

Tapestry of Life



Foreword by Tom Brokaw · Photographs by Howard G. Buffett

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Revised Edition

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e-mail: BioImages@aol.com

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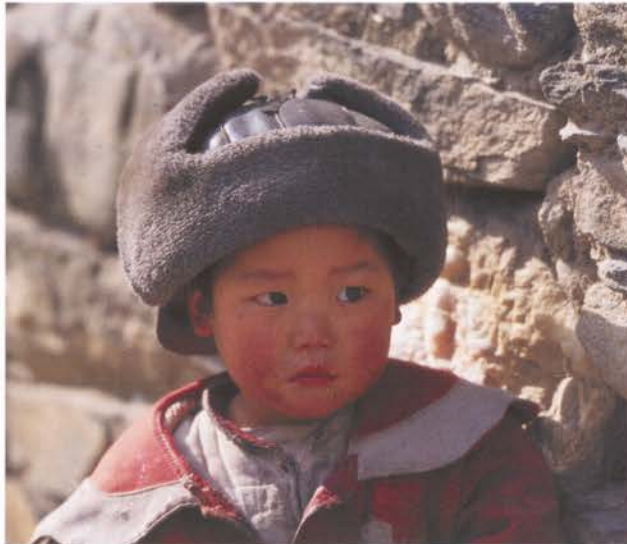
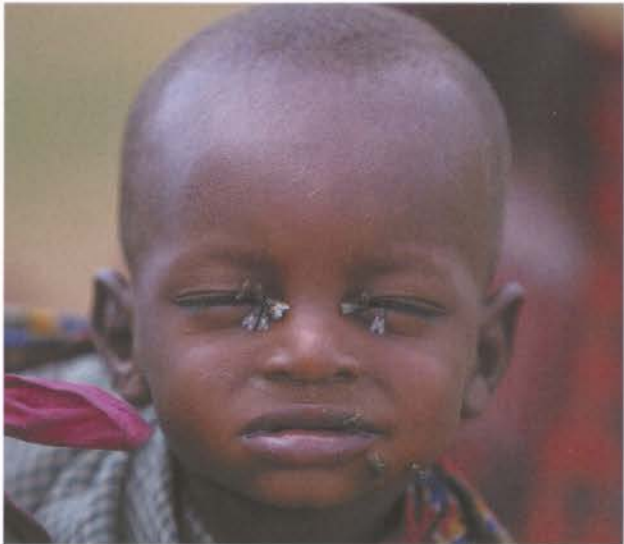
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*This book is dedicated to Tim Moylan and Penny Curry
in memory of their friendship and courage.*



Foreword

It is not surprising, I suppose, that I am often asked to recall the most memorable people I've encountered in almost four decades as a journalist.

As someone who's been privileged to have a front row seat in the theater of our modern history I have met most of the rich and powerful, the movers and shakers of our time. So I expect most who ask me the question about who lingers in my memory anticipate I will say Mikhail Gorbachev or Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dali Lama, Golda Meier, Bobby Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro or Margaret Thatcher. You know, historic figures who have left such an indelible impression on our time.

However, my answer is that for all of their charisma, controversy and their place in history I have been moved so much more by the ordinary people of courage, dignity and civility, especially those living in great poverty or in places of great peril.

A mother trying to keep her infant alive in the midst of the deprivations of a long civil war in Somalia; a young man in Calcutta who had all the dignity and pride of a suburban homeowner as he showed me through his primitive residence, little more than a lean-to of discarded plywood and straw mats; a wretchedly poor Brazilian family in the slums of Rio de Janeiro emerging from their hillside shanty to patiently await their turn at a community stand-pipe so they could brush their teeth before they began another long day of hand to mouth survival.

I have hundreds of those and other similar images in my mind's eye when I return to the cultures of affluence where the poor seem to be less and less visible.

It is an unsettling commentary on our time that the numbers of the truly poor remain so monumental in an era of great industrial expansion and medical advancement.

Worldwide, there are slight advances in reducing infant mortality or expanding consumer consumption but the hard numbers in too many areas remain just that, hard. Consider a population of four billion people around the world living on incomes of less than two dollars a day. In south Asia alone there are 500 million people living economically impoverished lives. It would take the average Bangladesh worker 8 years of wages to pay for a personal computer. In Africa AIDS is an epidemic of historic proportions.

I have written at length about what I call "the greatest generation," the men and women who came of age in the Great Depression and then, just as there was some hope of economic recovery, they were called upon to save the world in a war that raged on six of the seven continents, in the skies and in all of the oceans. When World War II was over, and they had prevailed, they returned home to give America a powerful new economy, breakthroughs in science and medicine, new art and new laws to secure fundamental rights for all Americans.

They also rebuilt their enemies, a historic act of unprecedented magnitude on the part of a military victor. It was a noble and humane act that re-defined the relationship of the powerful to the powerless, a relationship that is in constant need of nurturing and strengthening.

Now when I am asked whether the current generation is measuring up to the accomplishments of the greatest generation I respond by saying that wherever I go in the most impoverished and distressed areas of the world I find young volunteers who have given up the comforts of their home to help the needy.

But we cannot leave this task to the few who are willing to take the courageous journeys to the lands of despair. It is morally unacceptable for the rest of us to stand by, indifferent or inactive in the path of such a crush of despair.

Too often those living in great poverty or great peril are children, the most innocent victims. They occupy a world of constant hunger or constant danger, a world where sickness is a constant companion. They lost in the first great turn of the lottery wheel of their lives and they deserve another chance.

Worldwide, 8 out of every 100 children don't live to celebrate their 5th birthday. In these remarkable and haunting pictures by Howard Buffett you will see the faces of despair and fear but you will also see great beauty framed by determination and optimism. That optimism and determination should not go unanswered, just as the despair and fear should not go unrelieved.

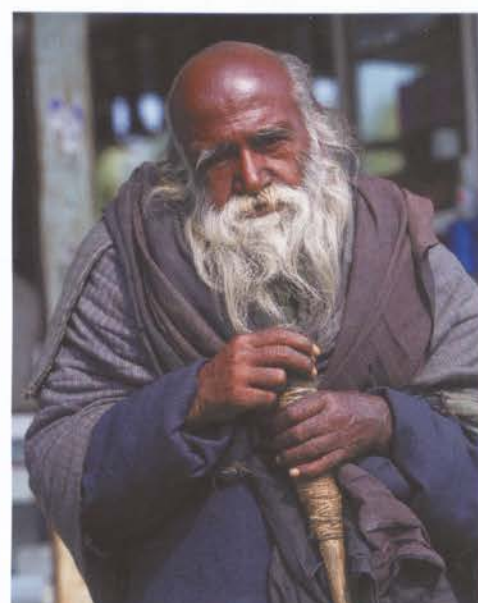
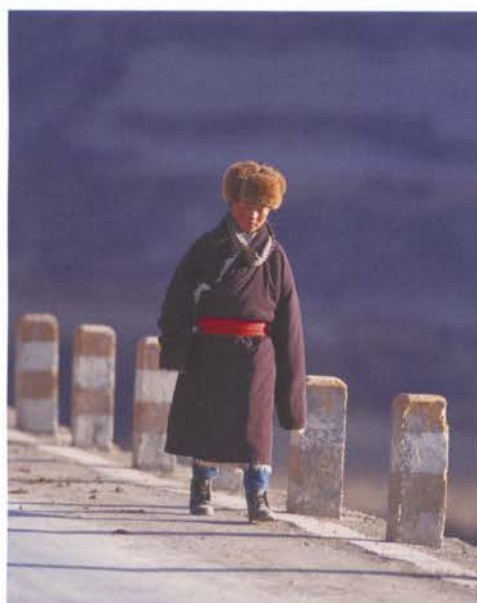
This is a family album and it is impossible not to be moved by its cry of help, it's beauty, both pure and bleak, and, most of all, by the promise and pride of this remarkable life form, the human race.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Brokaw". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "T" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

—Tom Brokaw

Every person bears the whole stamp of the human condition.

Michael Eyquem de Montaigne
(16th century)



Introduction

When you view humanity through a camera, life takes on a different dimension. The lens literally puts you a few inches from the image, intensifying the impact.

A photographer can be seen as detached - or even callous - when capturing pain and suffering on film. However, the resulting images often show reality to many who would otherwise be unaware of the world's needs. Perhaps one of these images might compel a person, or a nation, to take action. What I know from my experience is that occasionally there is an image that moves me, sometimes for a day and sometimes forever.

To a photographer, images represent more than photographs - they are experiences. I remember a young boy surrounded by tanks and death in Bosnia, playing with a semi-automatic handgun. The irony was disturbing because I had just visited a 12-year-old boy who had lost his forearms in a landmine accident. The next day, while visiting a rehabilitation center, I photographed a soldier who had lost his leg from stepping on a landmine. I felt self-conscious and almost ashamed at intruding in his life. In Bangladesh, a young street girl, Shamoly, attracted our attention with her brilliant eyes and charming personality. Returning the next day to photograph her again, I began to grasp this 11 year old's reality. She will likely be abused and raped. Within a year or two she will be married. It was difficult to leave with these thoughts. I wanted, unrealistically, to pull her from a sea of people and provide her with safe haven.

I remember a young girl lying in a hospital in Ghana dying of meningitis, malaria and anemia as her mother sat by helplessly. I focused my lens on the child's eyes as they rolled back in pain and then glazed over, oblivious to life. This was one time when I had to put down my camera. As I walked away I stopped and put my hand on the mother's shoulder, knowing she had no hope. After leaving the hospital we headed towards several remote villages along the northern border of Ghana. Neither words nor photographs can truly describe the experience. We watched as Guinea worms were extracted from children and saw severe cases of elephantiasis, river blindness and malnutrition. As I prepared to photograph one malnourished child, his mother continued to try to put a pair of underwear on him. He was so emaciated that the pants kept slipping off. What really struck me was that in spite of all the need and suffering, we were welcomed with open arms and presented with gifts that the villagers could ill afford to spare.

Photography has the ability to take unimaginable circumstances and make them more than imaginable. It makes them real. Images can expose injustice and tragedy. Denial can be replaced with truth. Consider the young boys shown in this book living in shackles and required to study the Koran. They live in deplorable conditions, a situation denied by the government and continuing as this book goes to print. Another form of slavery exists for millions of women across the world. In Senegal, working for less than 70¢ a day, women toil long hours under difficult conditions only to be forced to turn their wages over to their husbands. Limited access to adequate nutrition, water, health care or education leaves little hope for their future. These people are held hostage to cultures and customs that strip them of their dignity and rights. Although photographs can expose these conditions, we must also demonstrate the will to change them.

Here in the United States, there is great heritage and history, as some images in this book demonstrate. But, the United States is not exempt from issues facing other nations. Poverty is more prevalent than many of us want to admit, and cultural changes pose new challenges. Everett Stafford of West Virginia is evidence of a lost generation. He represents everything great about America, and much of where we have failed. He is a veteran with at least seven military decorations. Asked 50 years ago to put his life on the front-line for his country, he has been put at the back of the line at home. Everett is a compassionate, humble man, too proud to ask for help, yet caught in a changing world where it is easier to look the other way and pretend all the problems are across the ocean. Sometimes the struggles and needs at home are the ones most overlooked.

Thousands of miles from home I enter a world that essentially has remained unchanged for centuries. Deep in the south of Ethiopia we travel through the Omo River Valley, eventually touching the borders of Sudan and Kenya. We visit nine different indigenous tribes spanning five distinct ecosystems. These people use elaborate dress styles including many types of jewelry and symmetrical designs of body paint and scarification. They still perform traditional rituals such as stick fighting and cow jumping. Visiting these tribes is like traveling back in time. Unfortunately, time is running short as each tribe faces daunting challenges for survival. While man pushes his way into every corner of the globe, extinction threatens these ancient cultures. Frequently our progress causes their demise.

Images can also confirm or change our preconceptions of the human condition. Images convey the wonderful personalities of the people and the cultures that provide such diversity in life. Simple facial expressions can give us a revealing window to a life story completely alien from our own. Sometimes as I point my lens, just the idea of being in a photograph brings excitement to a young child's face. Other times, the lens is a tool to document atrocities and pain. Photographic images, although able to illustrate poverty and need, cannot provide the resources to heal them. That is one of the values of photographs, bringing the reality of life to the surface.

As I travel to many different places in the world, the joke in most places I visit is that if the driver doesn't understand English when I meet him, he will certainly know one word when I leave, "Stop!" In any project as involved as this book, there are a number of people to thank. This is a genuine expression of gratitude because I truly could not have produced this book without the help and support of these people. First, I want to thank my mother and father for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams. I want to thank Le Thi Hoang Anh, Jill Bauer, Spencer Beebe, Derek Books, Dave Cooper, George Forston, Linda Fultz, Jim and Nadine Hogan, Arun Jain, Peter Kinnear, Annette Lanjou, Bob Little and Allied Photo Color, Tom Mangelsen, Angela Mason and World Vision, Anthea McGregor, Benjamin Musisi, Francis Nuwame, Dan Pedersen, Toyine Sellers, Suzie Smirin, Rich Stearns, Michael Terry, Jane and Fredrick Van Zyl Slabbert, Jerry White and the staff of Landmine Survivors Network, and Bob Zhang. And a very special thanks to my daughter Megan, my son Howie and my wife Devon who helped make it possible to complete this book. I especially want to thank Jane Olson who, in addition to helping me in many ways, was my last line of defense when arrested in Bosnia for photographing damage from the war. Finally, I want to extend a special thank you to Dihman in Bangladesh, Emanuel in Ghana, Mansour in Senegal, and Getachew, Babee and Dange in Ethiopia for their extraordinary help.

The images on the following pages may reflect different things to different viewers, but each photograph has its own story. Some show people eager to share their smiles, and others their despair. Many photographs simply reflect a tapestry of life - woven of common threads drawn from varied places.

A few of these images show the contrast between cultures. Others are intended reminders of the tragic results of war and poverty. Regardless of the image, photographs have two unique qualities; they are timeless, and they are transcendent. What we cannot experience ourselves we can see through someone else's eyes. When I look at these images, I am grateful for my life. When you view these images, I hope you will share some of my feelings, and in your own way reach out to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard G. Buffett". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

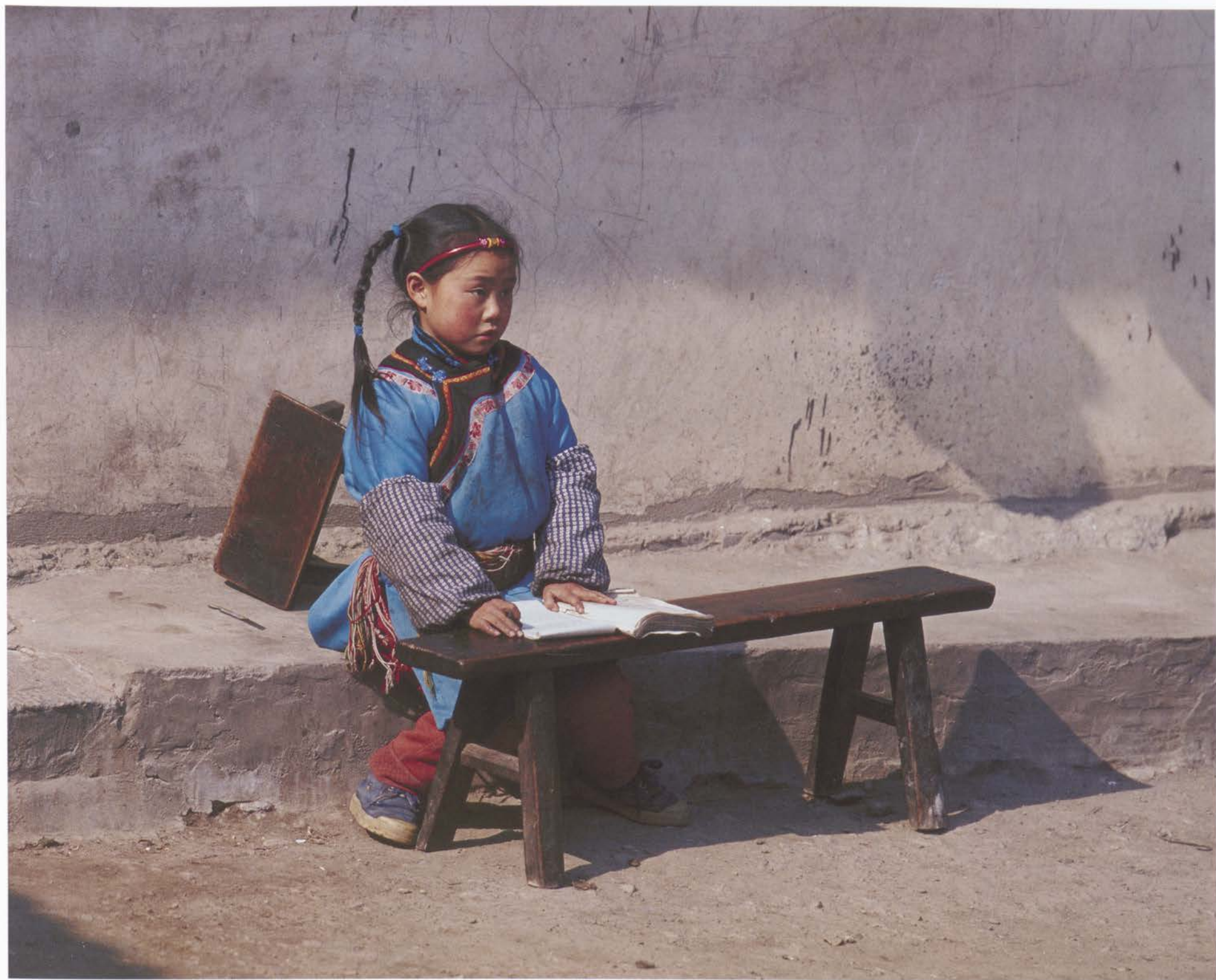
-- Howard G. Buffett



The cold of winter in the mountains of Sichuan Province does not deter long journeys. Walking great distances at high altitudes and in bitter cold is the only means of obtaining the necessities of life.



Children often have trouble finding a peaceful spot to study for school. This girl's concentration was interrupted by a rowdy group of older boys carrying guns on their shoulders.





