



And this just in from World Development Movement

Who are you cheering for in the World Cup? For most of us, the answer will probably be England. But what if you are Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish and your team didn't qualify? And who do you cheer for when your team isn't playing?

To help you, the World Development Movement has created the website [www.whoshouldicheerfor.com](http://www.whoshouldicheerfor.com), which ranks all the countries in the World Cup based on their issues to combat poverty and social injustice. We've used indicators such as carbon emissions per capita, maternal mortality rates and income inequality to come up with an index over the most supportable teams.

# Just Living

The 2010 World Cup will absorb acres of newsprint, whole swathes of the internet and hours of broadcast time in the coming weeks. For some this will be an occasion of great entertainment and interest, for others it will seem more of an imposition or a background annoyance.



Whatever your view and experi-

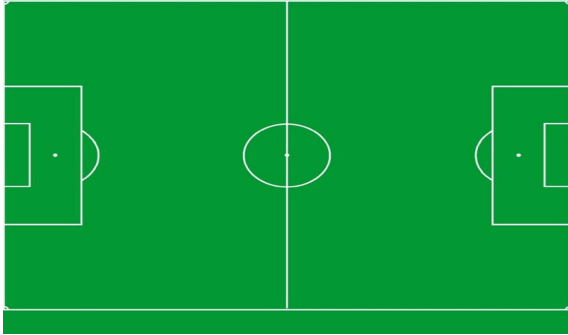
ence of the specifically sporting issue, this huge global football tournament raises or illustrates all kinds of other important issues nationally and internationally.

This year, as the largest sporting competition on the planet commences on 11 June 2010 in South Africa – and on the African continent as a whole – for the first time, it is important to ask, '**Just Football?**' The thinktank and commentary service, Ekklesia are using this as a way of helping us all think through some of the issues.

The title has a number of resonances. Among other things, it points to the fact that there is no such thing as 'sport alone'.

Whether you call the game 'football' or 'soccer' whether you love it or hate it, what some call 'The Beautiful Game' is also major international business and a massive social and cultural influence, both for good and ill.

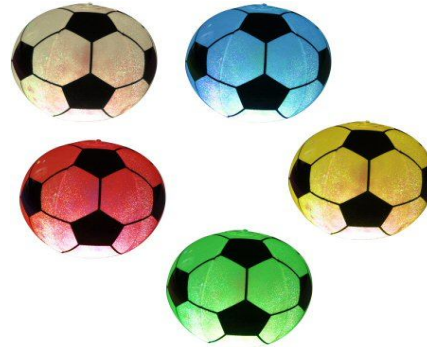
South Africa is particularly fertile soil upon which to recall this truth. From the 1970s, under the old *apartheid* era of institutional racism, systemic injustice and 'separate development' for divided ethnic groups, there were major international campaigns for change that had sport at their heart.



Cricket and rugby boycotts of the white-dominated regime included the 'Stop the Seventies Tour' civil disobedience campaign – headed by Peter Hain, who subsequently entered the UK parliament in Wales and became a government minister. This time, global football is being hosted in post-apartheid South Africa: a 'rainbow nation' which is very far from being problem free (poverty, AIDS, violence and youth disaffection are among its major challenges), but which has nevertheless made massive strides towards freedom and social justice compared to the old days of ingrained prejudice and racial discrimination. In the run-up to World Cup 2010, the street celebrations have illustrated the capacity of football to bring people together – black and white, young and old, male and female, religious and non-religious, able-bodied and disabled, gay and straight. This is a capacity which 'father of the nation' Nelson Mandela noted and celebrated on 9 June.

Of course, football, like other sports, reflects human divisions and animosities as well as providing a framework for challenging them.

The sporting boycott of South Africa played a pivotal role in building momentum in the campaign to end institutional racism, reaching people who would have been untouched by undiluted human rights and political discourses.



World Cup 2010, in the shape that it has now come into

being, a multicultural extravaganza, would not have been possible without the defeat of apartheid. Its very staging is an example and inspiration to continue the struggle against ongoing injustices – particularly poverty, which continues to refuse to be 'colour blind'. Black migrant workers and women domestic workers are among those who are still at the bottom of the heap in 21st century South Africa, where much has changed – yet for millions there is little difference to show for it. Globalisation is rapid, but unbalanced, unequal and environmentally unsustainable.



During the World Cup, we will be producing Just Living Specials, drawing material from the think tank Ekklesia's Just Football resource, helping us to think about these wider issues. This text comes from them, and we will explore the resources they provide. Love it or hate it, it's here. Let's look for Kingdom glimpses in the World Cup celebrations.