

### Preaching Dates

4 August 2019

**Alastair Crockett** (am) at

Cupar Baptist Church, Cupar

**Charles Sommerville** (am) at

Kelty Evangelical Church, Fife

**Andrew Swanson** (am) at

Cumberland Baptist Church

**Hugh Tannock** (am) at

Livingston Baptist Church

**Tony Walters** (am) at

Lighthouse Church, Arisaig

**Douglas Inglis** (pm) at

Wishaw Baptist Church

**Alistair Mackay** (pm) at

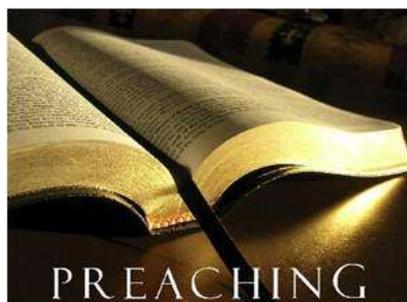
Dumfries Baptist Church

**Charles Sommerville** (pm) at

Whitburn Christian Fellowship

**John Bingham** (am + pm) at

Mustard Seed Fellowship, Glenrothes



“Nehemiah”

By Peter Trotter

*Achieving great things when ‘the people had a mind to work’  
(Neh.4:6)*

In polytheistic ancient Near Eastern culture, the status of a nation’s god was measured by a nation’s prosperity, military success and temple. At the time of the Exile the Babylonian god Marduk appeared all-powerful with his fabulous temple situated in a prosperous and military dominant city. In contrast Yahweh to non-Jews looked pathetic. Such mindset still existed when Nehemiah received news that the few Jewish returnees from Babylon to Judah had failed to reverse Jerusalem’s fortunes. The city, its wall and temple still lay in ruins. Nehemiah’s distress was occasioned by the danger the Jewish remnant was exposed to and the negative message a dilapidated Jerusalem sent to surrounding nations about Yahweh. The sense that Yahweh was calling Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and rebuild its wall, confirmed by the Persian King proactively helping Nehemiah, inspired the Jews in Jerusalem to complete the improbable task of rebuilding the city’s wall in 52 days. Contributing factors were ‘the help of our God’ and ‘the people [having] a mind to work’.

In north Thailand one Saturday in January, I was privileged to teach 6 sessions on Nehemiah to Bible students and over 20 Pastors from various denominations. I was requested to allow 10 minutes at the end of each session for questions but encouraged not to be disappointed if none were asked (in Thailand’s honour culture questioning teachers is unusual). Overestimating how long it would take me to speak and be translated into Thai resulted in much more than 10 minutes being left after I finished speaking. This was a God-send. When no questions were asked my host invited the other Pastors to share their thoughts. At the day’s conclusion, inspired by Nehemiah, the Pastors had decided to start meeting together monthly for all-night prayer meetings with the goal of organising an evangelistic event in a local stadium, something out with the scope of what could be achieved by any one church acting alone.

In north Philippines one Monday in May, whilst living in a church compound in a poor community, the first night of a youth Bible teaching camp began. It started to rain and, even by Philippines’ standards, the deluge was ferocious. Flooding was everywhere notwithstanding the church was supposedly wind and watertight. Undaunted a group of about 25 young people, aged 12 to mid-20s, worked together at the apparently futile task of scooping out the water and throwing it outside while water continued to pour in. To my astonishment, within 20 minutes of the rain stopping no water was to be seen. Enthused by being at camp and working together the young people had removed the obstacle to the meeting continuing. Well done I shouted to them! Great things can be done for God’s kingdom where God’s people ‘have a mind to work’!