**The Bishop of Burnley, Philip North made a speech during the General Synod debate on safeguarding (Feb 2020). Below is an outline of the main points he made:**

* The recommendations that flow from IICSA report are specific and detailed and well addressed in GS2158. But the IICSA report raises vastly wider issues. Essential reading – found they had massively powerful impact on me.
* Why? IICSA enables us to see church through eyes of survivors. Peter Ball documentary did the same. (In other words lets us do what Isabelle Hamley called for so strongly in Bible Study this AM on 1 Peter 3). Need to pay tribute to their courage – their voice is a prophetic one, calling us to greater faithfulness.
* As I read, found myself more and more reflecting on power, its use and abuse and on how I perceive the power I hold myself.
* As Bishops, priests, lay-leaders tend not to think of ourselves as powerful. Aware instead of limits, of what we can’t do because of complex legal structures and inherited traditions of the C of E. Or affect faux humility – very much tactic of Peter Ball.
* And that’s the danger. Hidden power, opaque structures of power, ill-defined patterns of accountability are very easy to abuse.
* Important recommendations in front of us– but only the beginning of response to one of the most forensic external analyses C of E has ever undergone. Two things I think we need to continue to consider in order to make power more transparent and strengthen accountability.
* **Clergy terms and conditions of service.** Freehold demonstrably a safeguarding disaster. Not sure that common tenure is much better. Must ask ourselves very honestly if better defined, more transparent professional relationships would make for greater accountability and a safer church. Safety of children and vulnerable adults must trump even cherished traditions.
* **A joined-up and externally accountable safeguarding service**. I worry deeply that current arrangements lack strength or coherence to hold church-leaders to account. In fact they are (in my view) dangerously fragmented.
  + Every Diocese and most cathedrals have own teams with different employers plus a national team and provincial advisers whose relationships to DSAs and cathedral advisers is undefined.
  + Often different safeguarding teams will give contradictory advice, interpreting guidelines in different ways.
  + Huge complexities when (as often happens) a safeguarding case effects numerous dioceses.
  + In unequal church, poorer diocese may be tempted to cut.
* Simply too much fragmentation. And fragmentation creates gaps that manipulative people can crawl into.
* I would suggest - time we TUPE’d safeguarding staff across to a single, independently scrutinised national safeguarding service so that they are not employed by those whom they are meant to holding to account - with all clashes of loyalty that may encourage.
* Thanks to NST and others for work that lies behind this. Look forward to same willingness to listen and reform being brought to bear as continue to engage with IICSA.