly believe there has to be some limits on my influence on what is going on ...

**Q: There are videos online showing**

**members of hate groups at your protest. What is your view of these groups?**

Anytime you have someone who is effective in the media, especially when you have a public protest, you're always going to have people who latch their agenda onto your message.

**Q: Is that what is happening here?**

Absolutely... They show up (to events) all the time. That's no proof of anything ...

It's crystal clear, Gary has been condemning white supremacy, the KKK, in the same breath he condemns Muslim terrorists, warriors who do serious crimes...

**Q: But how does it make you feel that they show up to your event?**

It makes me nervous. We're a democracy. They have a right to be there. I can't stop them. They are an element which I have no control over. I have no say in their beliefs or actions and they are the element from my side that I see can create potential problems...

**Q: Do you try to dissuade them from coming?**

No... Have I said things about them? Absolutely. Do I phone them up? Do I have phone numbers for them? What do you want?

**Q: Could you say something at the beginning of the march?**

I tell every person (at the start of each protest) to use no racial slurs. I tell every person not to swear. I tell every person not to use any violence. I'm not going to single out groups. I'm not there to judge every single group...

**Q: Do you agree with any of these groups?**

You are asking me to judge a group I don't know.

**Q: Are you racist?**  
No, of course not...

**Q: What is your end goal?**

My ultimate goal has nothing to do with Caledonia. It's an example of a problem. My ultimate goal is to force every government to live up to what I've been sold as a bill of goods.

I firmly believe in multiculturalism. I believe it's the only way to go. I believe people should be able to come here, retain their heritage, to practise their own beliefs, they should be able to raise their children in their own beliefs, but we all have to be equal under the law ...

**Q: What is your goal in Caledonia?**

Give people a voice, to restore 911 service, to end two-tier justice.

**Q: What does that mean?**

It means a strong message goes out (from the OPP) that says from this day forward, all decisions we make, we make no decision based on race ...

(On April 20 the OPP) sent a powerful message to the other side that if you respond with violence, we will back away ... You cannot allow any group to believe that response with violence will be met with surrender ... It'd be like walking up to a biker gang and saying, "We're not going to arrest you anymore but we want you to behave..."

**Q: When is this battle over for you and what will you do next?**

I decided I was going to be in this for a couple of years. I believe I'm changing the system ... If (the OPP) suddenly wake up tomorrow and decide they'll live by our Constitution, they won't change their policies in Ipperwash. So that means I take my battle to Ipperwash ... I believe the OPP is just one government department that has serious problems...

My goal is to expose that the government doesn't listen to the will of the people. You can't hold your government accountable. We have all these two-tier systems set up all over the place.

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