

More than 850 million people go to bed hungry every night.

*Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2008*

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Two-thirds (67%) of all people living with HIV worldwide reside in Sub-Saharan Africa.

*UNAIDS, 2008*

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MRDF supporters donated over £90,000 to its Burma (Myanmar) appeal after the cyclone in May 2008, which helped to provide emergency food and shelter to over 170,000 people.

*Methodist Relief and Development Fund, 2008*

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1.1 billion people in the world do not have access to safe water.

*Human Development Report, 2006*

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There were an estimated 881,000 deaths from malaria in 2006, of which 85% were of children under five years of age.

*World Health Organisation, 2008*

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Up to 2.4 million people were severely affected by the cyclone in Myanmar in 2008.

*United Nations, 2008*

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A month before the Climate Change Bill became law, the UK Government announced it would include aviation and shipping emissions – which will help Britain's commitment to curb its carbon footprint. Ed Miliband paid particular tribute to 'the members of the public who wrote to us in record numbers, asking for a Bill that met the scale of the challenge.'

*Stop Climate Chaos, 2008*

Esther, a young Jewish girl, is selected by King Xerxes to be his wife after a nation-wide search for a new queen.

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The king's wife, Vashti, is deposed after she refuses to appear when summoned by the king to show off her beauty.

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Esther marries the king but, on the advice of her uncle Mordecai, does not reveal that she is a Jew.

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Haman, one of the king's officials, takes a dislike to Mordecai because he does not bow down to him, and resolves to kill all of the Jews.

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Esther is told of the plot and risks her life to speak with the king, without being summoned, in order to ask that the Jews be spared.

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Esther's courage pays off – the Jews are spared, and Haman ends up being hanged.

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Today, at the Jewish feast of Purim this story is read and the audience sometimes boo when Haman's name is mentioned and cheer when the speaker says Mordecai's name.