

**December 16, 2011**

## **TILLEY: A call to Christians at Christmas**

Editor's Note: Finally, we have someone prepared to call the Christian Churches out on their feeble caution and empty prayers on Palestine. Virginia Tilley does it with the razor sharpness of one who knows her business – not prepared to mince words or pay lip service to mealy-mouthed assurances of Christian concern for Palestinian suffering while doing nothing to hold Israel to account. It is long overdue as one denomination after another pussyfoots around Israel too afraid to call a spade a spade. In recalling the 1985 *Kairos* document composed by Archbishop Tutu during South Africa's anti-Apartheid struggle, Virginia Tilley says it should be read *“just to show how clear-headed Christian activism can get when it truly girds its loins. The 1985 Kairos had no truck with empty talk of ‘peace’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘dialogue’.*” Tilley's article is an important expose of how the Christian church, for all its efforts in giving succor to the Palestinians, has been woefully lacking in moral fortitude. As Tilley says so eloquently, *“the tasks in Palestine have long been plain. The evangelical Christian right must be approached about its gullible equation of a modern military state with spiritual rebirth. Israel's instrumental deceit about Jewish life in the Holy Land constituting a path to Christian salvation must be exposed. The sins of ethnic cleansing and state-sponsored bigotry must be confronted. The malevolent whispers circulated by Zionist plants in Jerusalem and Palestine, which attempt to demonize Islam for Christians and Christianity for Muslims, must be openly and unanimously denounced. In the spirit of the 1985 Kairos, the true meaning of Christian love must show its moral fist to reject false symmetry and the sinful notion of reconciliation with oppression.”* It is something to think about as we gear up for the usual Christmas festivities celebrating the birth of Jesus more than 2000 years ago in Bethlehem, long before walls, barbed wire and checkpoints imprisoned the city from the rest of Palestine. Perhaps it will make for more sober reflection about the part we all have played in perpetuating the intolerable Palestinian predicament. At five minutes to midnight, it is really time for the Christian church to “gird its loins” and call for true justice for the Palestinians.