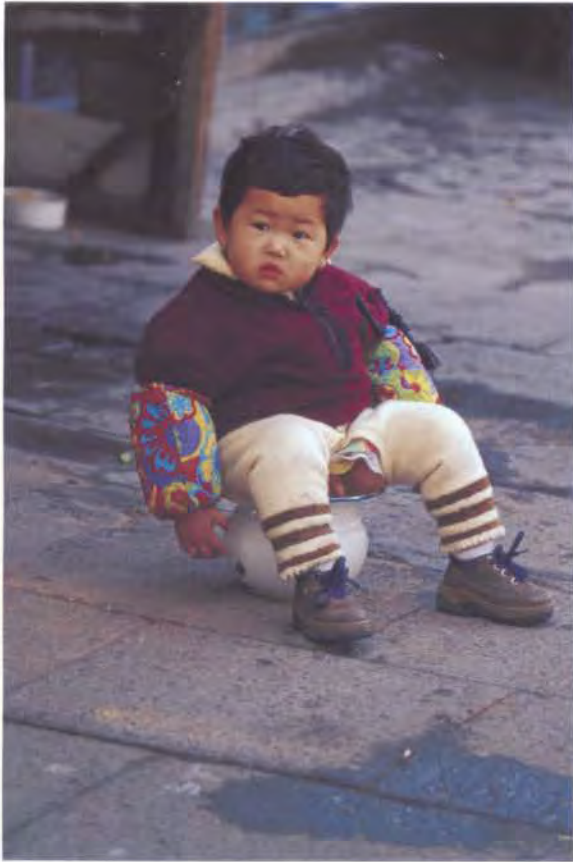
In less developed areas young children are frequently exposed to the work environment from birth.





Children's toys often reflect the course of their lives.





With no diapers or sanitary conveniences, Chinese people find innovative solutions.





The air temperature is so cold that it is surprising to see water flowing. Collecting water just after sunrise, this girl walks miles back to her village hauling two full buckets.





While a city girl arranges fruit for market, a rural child shows determination as she drags cornstalks home for fuel.



A small garden, critical to this man's ability to feed his family, receives water through backbreaking work.



The rice fields are peaceful and seemingly empty until this man appears, herding his geese to fresher pastures.



A gnarled tree provides storage for the winter's supply of livestock feed and cooking fuel.

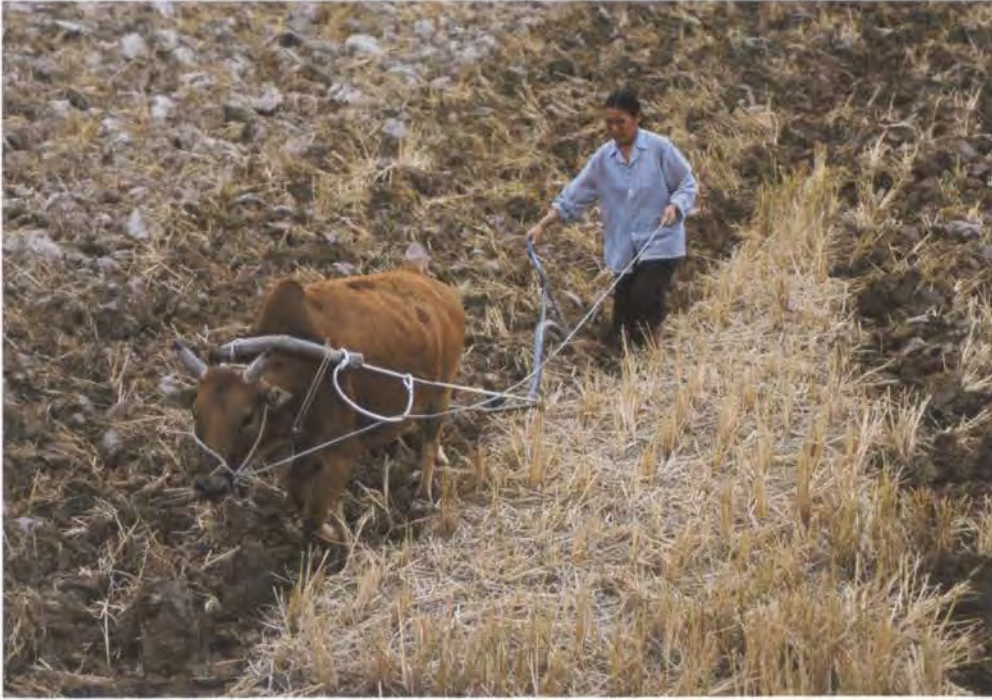


In the back of an open-faced building, elderly men gather to smoke and chat - China's version of the Harvard Club.



A common sight throughout the Chinese countryside, the rice harvest feeds many thousands of people.





In the U.S. most people work for a lifestyle. In undeveloped countries people work simply to survive.



Clutching her rustic tools after a long day of work, this Chinese peasant shares neither a smile nor a glance as she trudges home.





The business of living begins with hauling water. This woman's bones are bent from years of labor.

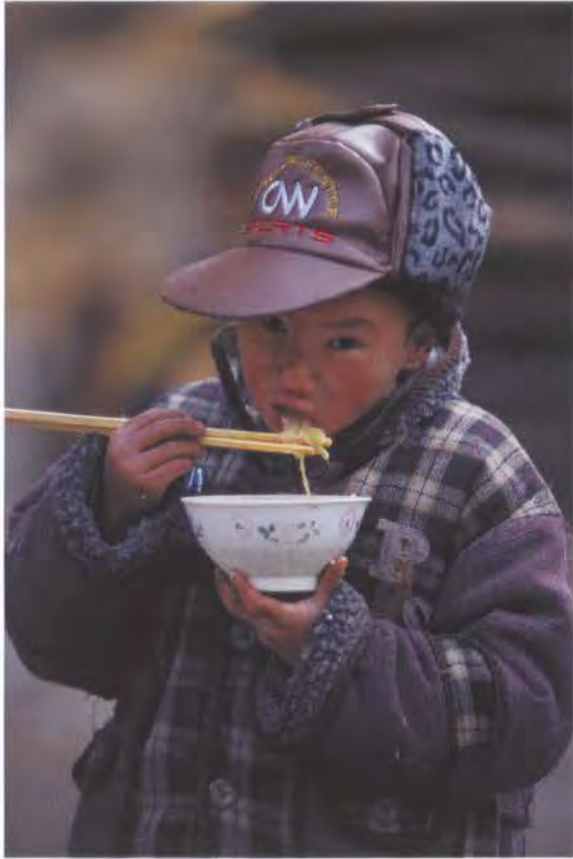


It takes five men to load such a slab of rock onto this laborer's back. Within seconds he disappears into the dust as a herd of sheep come down the hill. In many countries humans perform the work of both animals and machinery.



Though she has sight in just one eye, this elderly Chinese woman still performs a full day of physical labor.



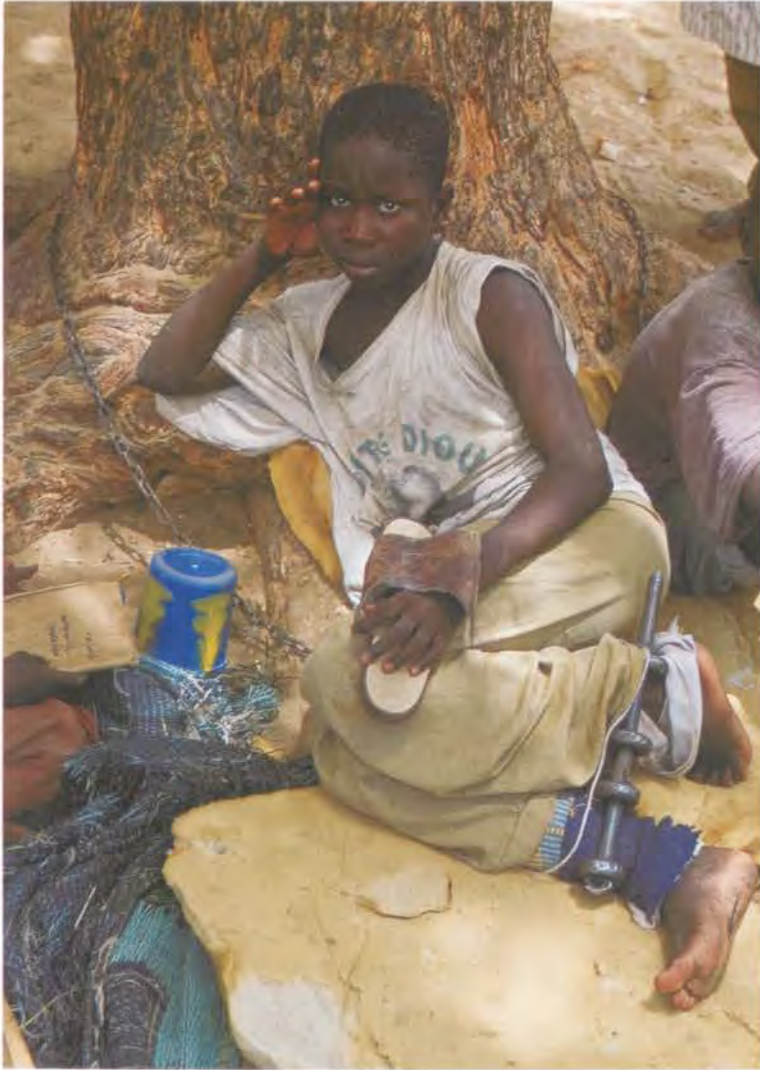


While a country boy makes a meal of rice and noodles, an urban beggar eats bananas from the street. In contrast to the poor in the countryside, impoverished city dwellers have little pride or dignity.



A beautiful girl poses just outside a compound where young boys are held prisoners in shackles and chains. The proximity of innocence and injustice is distressing.





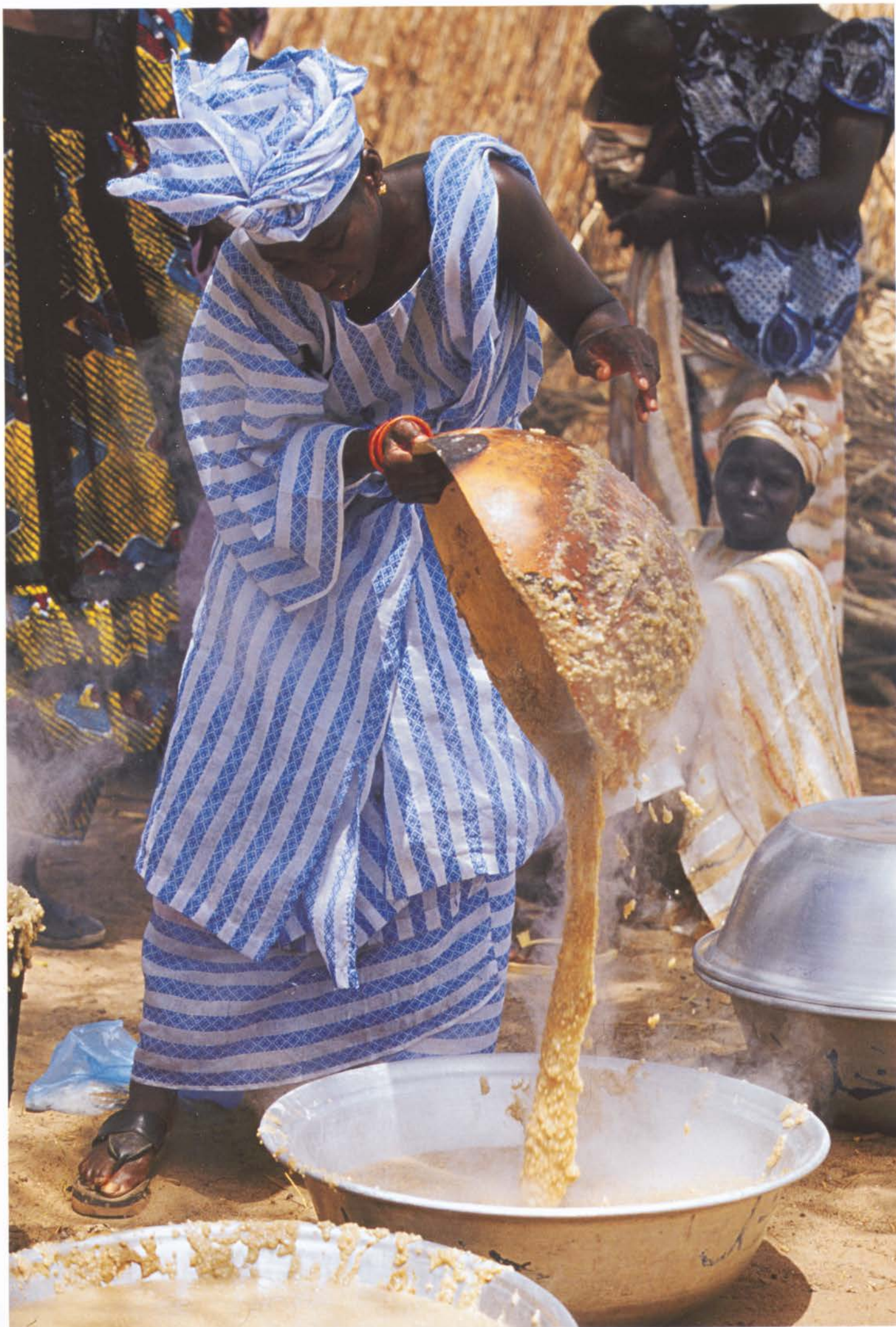
The unwanted children of large families are often handed over to Muslim religious leaders called marabouts. Here a rare photograph shows restraints used to prevent escape. These boys are required to beg for money in the streets each morning. If they fail to reach their "quotas," they are disciplined. Later, if they attempt to flee, they are put in shackles or chains and forced to study the Koran during their enslavement.



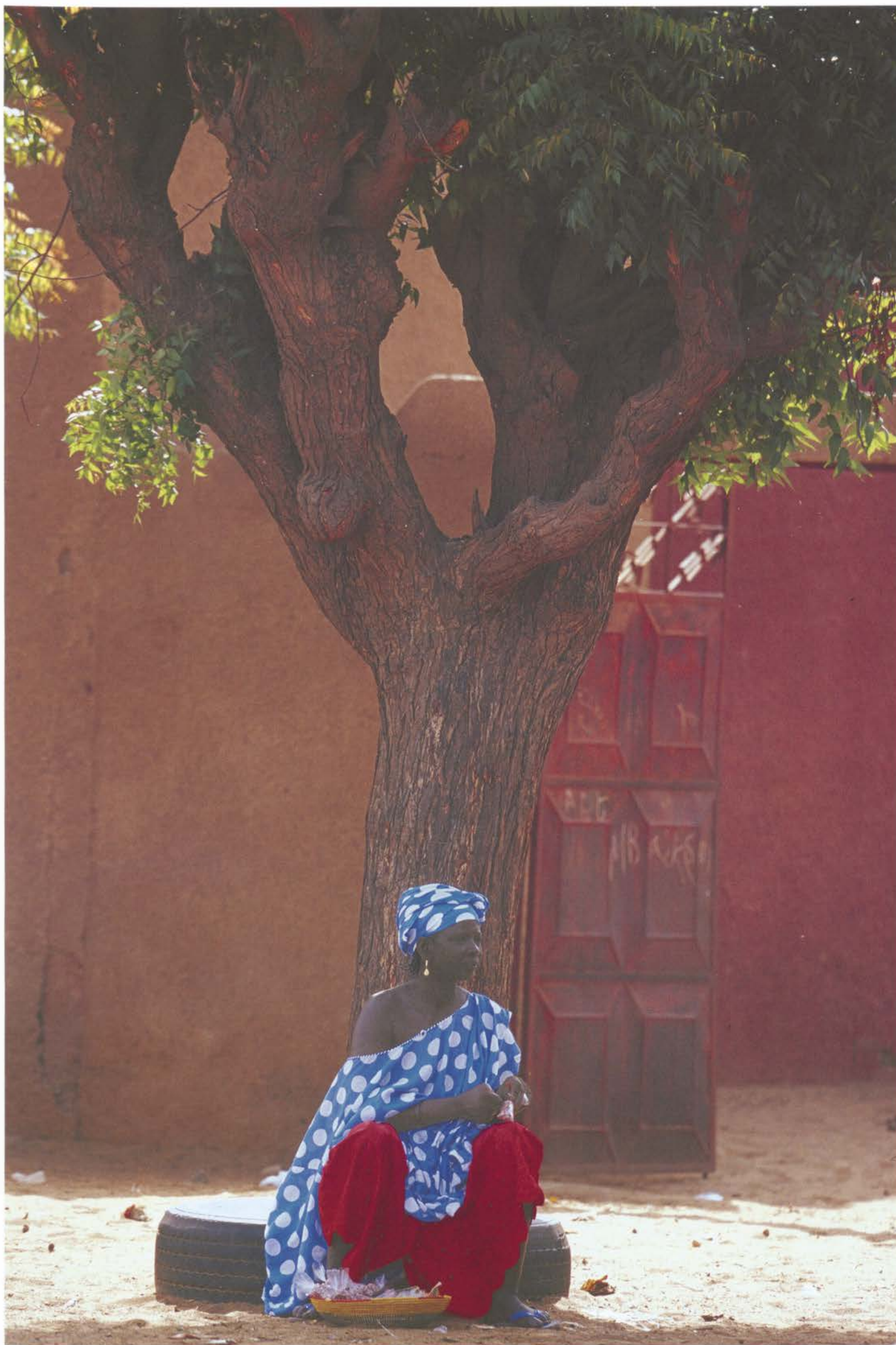
A young follower of a religious sect is devoted to the teachings and lifestyle of his master, whose image hangs from this youth's neck.



It is quite a feat to cook over steaming pots in humid heat and still appear fresh and clean for the noonday meal.



With a large tree for shade and a rubber tire for a seat, this poor but dignified woman sells her basket of sweets.



