



### **QUILT BLOCK OF MARILYN TUDHOPE AND JIM ABEL**

The gray figures in the background represent the children who attended residential schools. Intentionally, they have no distinguishing features, in part because not all the stories have been told, not all the voices have been heard. But more important, these figures are mere shadows of what the children could and would have become if the colonial society, dominant and arrogant, had not denied them their language and culture, the love of their families and communities, their spirituality.

The vertical brown strips can be trees in the winter, devoid of leaves, apparently dead, or they can be bars, incarcerating the children, separating them from their normal lives. There are still barriers which prevent right relations between First Nations and the rest of Canada – ignorance about residential schools, or worse, denial, or complacency about current conditions on reservations for example.

The circle is significant to both Native spirituality and Christianity. Thus, the image in the centre of the quilt block celebrates the coming together of both traditions, In the circle is a branch with tender green leaves, a sign of spring, of life renewed. On the branch, a butterfly emerges from a cocoon. The sky has become a richer, deeper blue. The scene symbolizes hope, hope, that once the truth has been told and heard, reconciliation will follow. It is our dream that future relations between Aboriginal peoples and all other Canadians will be based on honesty, respect, dignity and equality. A final point about circles: we sit in a circle at the meetings of the Kawartha Truth and Reconciliation Support Group. Belonging to this group has been enlightening for us.

*Marilyn Tudhope and Jim Abel*