

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dear Prime Minister Johnson

As you take up your appointment as the United Kingdom's Prime Minister we trust that you will have all the wisdom, patience and understanding that is required as you lead our great country through what are likely to be difficult times. You are certainly in the prayers of many.

At Church Action for Tax Justice, our primary concern is that both national and international tax systems are designed to foster the common good of all. We think tax regimes should be fair, transparent and serve not just the present but also future generations, not just the wealthy but especially those who are poor. We are therefore concerned about your reported plans to reduce taxes for those who earn the most. We urge you to think again, ensuring first that the public purse is able to support public services in such a way that we see an end to the growing use of foodbanks, many of which are run by churches. We know that you believe in strong public services as you have written previously about the importance of them and the need for all corporations and individuals to pay their fair share of tax to contribute to those services.

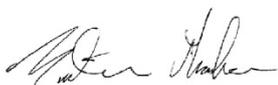
Specifically, in 2006, you took to task some of the tech giants for the way they paid "quite derisory sums in tax to the UK Exchequer". You went on to comment that these companies should be paying more, and that "the loopholes and dodges should be axed". However, you also suggested that the problem laid not so much with the companies as with our own laws and policies which facilitated these practices: "the fault in the whole affair lies with our national arrangements – our own system for not getting a fair whack from the tech giants... We now need to go further. We want, need and deserve these companies somehow to pay more tax in the UK."

At Church Action for Tax Justice we completely agree, and as Prime Minister you now have the power to hold these corporations to account. You can drive the legislative agenda that will bring about the change you have indicated. As I am sure you are aware, it has been estimated that the UK loses up to £90bn per year through a range of tax avoidance and evasion measures. That money could easily pay for the improvements in public services that you have promised from greater funding for the NHS to more bobbies on the streets.

At the start of your premiership then, we urge you to begin the process of closing the loopholes that enable so much tax to be dodged. Specifically, we are aware of Baroness Williams' letter to peers of 17<sup>th</sup> July that registers of public ownership in the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories will be published, but not until 2023, although Parliament's date was the end of 2020. We would encourage you to find ways to bring these arrangements forward to that date and to ensure this happens as a way to demonstrate the veracity of your words.

The great British public pay their taxes, and we are sure they would appreciate it if, as Prime Minister, you ensured the wealthy, both individual and corporate do so as well.

Yours sincerely



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## NOTES:

Church Action for Tax Justice (CAT) is an ecumenical, collaborative movement united by the belief that we, as individuals and churches, have a faith-derived imperative to challenge economic injustice. We stand for a fairer and more effective tax system, where democratic governments set taxes to reflect the Common Good, and individuals and corporations pay their share.

Working as part of the wider UK and global tax justice movement, we aim to

- Raise awareness throughout churches and faith communities of the fundamental relationship between taxation, equality and public services, and the urgent need for tax justice at national and international level
- Campaign for transparency and an end to tax dodging by both corporations and individuals
- Stimulate a conversation about the society we want to live in and the tax system that could deliver that
- Encourage Christian and all faith organisations to promote tax justice through their education and mission work, and their financial and investment policies.

[www.catj.org.uk](http://www.catj.org.uk)