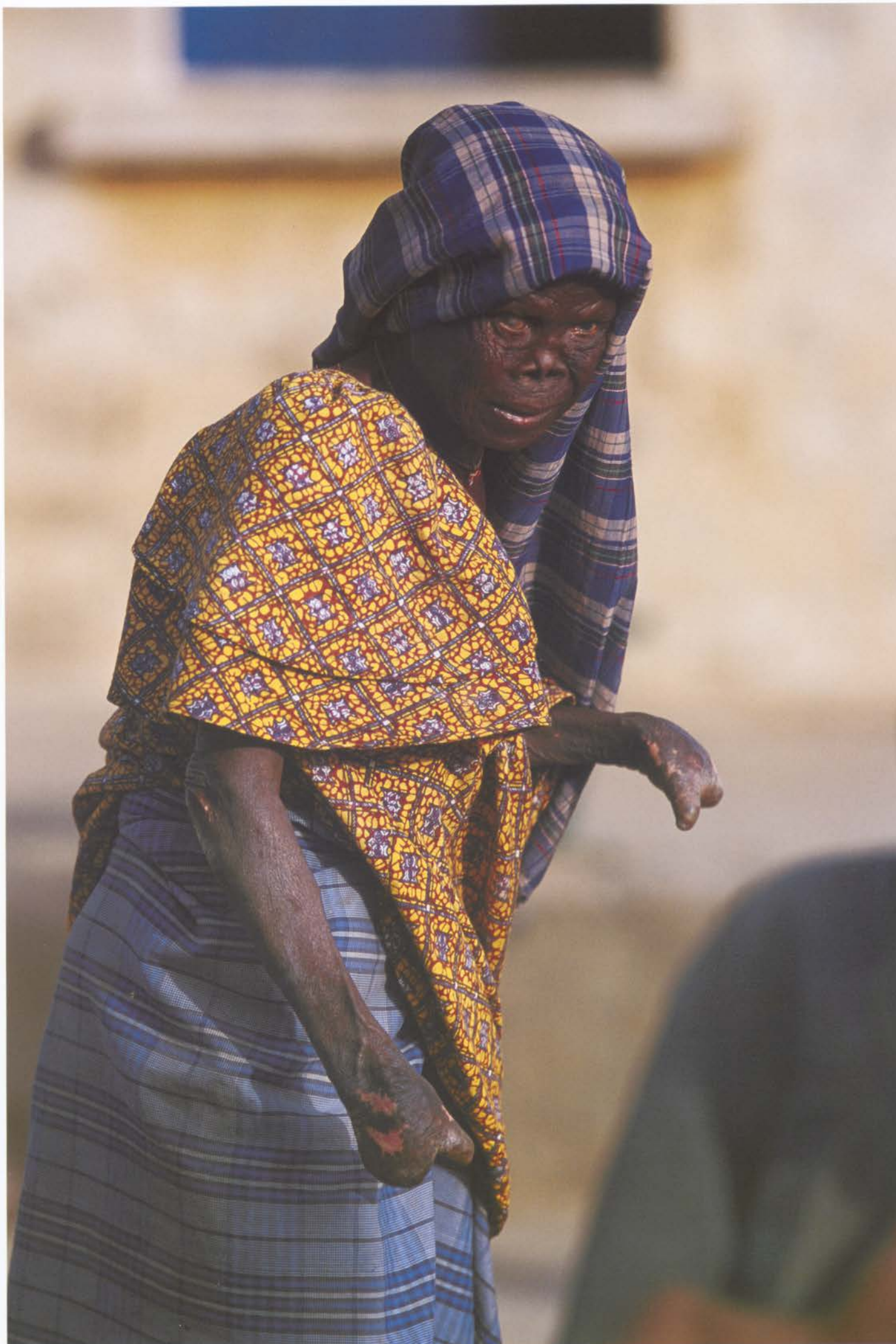


The perpetuity of life is the inevitable role of women in every culture.





A village of lepers, visited rarely by their countrymen and almost never by foreigners, is quite receptive to our presence. Imagine the challenge of the simplest tasks for these suffering women.





The expression on this woman's face suggests a life of tranquil dignity, but the living conditions in her village would challenge even the hardiest Americans.





Struggling against the resistance of knee-deep water and wet sand, with the heat of the sun and the weight of the salt vats, these women work from sunrise to sunset, day after day.





To most of the world the horror of genocide is unimaginable, but to many people in Rwanda it is reality. The first site we visit yields thousands of skulls arranged in neat rows, evidence of the magnitude of death that occurred in this country.

At another location we walk among the bones of victims of the 1994 genocide and it is difficult to comprehend the pain experienced by so many people. It is estimated that over 900,000 people were killed in less than 100 days. This woman is one of four or five survivors of the massacre that took place in this church. She cannot remember the exact date, but she knows that she was six months and fifteen days pregnant. She survived by hiding under the bodies of her dead husband and three children. The USA AID box is exceptionally bothersome and ironic since our country stood by and did nothing to prevent the horrors of this ethnic cleansing.





A building destroyed by bombs shows a mural of civilians appealing to soldiers. U.S. troops on patrol are a constant reminder of the tragedy in Bosnia.





What was once a children's soccer field is now filled with death, and a young boy plays with a weapon of this war that has altered his life forever.





As I walk across a snow-covered field to photograph a bombed village, a woman stops me, speaking urgently in a language I do not understand. Our translator explains that the woman is warning me not to cross the field unless I carefully step in existing footprints. A landmine could be just inches away from one of these imprints. Today there are over 100 million landmines scattered across 70 countries. Approximately every 20 minutes there is a casualty from one of these mines. UNICEF estimates that 30-40% of landmine victims are children under the age of 15, and although 137 countries have signed a treaty to ban landmines, the U.S. has not.

Even though this man does not mind me taking photographs, I feel self-conscious and embarrassed, as though I were intruding. At times like this I must remind myself why I am photographing - so we may all better see the results of our actions.





This young child, wrapped in the symbol of our country's freedom, reflects a new wave of patriotism in America.

As an elderly man walks out on his porch, I stop and ask him if he is a veteran. His response is an instant salute to his beloved flag. The pride that has given him the courage to fight for his country is the same reserve that keeps him going now. Everett doesn't expect more, but he deserves more. Like many of his generation, he risked his life for our freedom. We've given him little in return.





Rosie is proud to tell us she is 70 years old. She lives in a mobile home in Appalachia, surrounded by poverty and loneliness - a reminder of our system's imperfections.





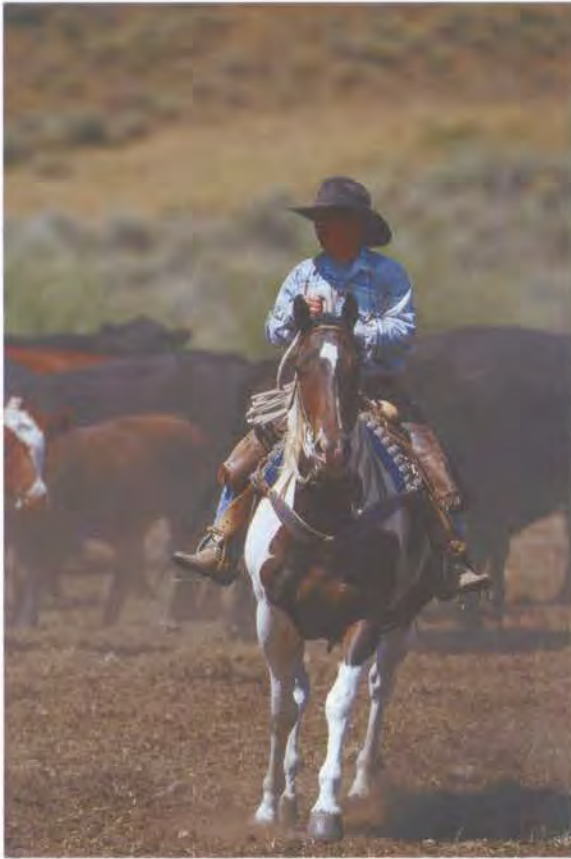
Harvesting their Illinois crop, these Amish farmers shun modern technology, preferring a simpler but more difficult way of life.





Impoverished by the demise of the coal industry, an Appalachian grandfather cuddles his son's firstborn in a broken rocker.



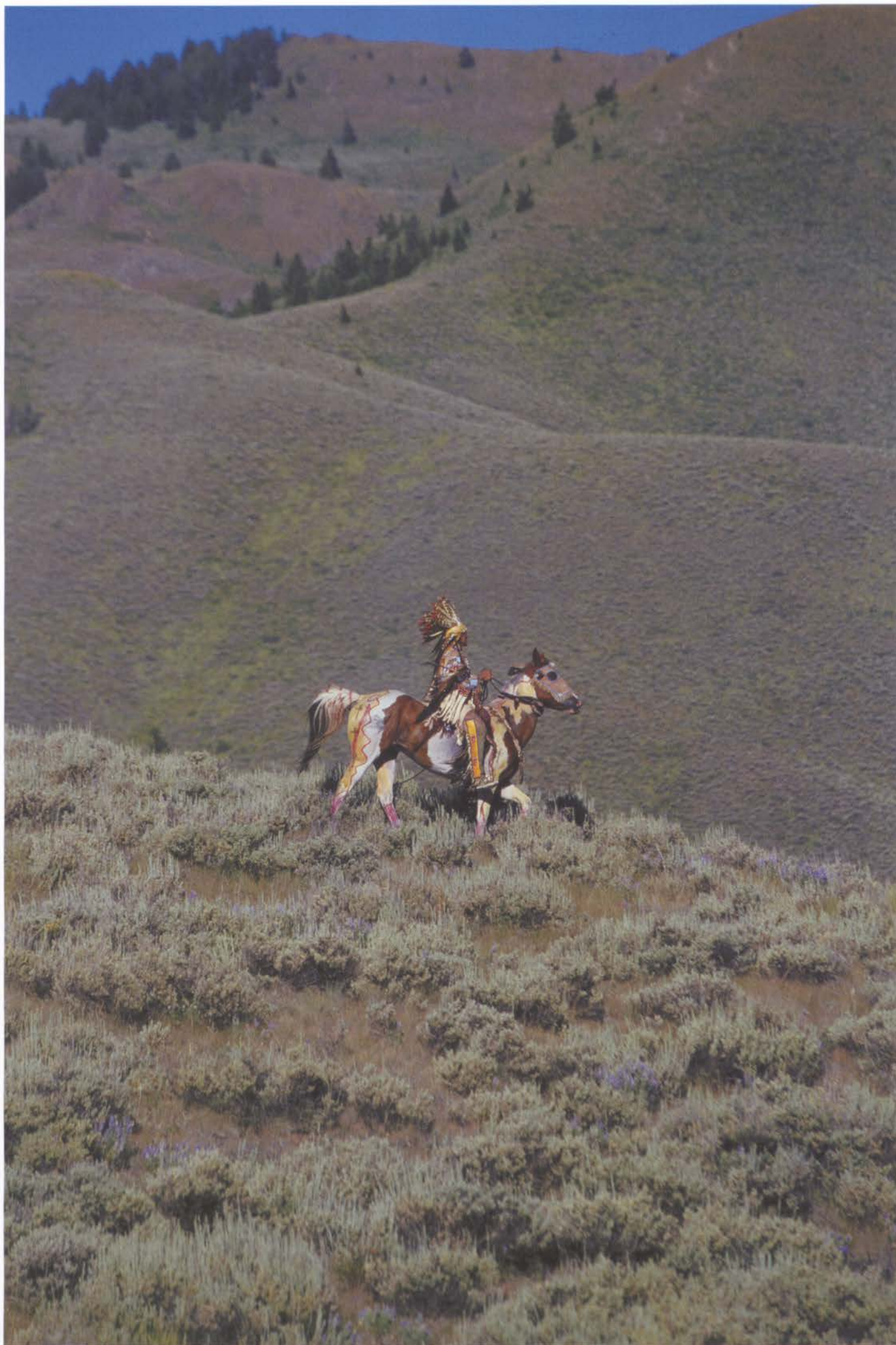


The American cowboy is striving to survive in the western prairie. Fewer people are willing to commit to this solitary and challenging way of life, but this Idaho wrangler wouldn't trade it for anything.





Central to the theme of this country's culture, the American Indian is struggling to maintain tribal heritage.

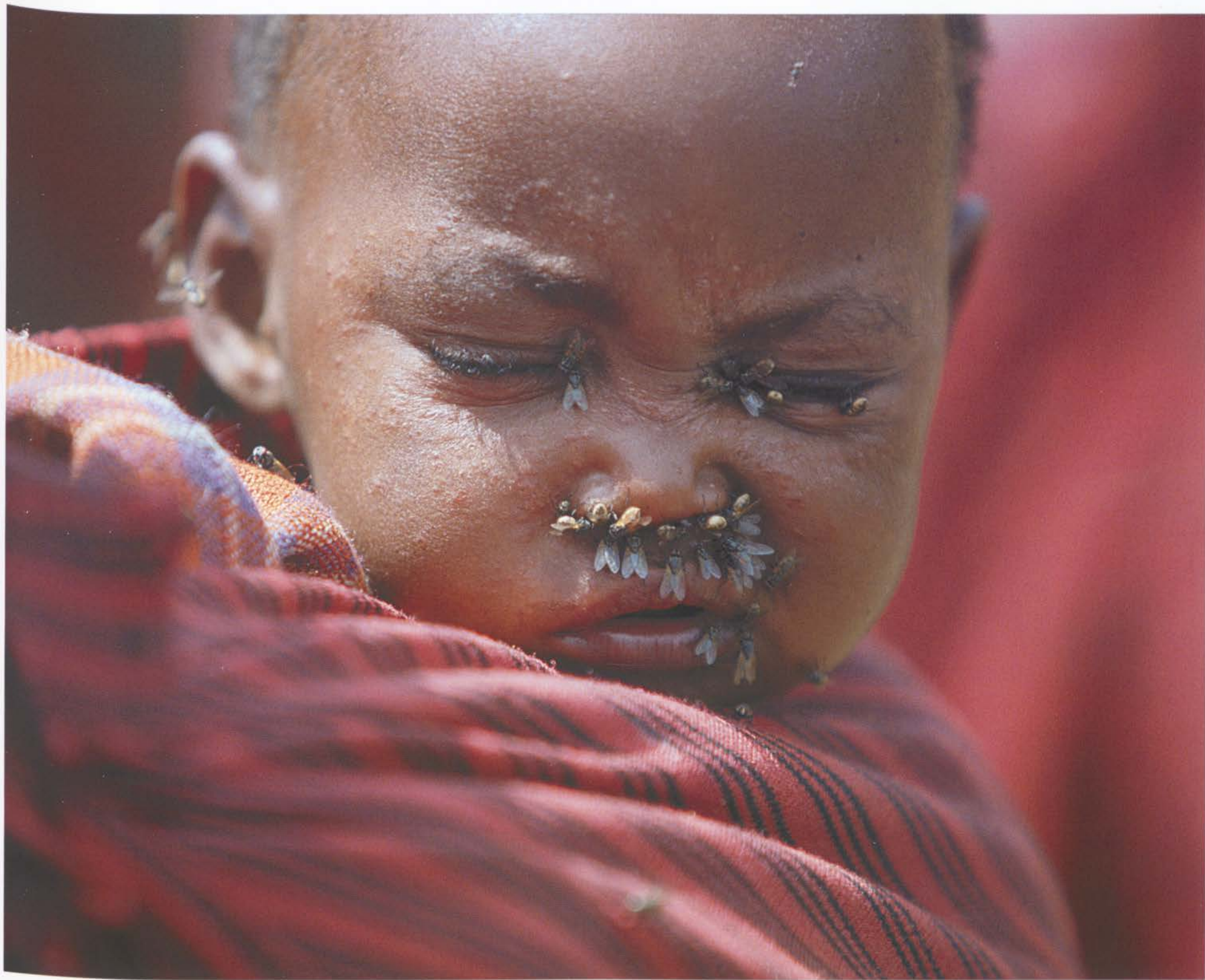


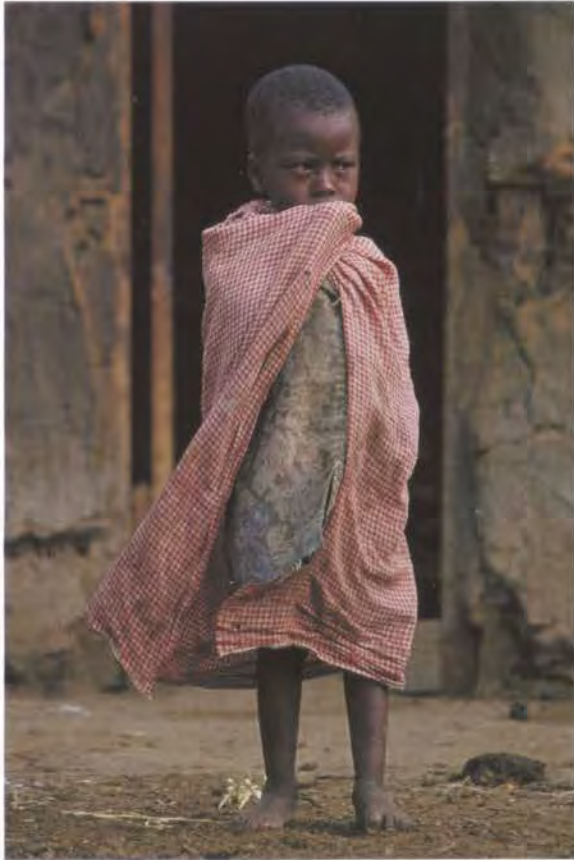


The Masai are an ethnic group from eastern Africa who make their living raising livestock. These tall, slender people are famous for their strong independence and their skill with weapons.



I felt frustrated and helpless photographing this child. No one should live in these conditions.



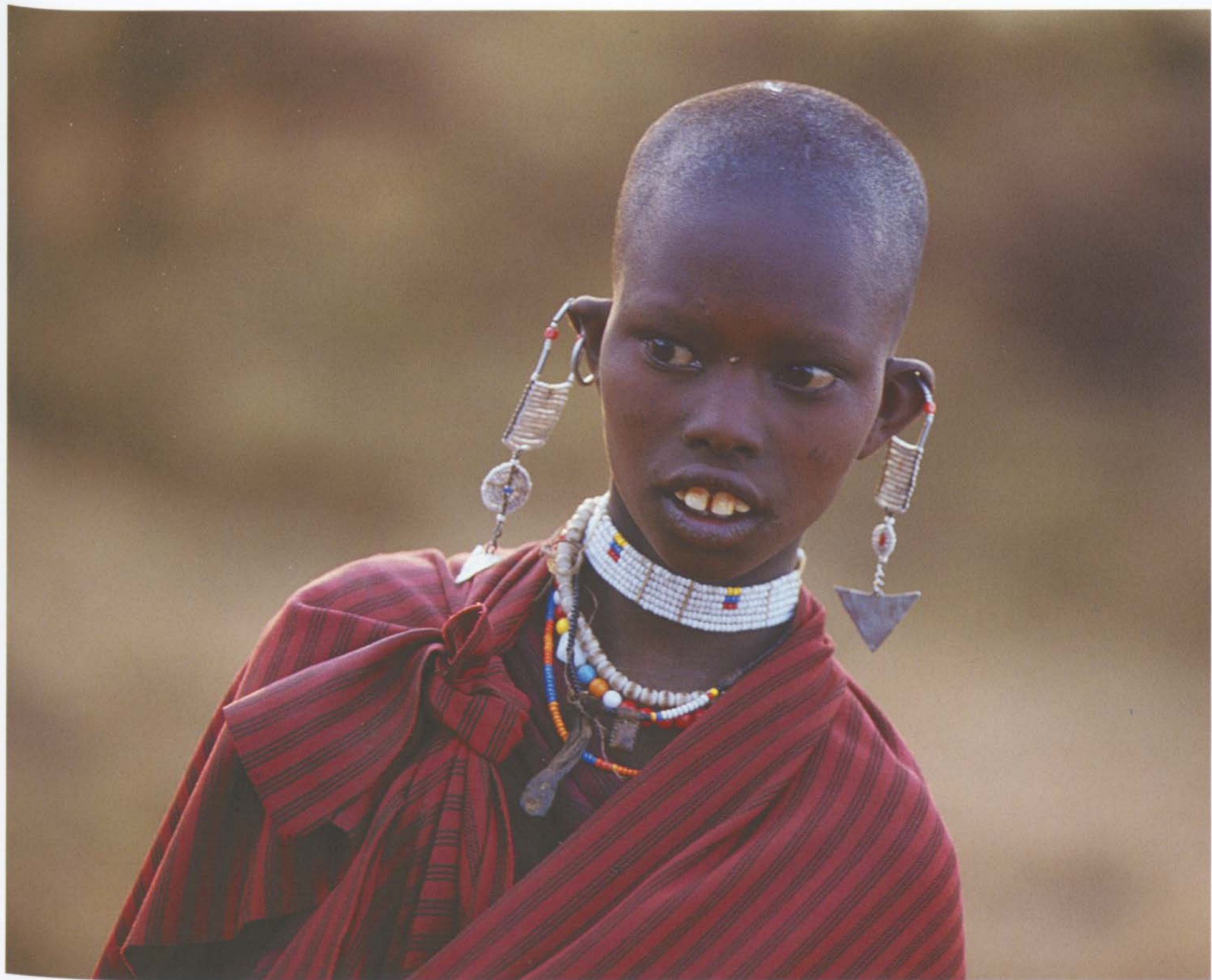


Life on the plains is difficult and survival itself can be a luxury.





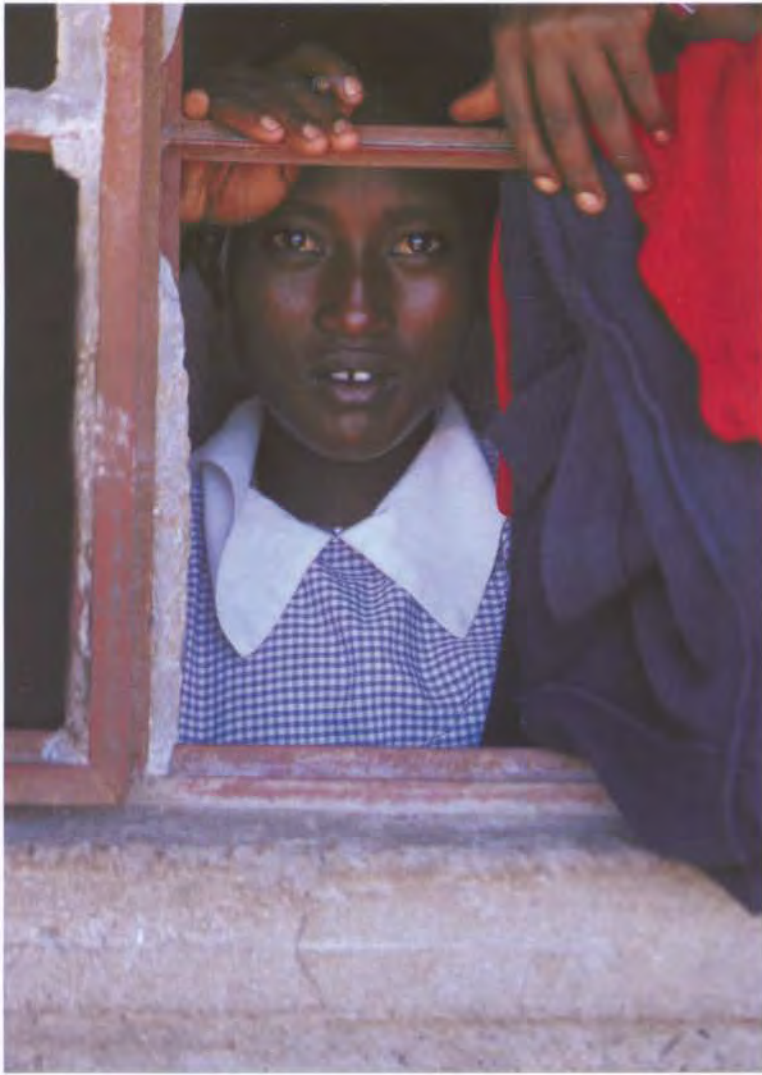
Beaded jewelry is a sign of status and distinction among the indigenous people of Kenya.





In many parts of the world children have little hope. Pleasures are few and time passes slowly.





Young rural schoolchildren love a distraction and will chatter excitedly about our visit. Older children are often cautious of outsiders.



The absence of comfort does not prevent this man from napping in a small mountain town outside Cuzco.





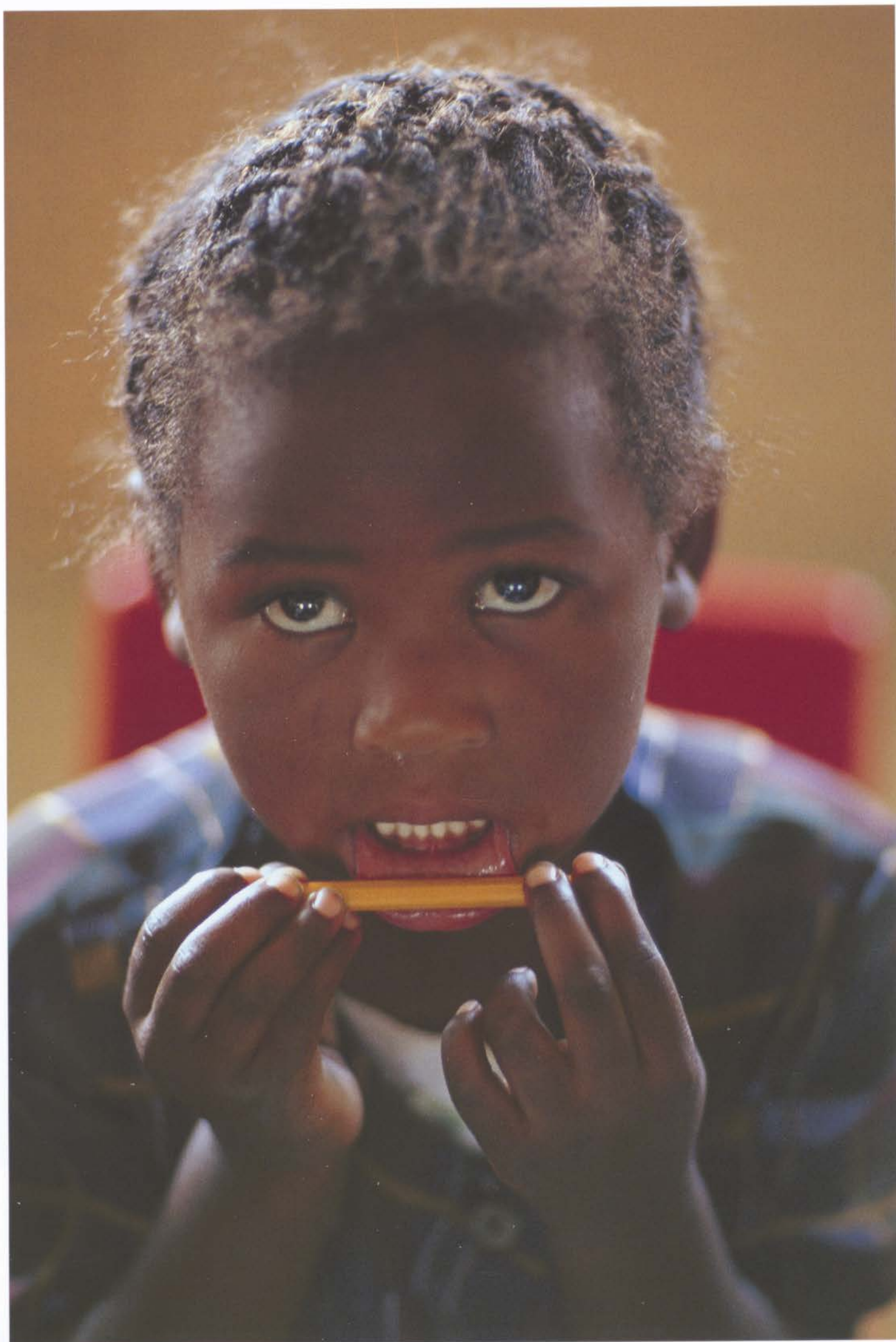
In a village in the Peruvian mountains, this child's face shows the harshness of her life. The blond doll in her homemade backpack is a recurring sight throughout less developed countries.





Rural schools in Africa are often more concept than construction. Students and teachers gather under trees, in open structures or in crude huts to absorb and share knowledge.

Intent on learning, this child seems to understand that education will be the best way to improve her life. Surrounded by the challenges of a society under immense pressure, school can also be a safe haven.





The pride and determination in these expressions explain how South Africans endured so many years of oppression.





These scenes are common on the streets of Johannesburg. The abolition of apartheid has not been a cure for the social ills of South Africa, regardless of race or color.

Although many associate these political and racial issues with other countries, it wasn't until 1965 that the U.S. made an honest effort to abolish practices such as poll taxes and literacy tests designed to disqualify black and poor white citizens from voting. It was only one year after my birth when, in 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. Today many of these acts of discrimination and hate are found in every corner of the world, including here at home.





Rituals performed by generations of tribes perpetuate a fragile culture in a changing world.





Costumes, face paint, jewelry, dance and celebration are important elements of the African spirit.



Swazi natives are hardworking, unassuming people, rich in culture and values. Sporadic tourism presents a small opportunity to increase meager incomes. Children are pulled from school to dance along busy highways by the stands of native crafts in hopes of attracting buyers.





The impact of a lifestyle on the human spirit shows clearly in both expression and demeanor.





There is no quick cure for hunger, no drive-through, quick shop, grocery deli or microwave. Children learn to be patient with the pain of an empty stomach.





In most parts of the world people are agreeable about being photographed. Sometimes they show curiosity and other times indifference or preoccupation. What looks like an interesting image to me is just a routine part of the day for them.





Begging is a last resort for survival. A man unable to hear or speak must rely on a written plea hung from his neck, while a person too weak to plead for the help he needs lives along the railroad tracks with little more than a thin blanket for cover.



In a large, dimly lit hospital room, patients fill every bed. It seems that this child is trying to communicate with her eyes, and it is difficult not to share her pain.





Life as we know it does not exist for these people. They struggle every day to fulfill the most basic of needs - food, clothing, shelter, mobility and sleep.



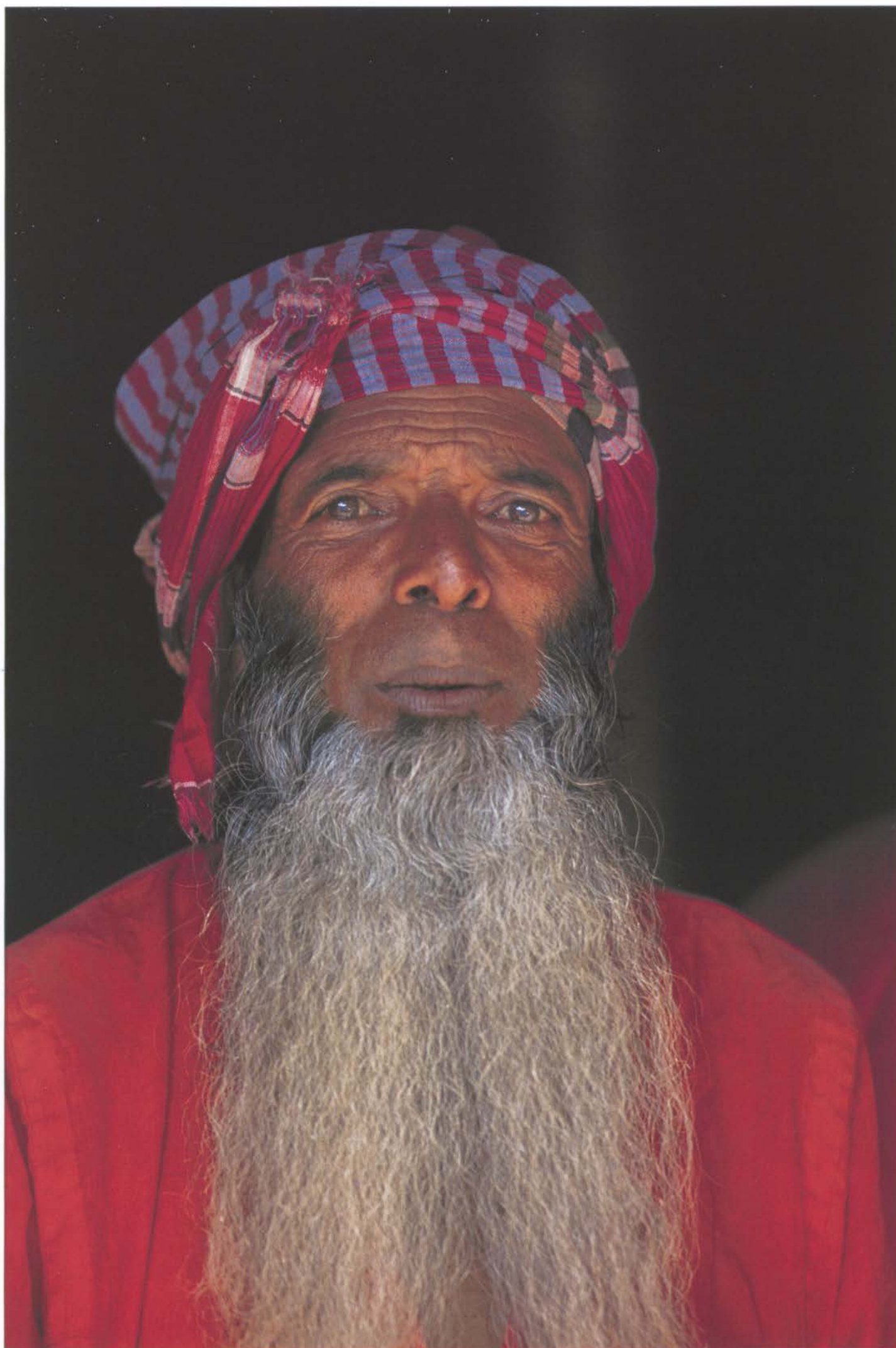


As bulldozers plow down hills of rubbish and excavators dig through the heaps, these children search among flies and filth for anything of value. Their idea of value is quite different from ours.





Originally part of Pakistan, Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated and poorest countries. Since eighty-five percent of the country is Muslim, Hindus are a minority. These men seem to radiate spirituality.





Among the masses of people gathered along these railroad tracks, a young girl quickly consumes her meal. Where competition for food means survival, every item a photographer carries could be sold or traded for sustenance. It is necessary to be on guard, yet convey no ill will. It is impossible to leave this place without leaving a part of oneself.



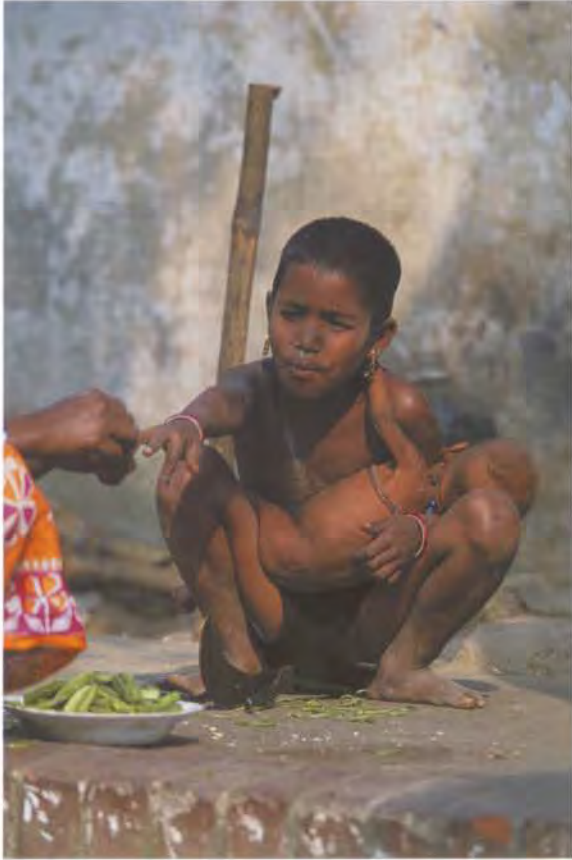


The waterways provide a food source and way of life. There are no policies to safeguard the quality of water and more often than not, pollution causes many health problems.



The produce of Bangladesh is exotic. Van Gogh might have painted this man carrying his fruit to market.



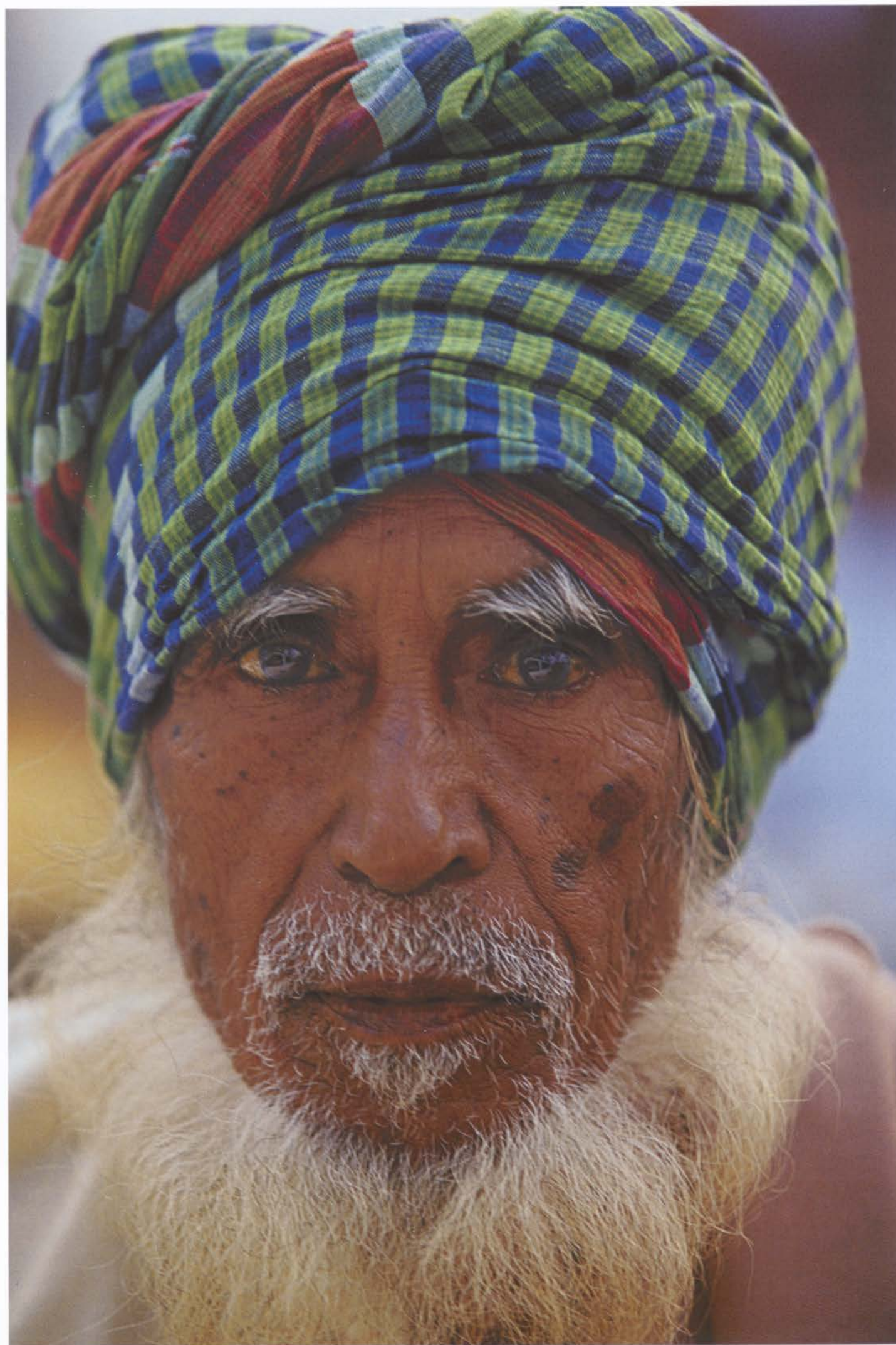


Nomadic families move from rural areas to the city and live from day to day with no expectations. They bring few possessions and show uncommon resourcefulness.





The pain and hardship of these men's lives show in the lines of their faces and the watchfulness of their eyes.





Children's games are the same the world over. The innocence of "Ring Around the Rosie" contrasts sharply with the violence of war games.





Adhering to traditions and customs, young people show their individuality in colorful ways.

There is just enough light from the bonfire to capture this girl behind the flames.





Returning from Mecca, train after train is overloaded. Since this is the front of the train, one wonders how the engineer could see when or where to stop.



Hunger in rural Bangladesh is a condition shared by both humans and animals.





Shamoly is an eleven year-old street girl with too much experience. Her charm and grace show in every pose, and her vulnerability evokes a strong protective response.



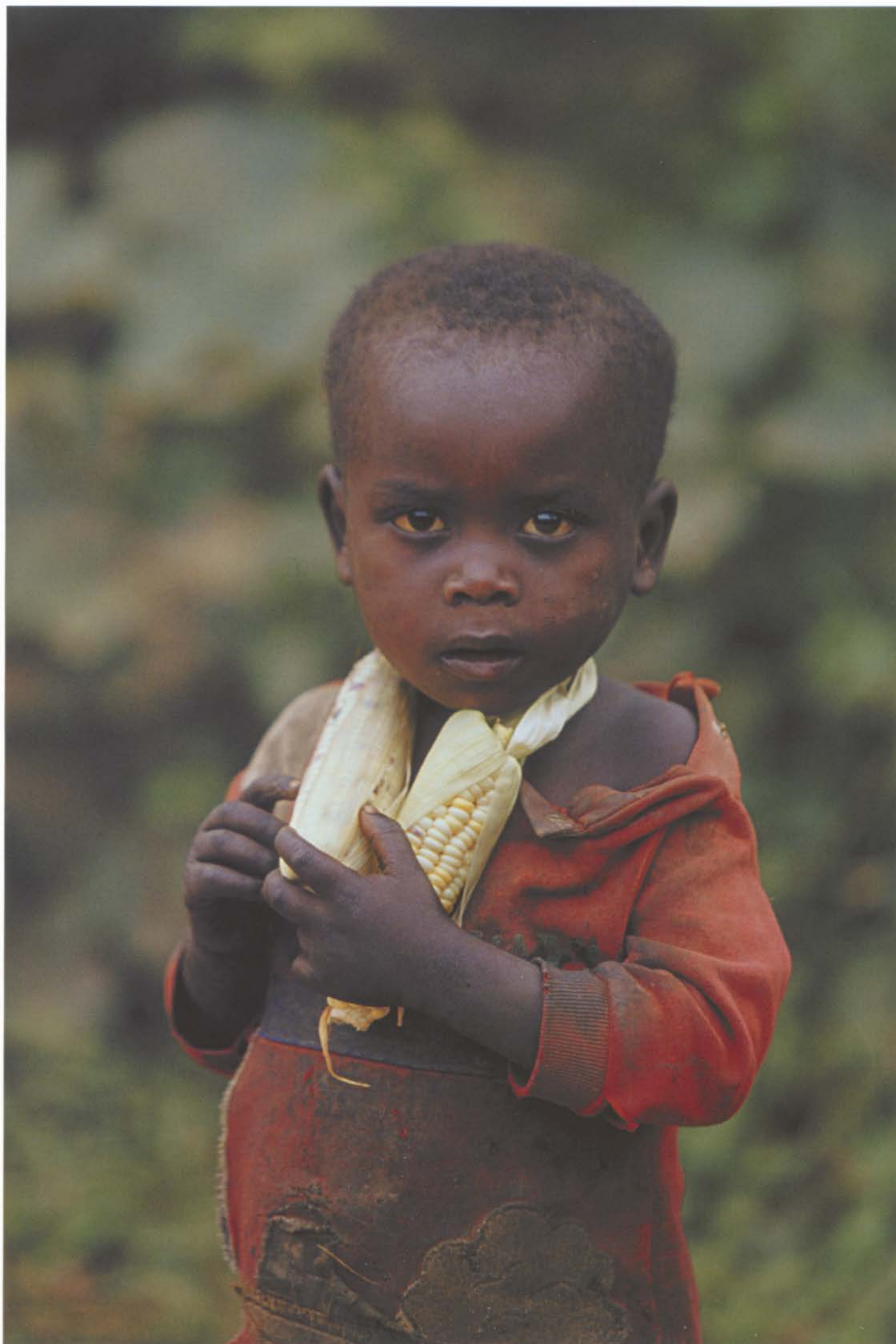
In many parts of the world, as mechanization replaces primitive agricultural techniques, crop yields increase at the expense of the environment. These students and their instructor learn the impact of heavy tillage compared to the benefits of minimum and no-till agricultural systems. Feeding people without depleting natural resources will be a huge challenge in this century.



Packing up belongings and searching for new hope has become a familiar way of life throughout the world.



Hanging from his neck like jewelry, these two ears of corn may be the only food this boy will have for the day. His mother has tied the husks together so they will not be lost.





Living high in the mountains, these brothers view the outside world with skepticism.





When parents spend long hours in the fields, they must either bring their infants with them or rely on older siblings for childcare. In an environment where life appears to have little value, the instinct of the young to nurture the very young shows hope for humanity.





One child is bloated with hunger and the other is losing his vision.
These young boys will never receive the medical care they need.





There are numerous commodities throughout many African countries, but the sale of fruit and grains will yield barely enough to feed a family for a day.



For a photographer, this is a difficult picture to take. The urge to set aside the camera and comfort a crying child is strong, though unrealistic.



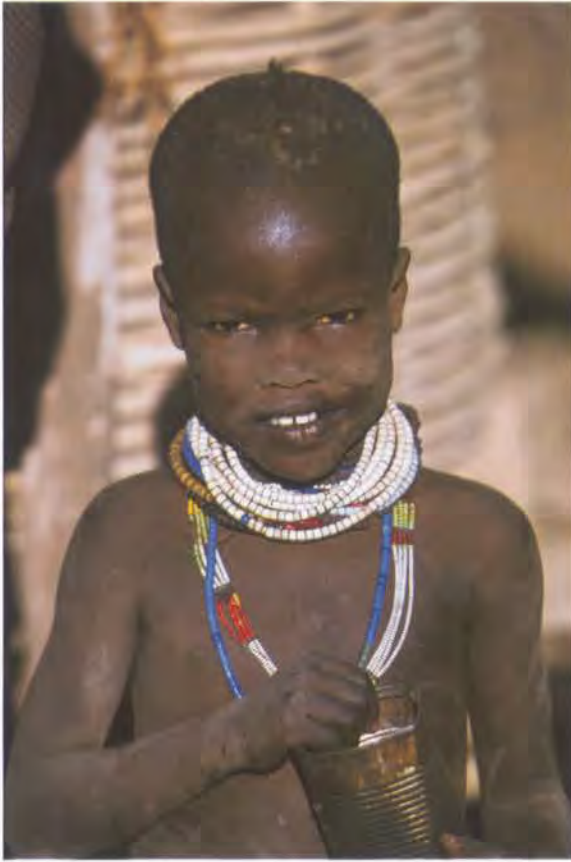


Shown in these two photos, the Mursi, along with other tribes, are facing the threat of extinction. It is estimated that their neighbors, the Karo, number less than a thousand. If Ethiopia becomes a more stable country, tourism will increase, further challenging the preservation of tribal cultures.

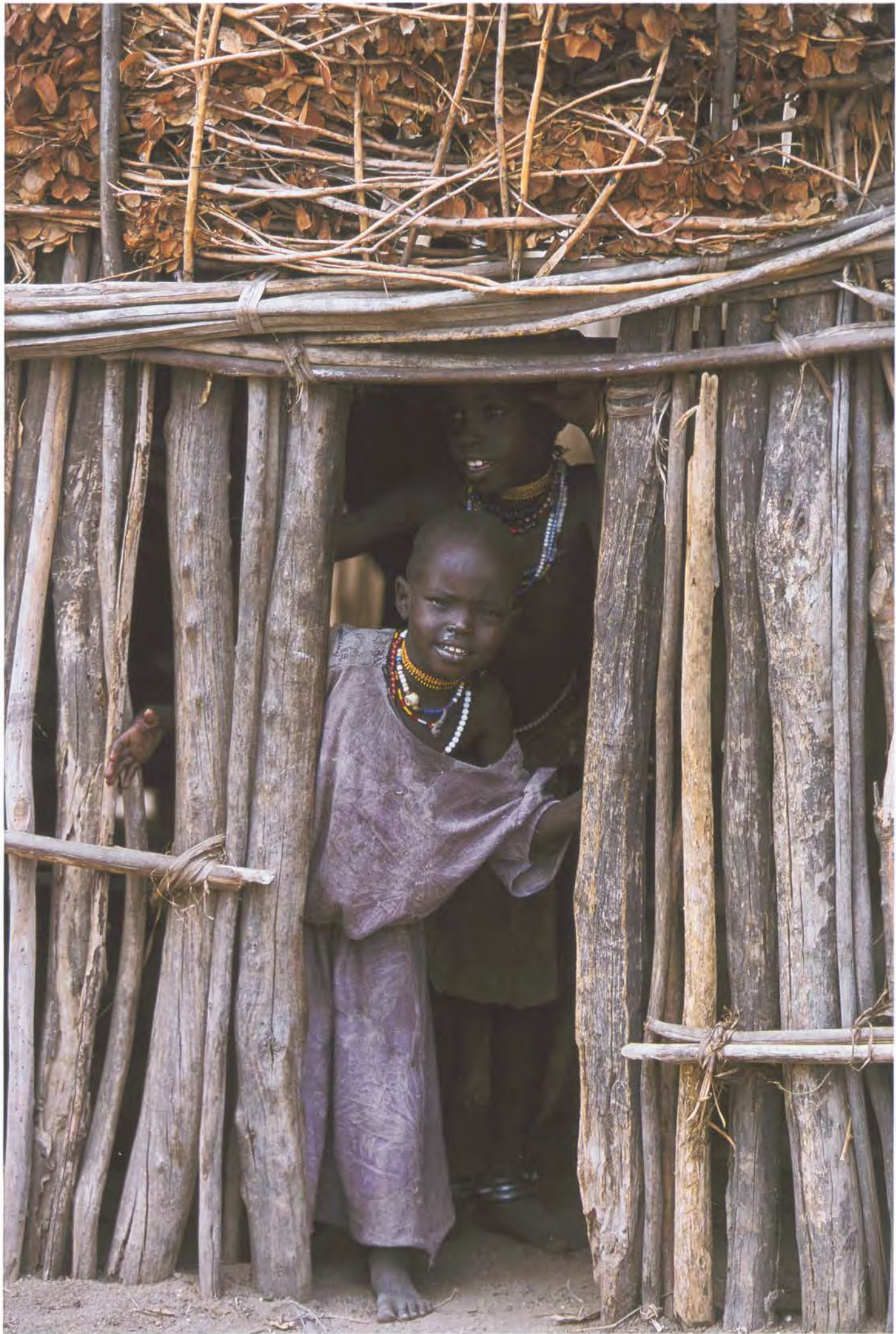


Like a steeple, this Hamar woman stands on top of her hut. Her thickly plaited hair is ochre-stained and her body is covered with scarifications. She adorns herself with tight armbands and an array of beaded jewelry. Most rural Ethiopians live in small villages or isolated homesteads. Farming is their livelihood and their customs have not changed much from their ancestors'.





Always curious, the children of the Erbare tribe inspect the unusual visitors to their village. The proud chief tells us of the current hardships and apologizes for not being able to provide a sacrificial goat to honor our visit. He explains that skirmishes with a neighboring tribe and lack of rain have reduced their herds and their harvest.





The Dasanech people are desert nomads who live in crude huts in a harsh and barren environment. Frequent dust storms descend on Ethiopia, where deserts rank among the hottest places on earth. The challenge of raising cattle in this setting is evidence of this people's resilience.



Many rural African settings combine bleakness and beauty in one image. The window within the window is like a piece of art in this crumbling shelter.

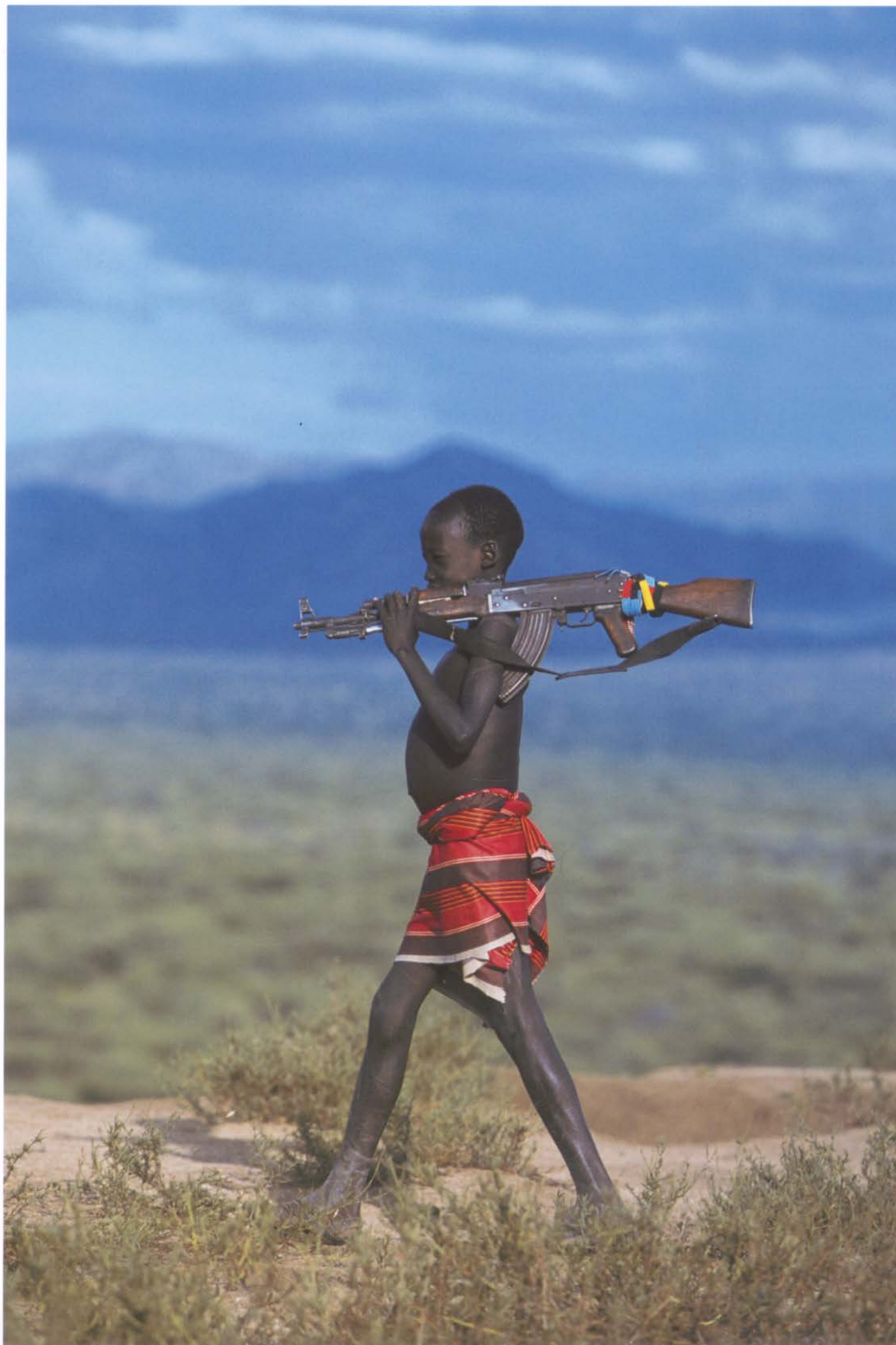


From the dust-covered trees and huts appears a girl with fresh bamboo. A sudden pause in the relentless wind and blowing sand allows a quick shot of this stark contrast.



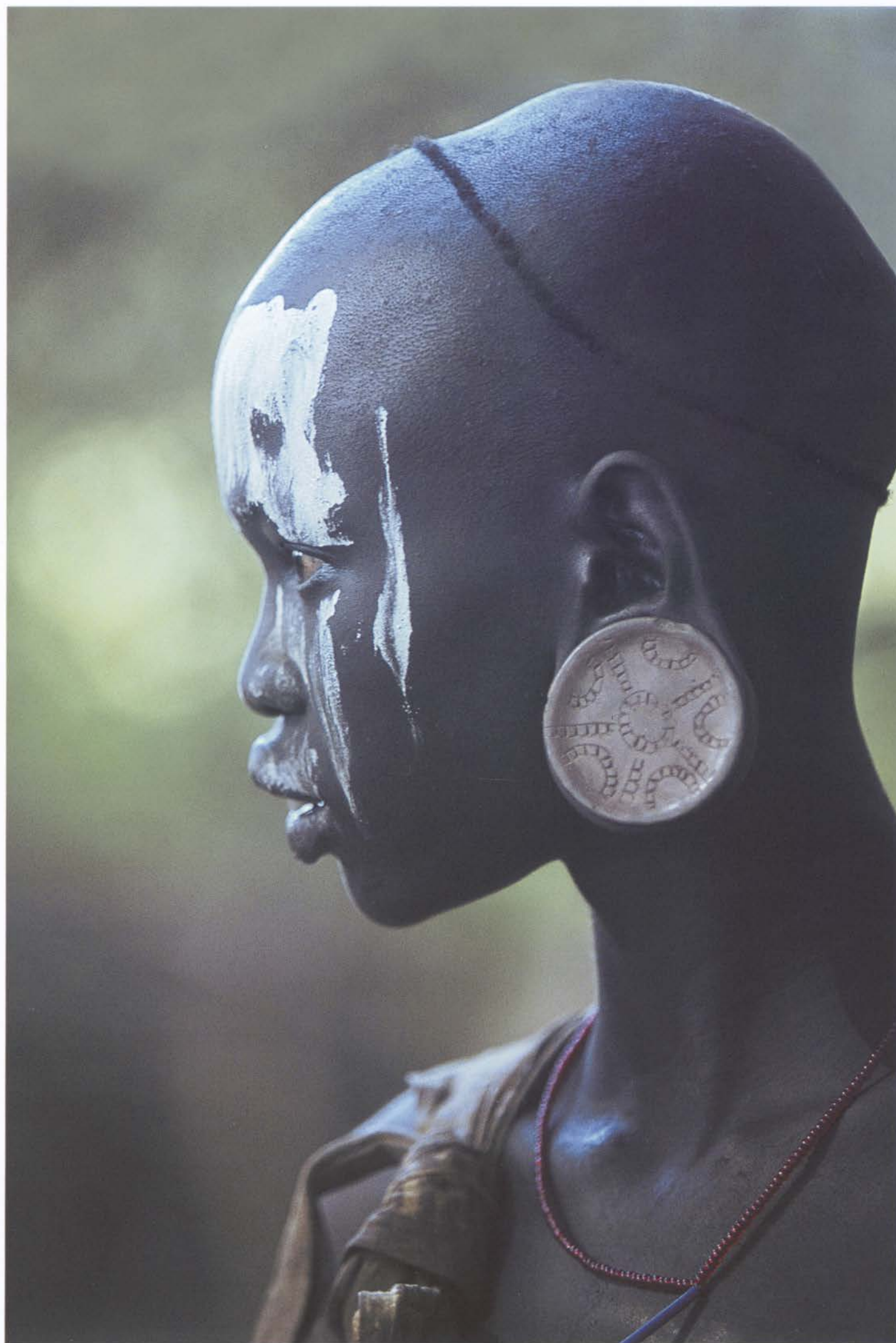


The acquisition of automatic weapons greatly impacts the future of these people.

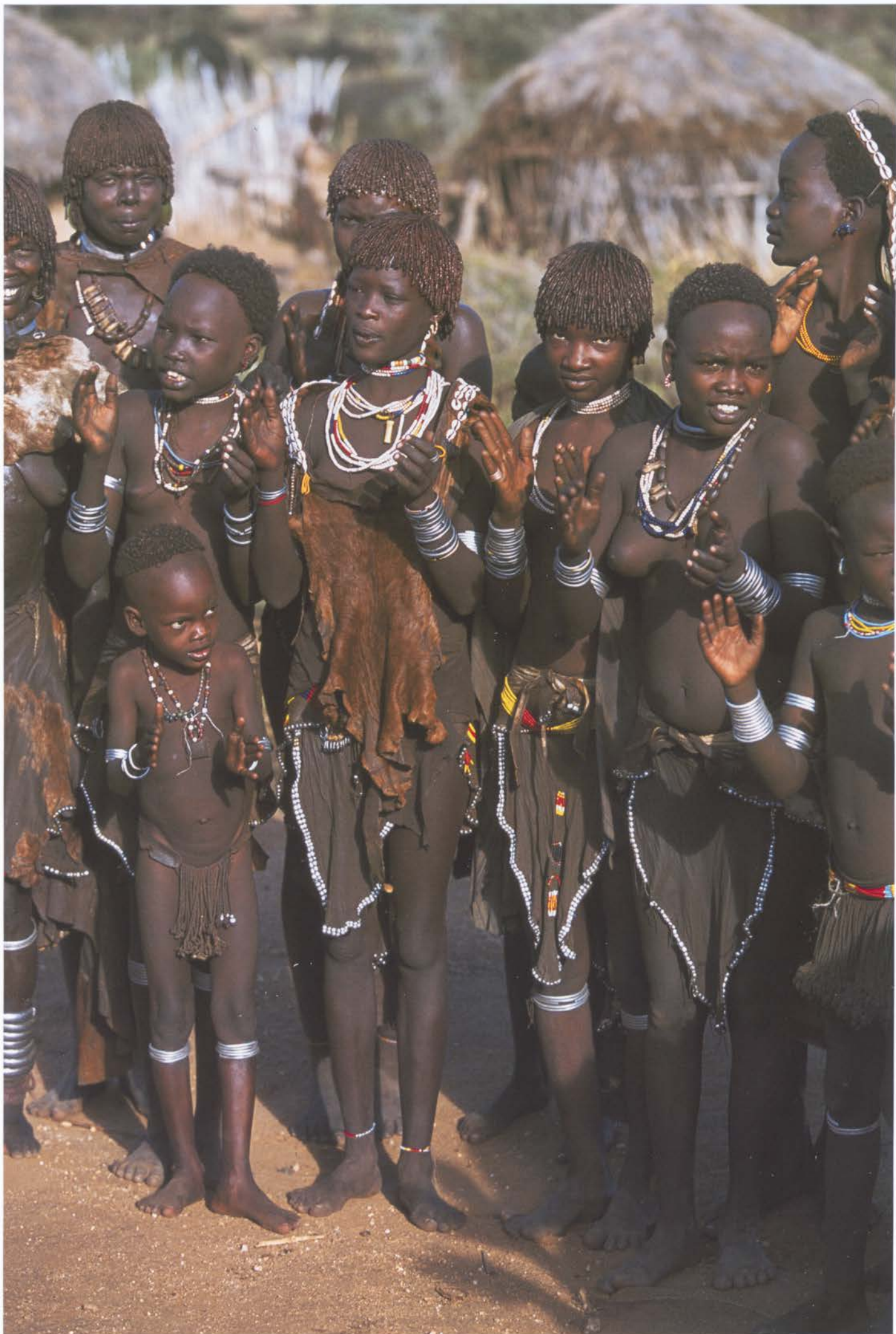




From adopted styles, including hats, to the more traditional adornment of lip plates and earplugs, each group of people harbors unique features representing their changing culture as well as their long heritage.



A welcoming ceremony reveals the friendly nature of the Hamar people, but their mood could change quickly if confronted or challenged by foreigners.

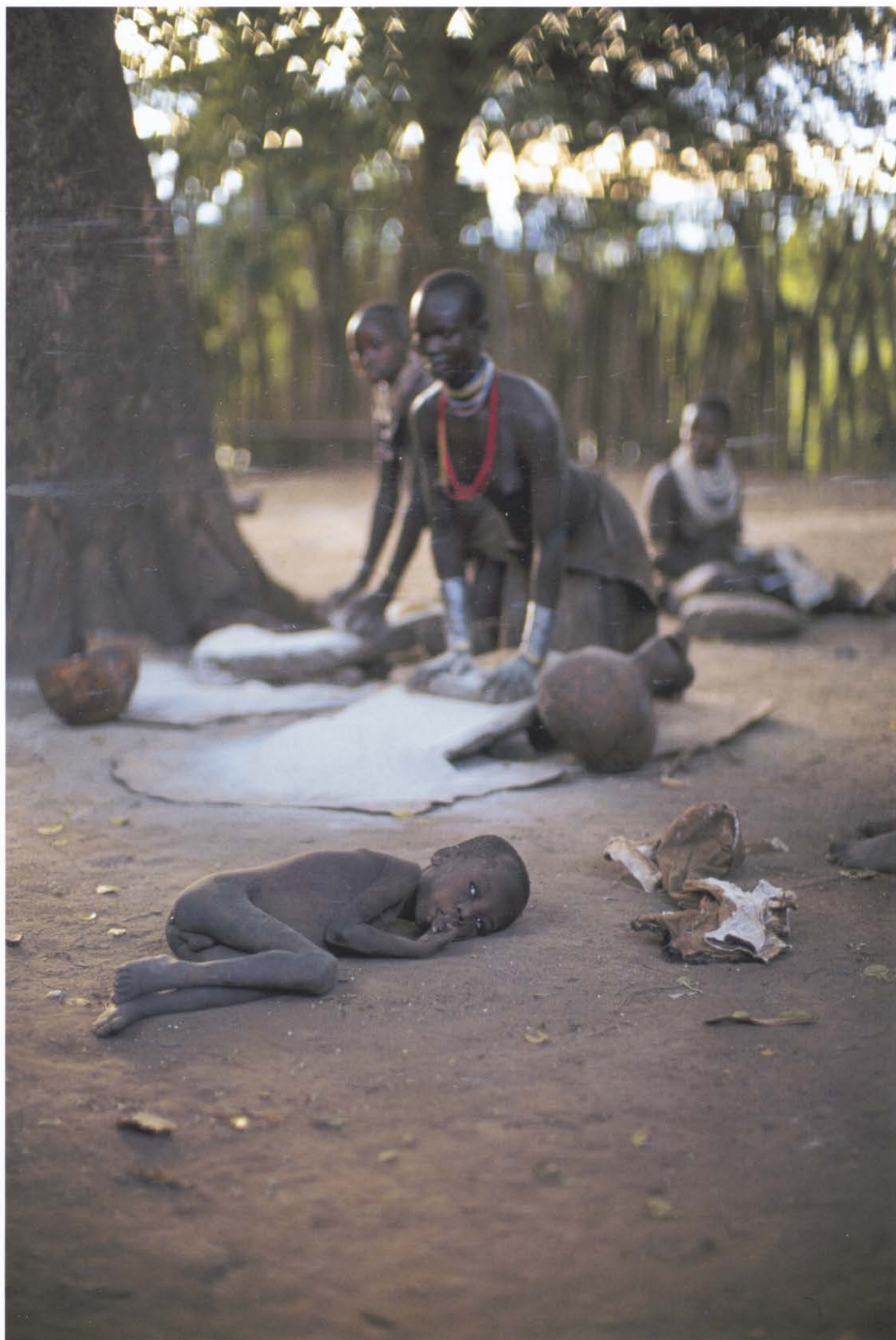




Tribes differ from one another in the way they decorate themselves. The Hamar, with their braided hair and neckbands, differ from the Karo who combine painting and jewelry with everyday wear. Embellishments often indicate status, acts of courage or preparation for a ceremony.



Others estimate this boy's age at 10, yet his mother cannot say for sure. For the past five years he has not had the use of his arms and legs. No medical help is available, and even if it were, most likely it would be met with suspicion and rejection.



A proud smile is a welcome sight in an environment filled with pain and need.



The indignity of begging shows clearly on this young mother's face. The change she receives will help provide food for her family.





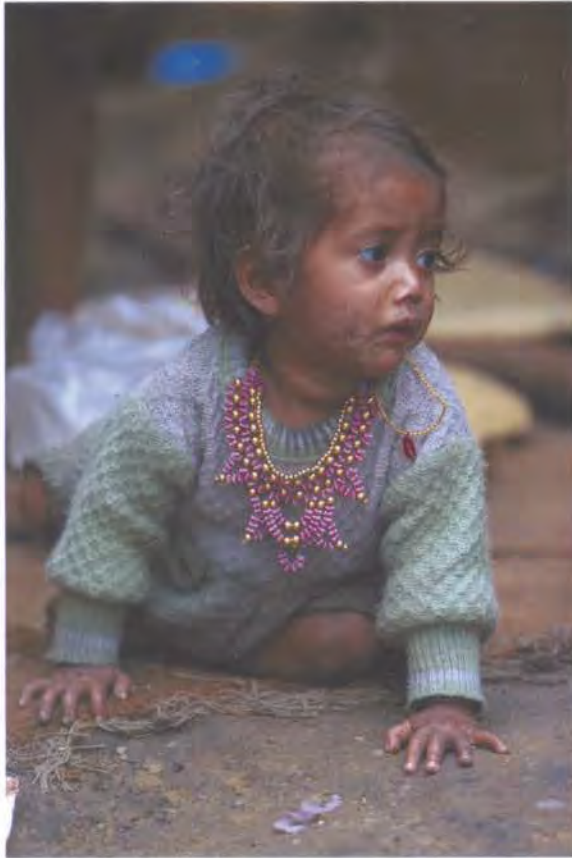
A deaf girl shows off her acrobatic skills as her brother helps. With his drum and her agility, these two orphans live off collections from their street entertainment.





Even in impoverished areas, cleanliness is a daily ritual.





The filth of street life does not deter a mother from adorning her child, but there are no frills for this man who is crippled by disease and famine.





This particular morning the government demolishes shanties in an area on the edge of Mumbai. With their makeshift homes destroyed by bulldozers, these children now live on the street with no shelter.



Families living in the slums protect and nurture each other in a challenging environment.



In some cultures, a goat has more value than a female child.



For street dwellers, being clean, fed and adequately dressed is a tremendous achievement.



With no guidance or amenities, this girl's dismay shows clearly in her expression. She is one of an estimated 2.5 billion people who lack proper sanitation.



In many ways, survival on the streets of India 's large cities is almost a miracle.



There is little question about this young girl's future. She has already entered a life of prostitution.



K. RAJES

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It is difficult to tell if this man is dead or alive. He never moves and his condition raises no curiosity or concern. Life in the gutters of Mumbai consists merely of flesh, bones and a pulse.



The richness of India's culture and the passage of time reveal themselves in these sad and pensive features.



It is easy to see the bond between these two. In many countries monkeys are used for begging and entertainment and they are frequently abused.





Proud expressions on beautiful faces illustrate that life in these villages is rich in tradition and pride.



Women spend hours sorting through crops, choosing the ripened grains and leaving the rest to age.



Extreme poverty does not rob this young woman of her composure,
but her eyes reveal the difficulties of her life.



The grace of this woman drying grain in the heat of the day is more a form of art than an act of labor.



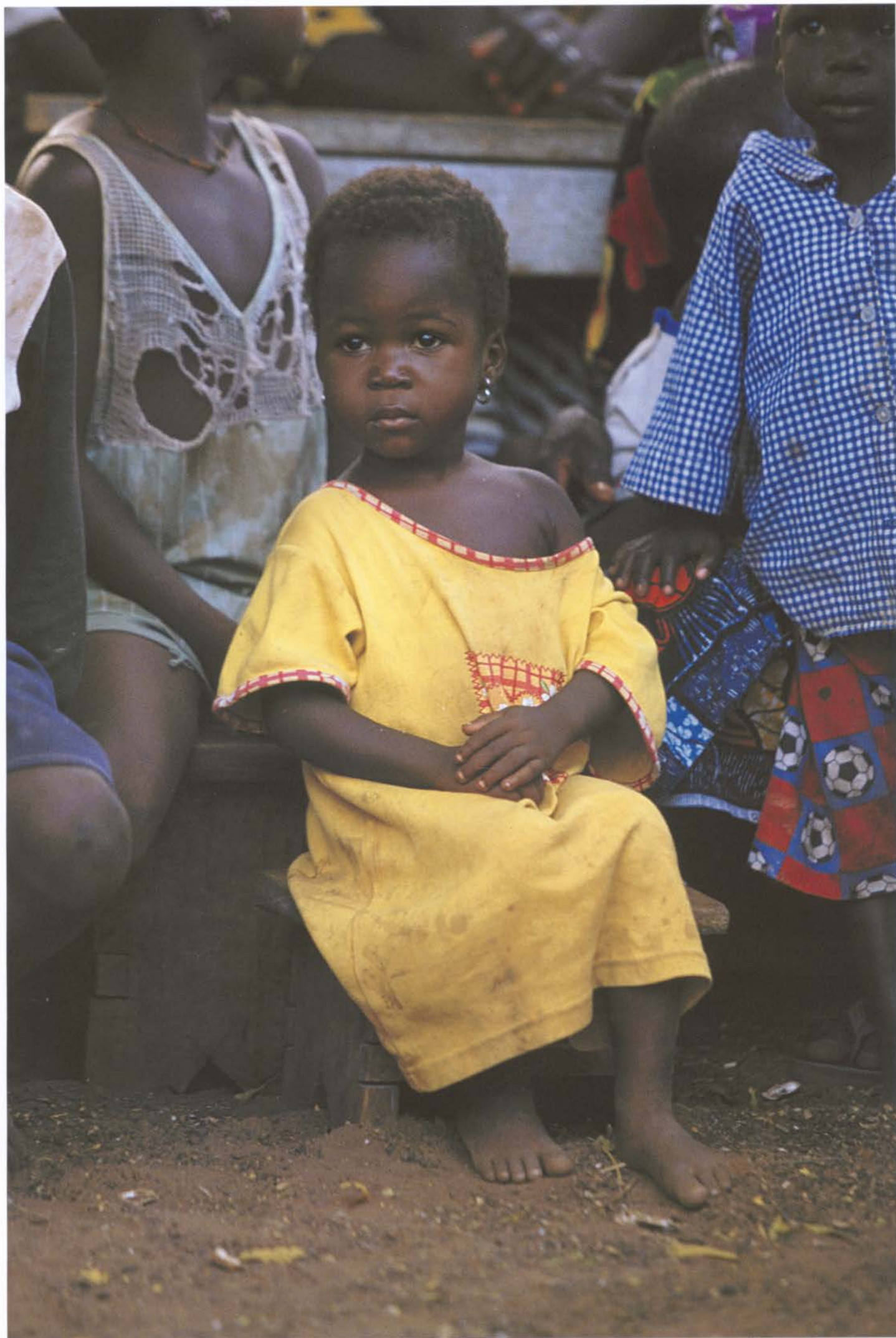


Even the youngest children haul water and food. The recycled oilcans are nearly as precious as the water they carry. Though work dominates play in children's lives, they will share a smile with a stranger.

The United Nations has estimated that in 25 years almost five billion people will live in areas where it is impossible to provide enough fresh water, not only for drinking, cooking and bathing, but for agricultural production as well.



Like a small princess, this child sits with enough poise and dignity to capture one's heart.



Where life has few resources and little stimulation, small pleasures entertain children of rural Ghana.





An intuitive knack for color and style enhances the vibrant beauty of native women.





River blindness, trachoma and other diseases are a result of using contaminated water. There are few solutions for most third world problems, but there is a solution for these diseases - fresh water. Because wells are expensive to drill, many populations go without. Currently over one billion people have no access to safe drinking water, and it is estimated that more than five million people die each year from waterborne diseases.

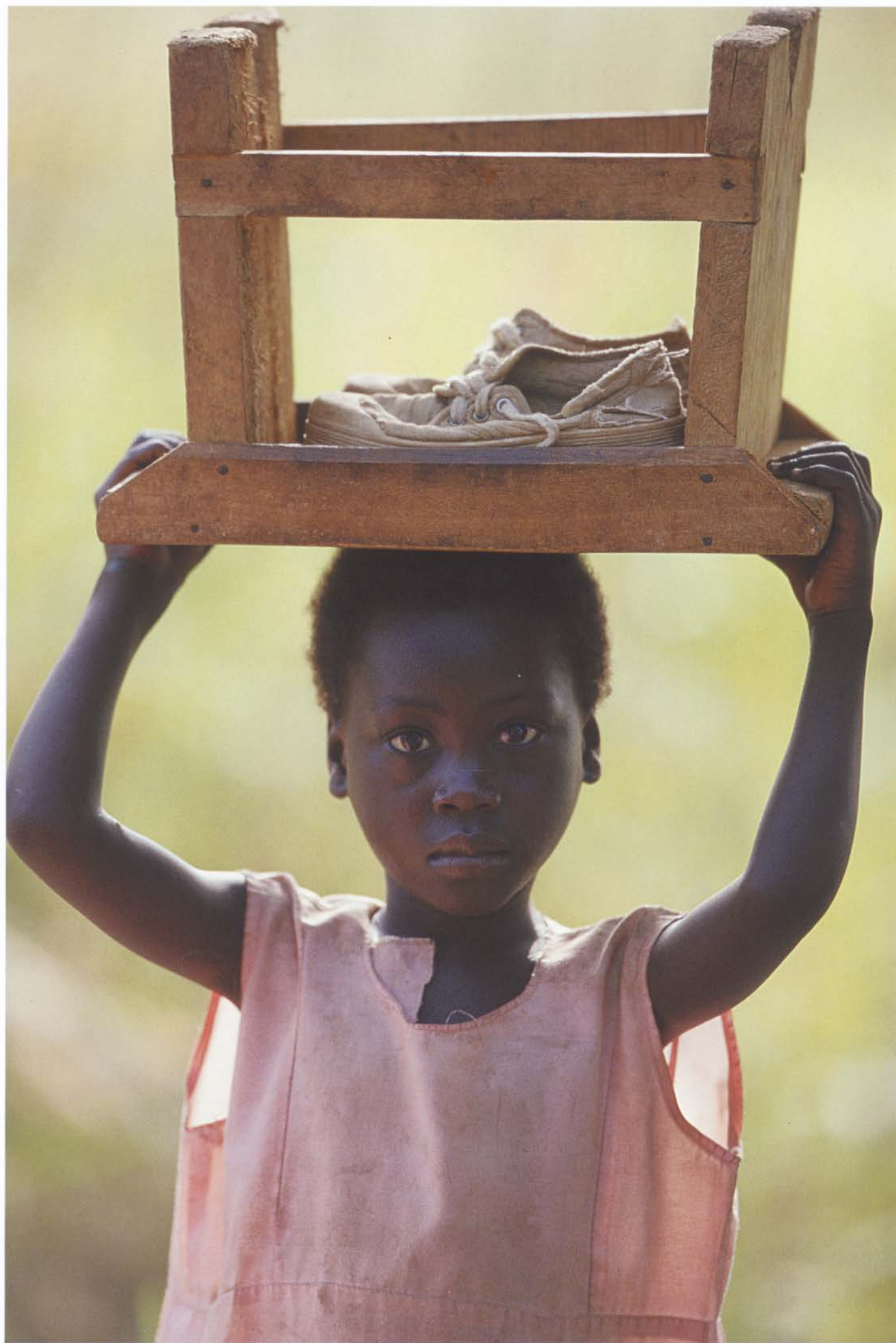




Children who find joy in just being alive wear torn, discarded clothing with pride.



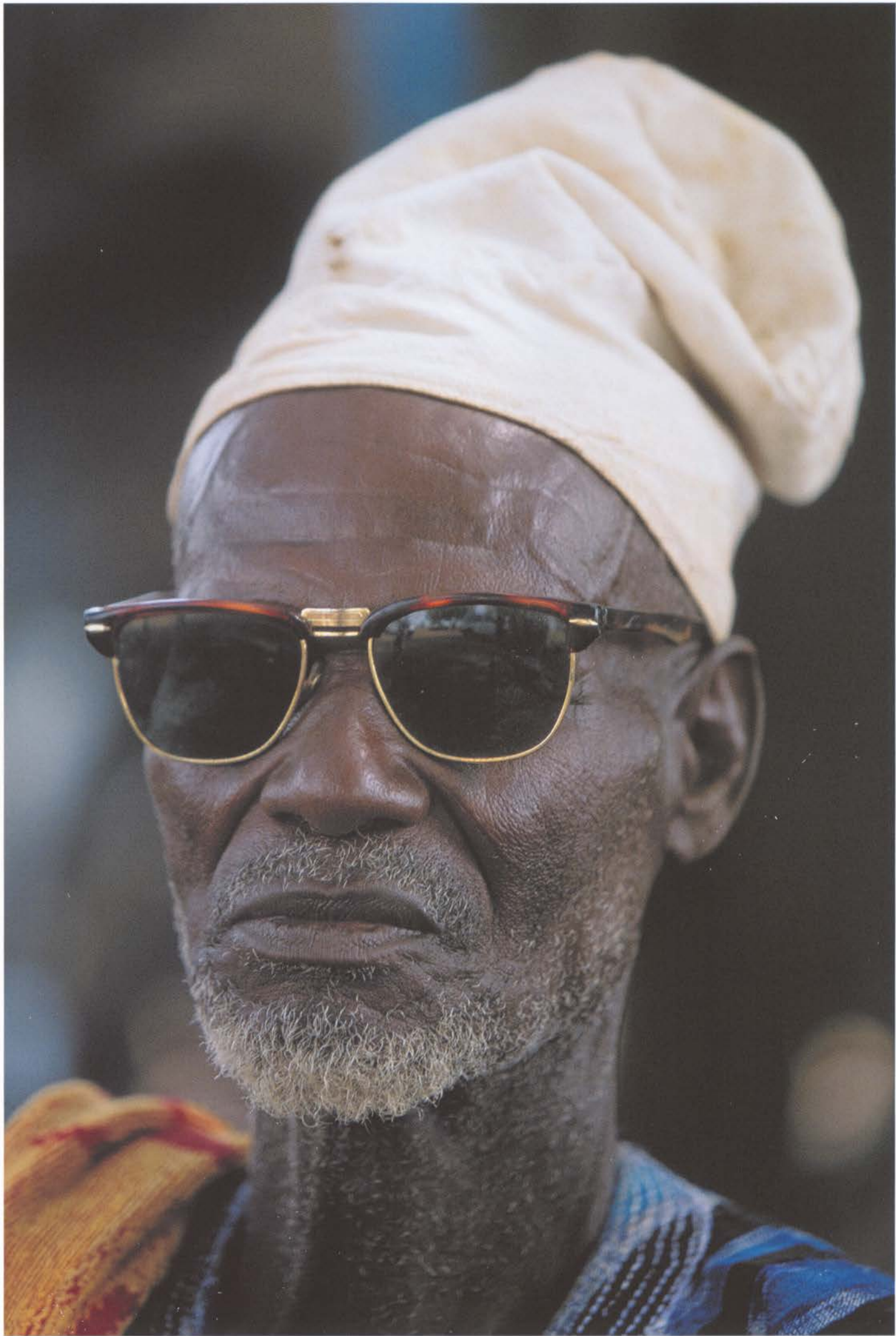
This girl walks miles to school barefoot, toting her stool and carrying her shoes so they won't wear out.



The colors and textures of the produce along with this woman's vibrant clothing lend a festive air to the market.

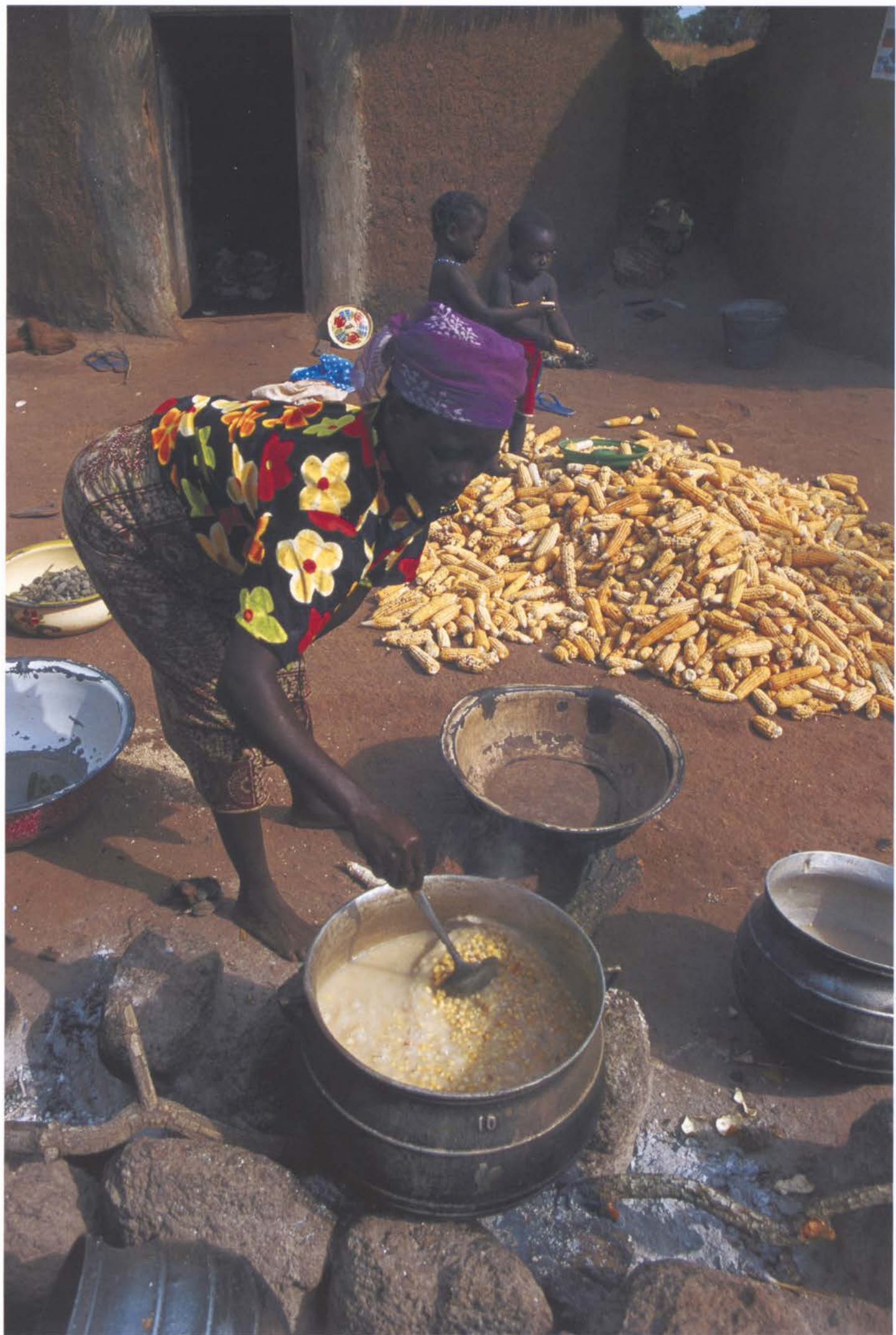


This chief of a northern Ghana village is pleased to receive us. At our departure he makes me an honorary chief with all the proper clothing and provides me with a goat. I'm not sure where that goat ends up, but it doesn't come home with me. As I depart, I promise to have a well drilled for the village to help eliminate the prevalent diseases associated with polluted water supplies.





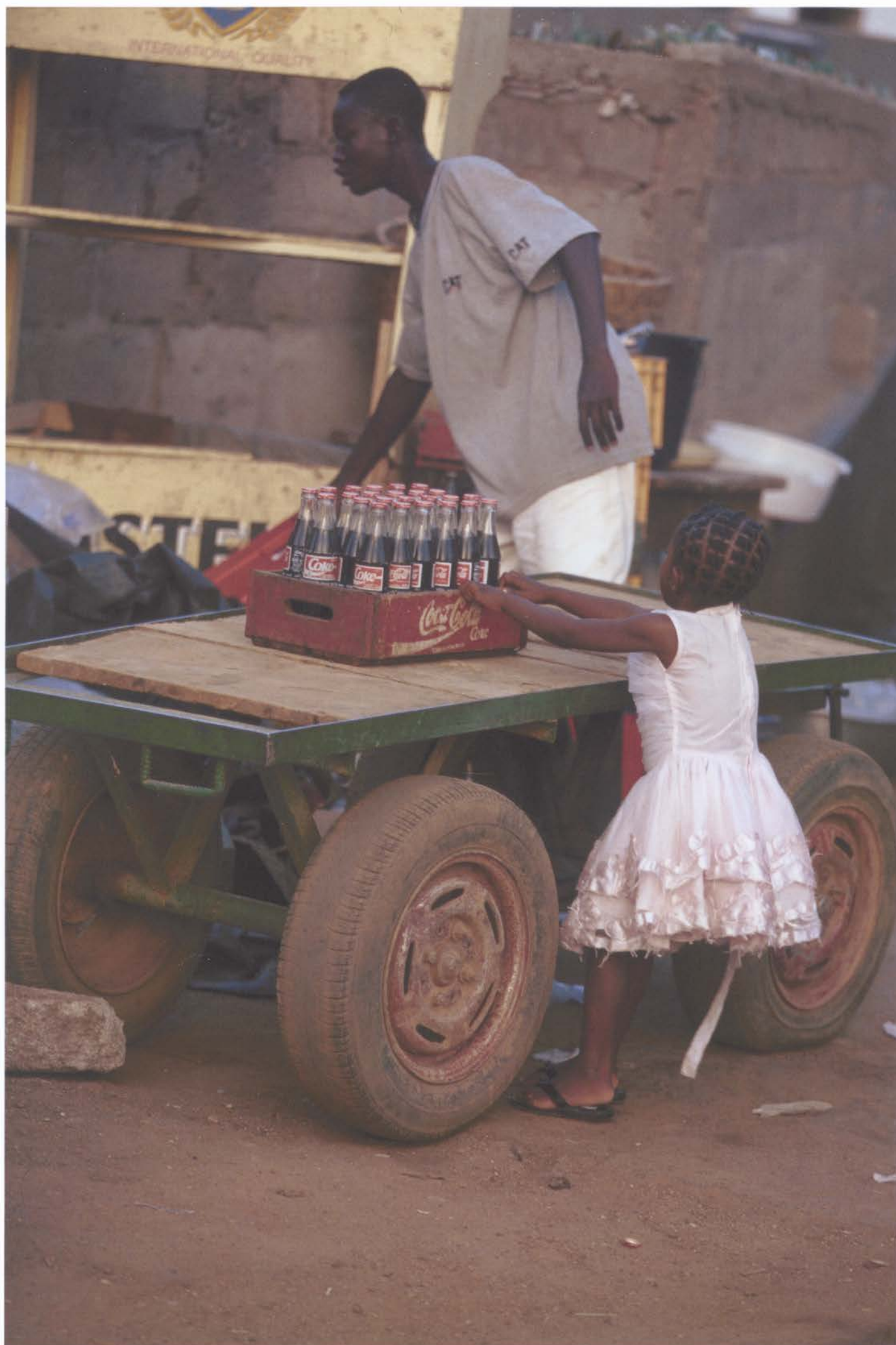
A good harvest and the help of many hands will yield a hearty day's meal.



Very young children wait patiently in line for a small meal to fill their empty bowls and bellies. It is estimated that 500 million children go to bed hungry every night, and millions of children die from malnutrition each year. No explanation can comfort a hungry child who looks to you for help.



A familiar scene all over the globe, there is little question of U.S. influence on third world countries.





These women are dressed for our arrival at a welcoming ceremony. At first it is difficult to distinguish individuals in the group, but soon each face takes on its own personality. This is life in Africa; tribal customs rule, yet each woman must deal with her own adversity.





In a third world country it is difficult to nurture babies when there is barely enough to sustain life.





The colorful fabrics worn by villagers do little to disguise the sadness in their eyes.

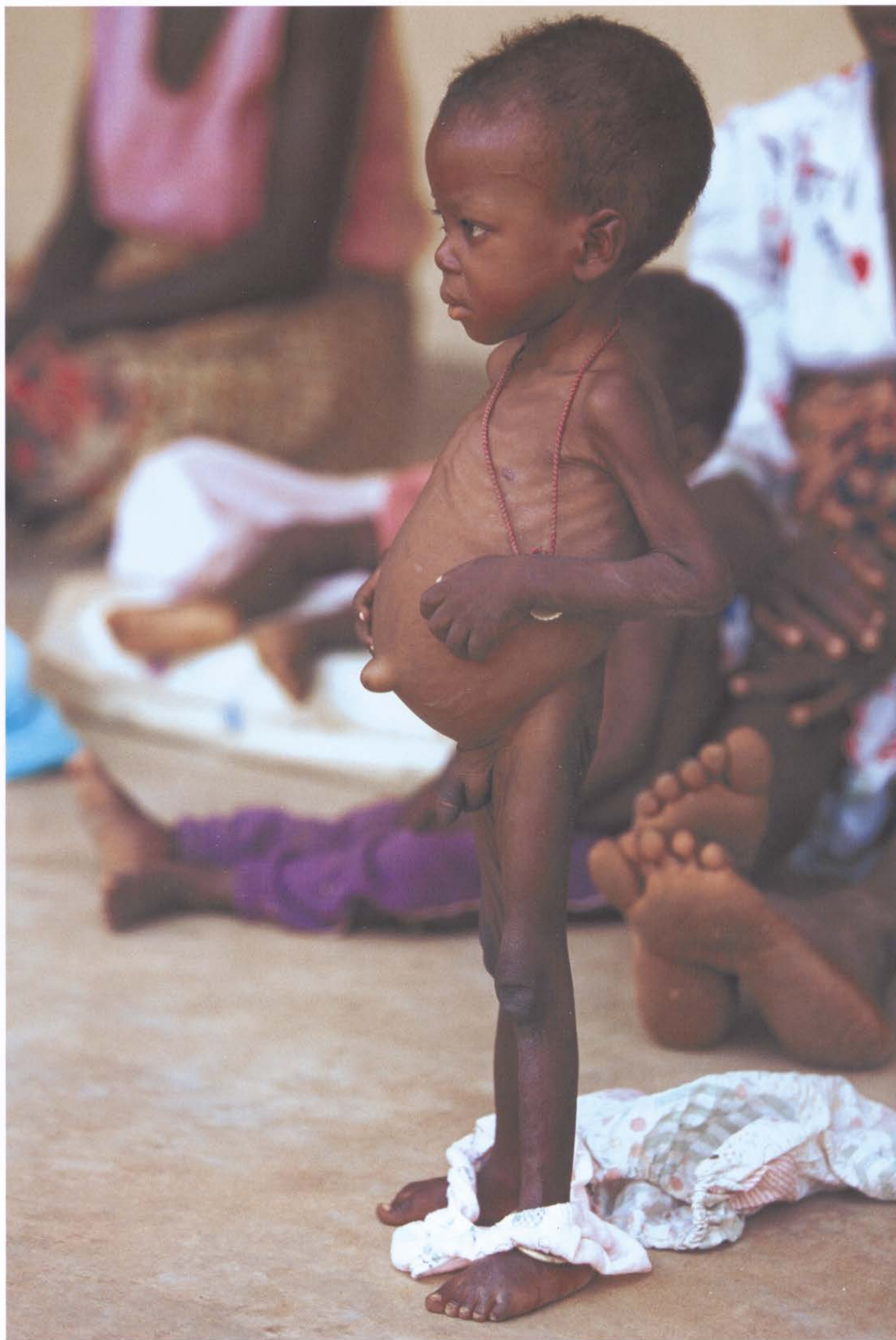




The labor of a long day brings beads of sweat, enhancing the natural beauty of these women.



This child is left with relatives while his mother goes to the city to work for a year. When she returns, she finds him bloated from malnutrition and close to starvation.





One ankle is swollen and bloody from a doctor's failed attempts to remove a guinea worm. The opposite foot successfully yields the worm, which may be three feet long. People contract Guinea worm by drinking contaminated water. The worm begins to migrate through the body about a year after ingestion, and symptoms include fever, nausea and vomiting. When the worm emerges, it causes intensely painful edema, blisters and ulcers.

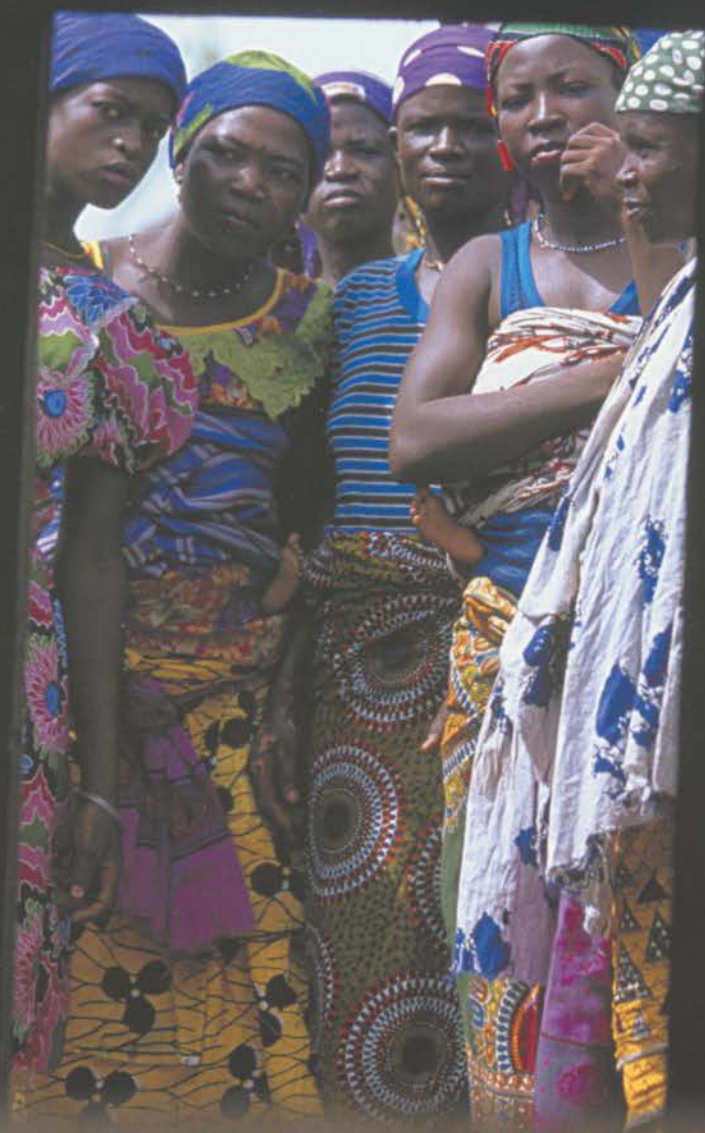
Later in the day we see this boy with bandaged feet, walking several miles to his village.



An emotionally difficult image to photograph, this child is not likely to live another 48 hours. Limited access to medical care leaves little hope for many children in this part of the world.



Between these windows is a very old, sick man sitting in darkness. Through hand motions and facial expressions, he apologizes to me for his condition. Evidently village customs demand that the weak and sick be hidden from visitors' sight. I smile and reassure him, hoping that I have not caused him embarrassment.

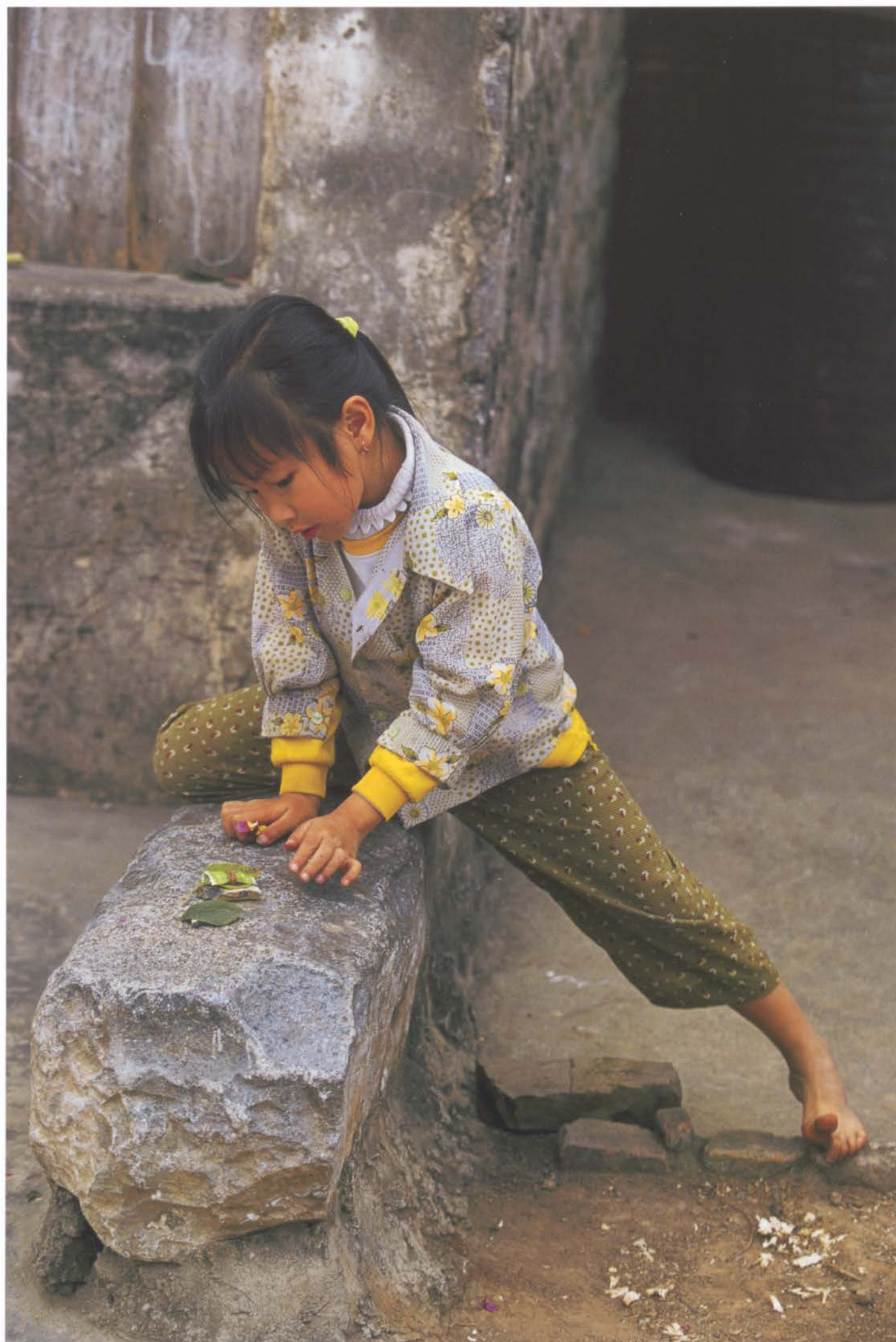


Children have a natural craving for knowledge and will often learn whatever and wherever they can.





The imagination is a gift to the human race. Children who lack modern world toys and activities will entertain themselves for hours with the simplest of diversions.



The ability to enjoy life, minute by minute, nourishes the human spirit.





Children have the capacity to abandon themselves in the simple joy of free play.



Using their muscles in place of machinery, barefoot women dry rice by moving it back and forth for aeration.





In countries where corn is a staple, planting, detasseling, harvesting and drying the crops are very important jobs.

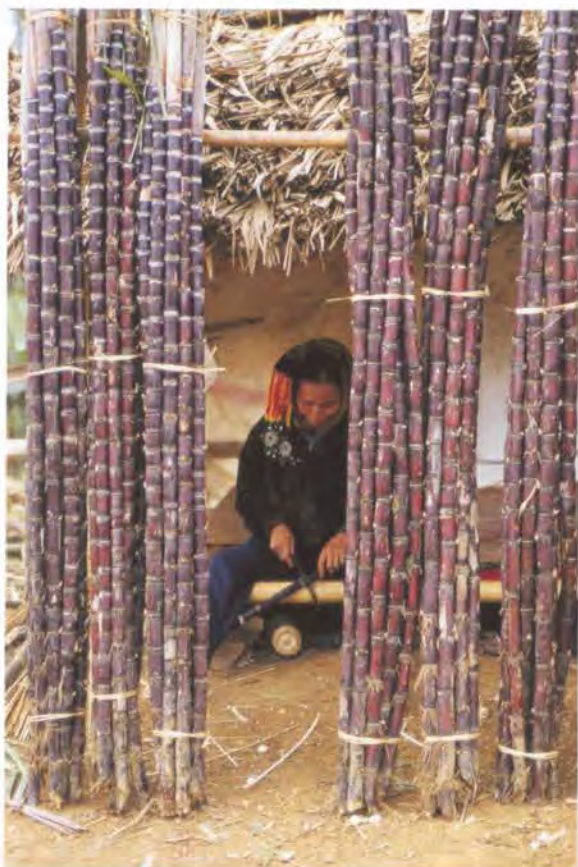




Although rice is the most important crop in Vietnam, corn and wheat are also essential to daily food needs. A young girl arranges corn to sell at market, and river workers unload bags of grain.

In many areas of the world, rivers have become highways of commerce, impacting the environment and allowing access to virgin territory, often jungle. As these areas develop, unique habitat is destroyed to make way for new cropland, logging and hunting. Occurring at an unsustainable rate, this trend has depleted huge amounts of the most biodiverse areas of the world.





Preparing sugar cane for sale alongside the road and planting rice paddies are some of the critical roles rural Vietnamese women play in providing for their families.



Hundreds of small land patches, primitively irrigated by canals and buckets, provide a living for thousands of people.



A classic Asian scene, this man prepares his rice field, casting a perfect reflection right down to his cigarette.

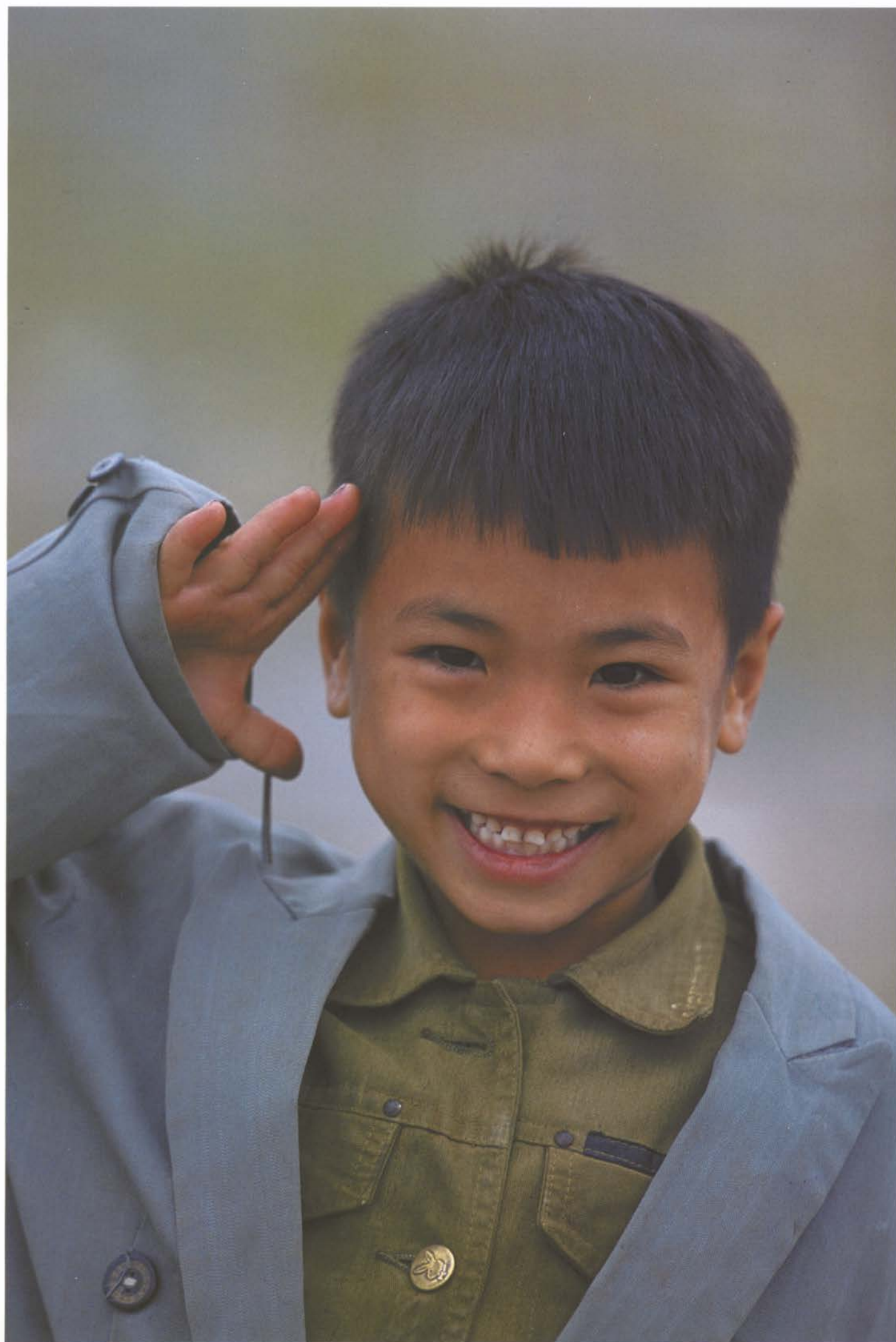




Long hours of backbreaking work are the central theme of life for Vietnamese peasant women.



This child's spontaneous smile and military salute signal hope for a generation free of the memories of war.



This is a familiar site in many countries. Often when I raise my large lens to photograph, a child will assume this pose, peering back at me through imaginary lenses.



"Parting Thoughts" is intended to remind us of the overwhelming privation of third world countries compared to the luxuries in the U.S., where one person's daily excess would sustain a third world life.

It is too easy to assume our great fortune.

Parting Thoughts

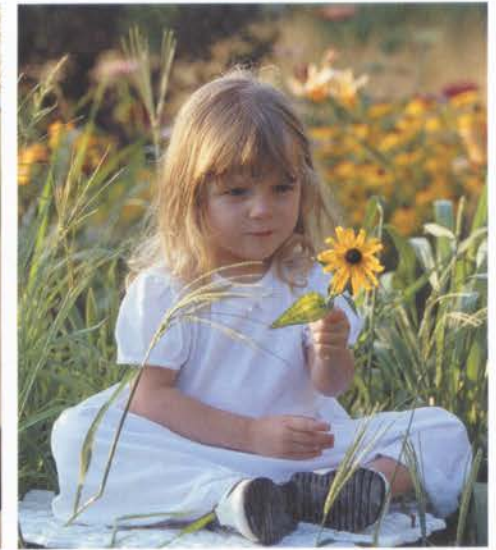
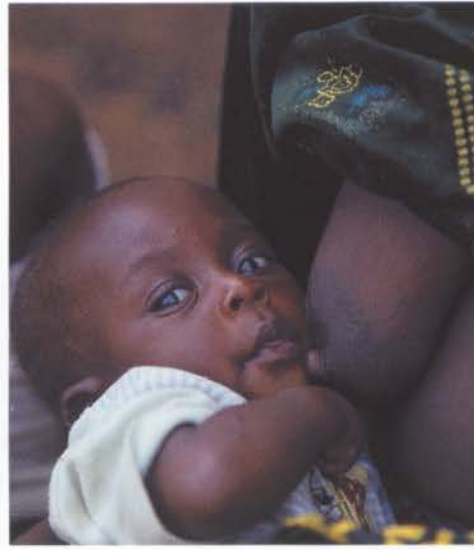
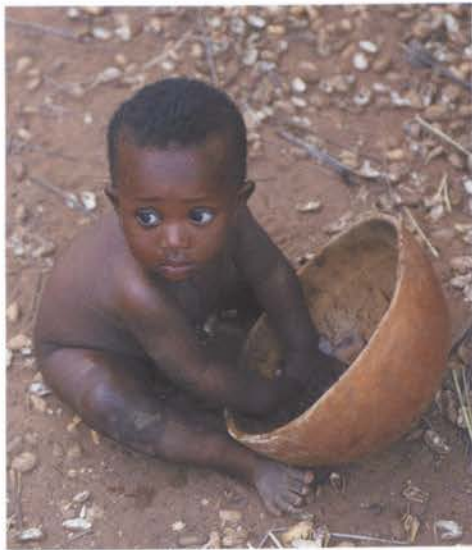
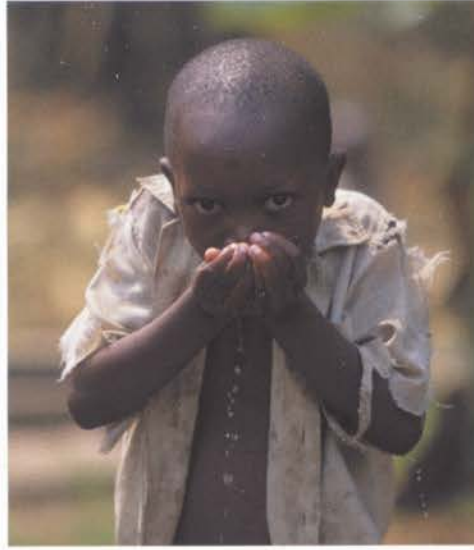
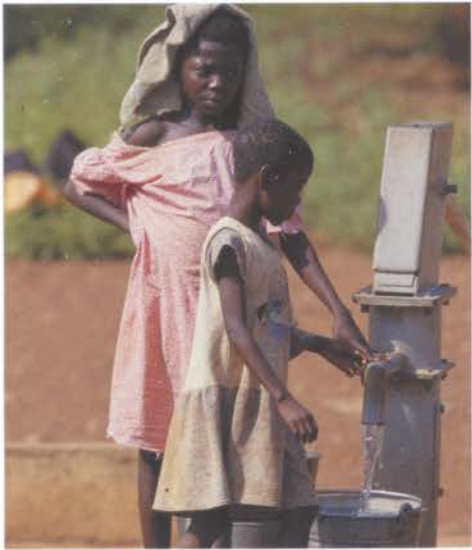




Photo: Anton Louw

For the past ten years I have photographed thousands of people in many countries. I want to thank all the individuals who have participated in this book by allowing me to capture part of their lives on film. As a photographer, some of these experiences have been humbling and sad, but others have been inspiring and hopeful. Most of these people will never see this book, but each person has a special place in my heart.



Photo: Howard W. Buffett



Photo: Getachew Dinku and Abebe Assefa



Photo: Jane Olson



Photo: Jane Olson



Photo: Howard W. Buffett



Photo: Howard W. Buffett



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