DNC Prayer: Day 2

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NCR Today

While the appearance of Sister Simone Campbell of NETWORK was the big religious news out of the Democratic National Convention yesterday, the nun from "Nuns on the Bus" was there as a speaker, not to give a prayer or benediction.

The closing benediction on Wednesday evening was given by Rabbi David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, who had to follow not only former President Bill Clinton, but also the long roll call from each state, which meant he took the podium to a nearly empty convention hall.

Wolpe, who was named the "most influential rabbi in America" by Newsweek, prayed that Americans would take up the "holy charge" to care for the poor and hurting, quoting Isaiah's directive to "defend the orphan and take care of the widow."

He also mentioned unity, noting that "right and left" worship "the same God."

Apparently, Wolpe also inserted a last-minute reference to Jerusalem into his prayer:

> "You have taught us that we must count on one another, that our country is strong through community, and that the children of Israel, on the way to that sanctified and cherished land, and ultimately to that golden and capital city of Jerusalem, that those children of Israel did not walk through the wilderness alone."

The phrase "and ultimately to that golden and capital city of Jerusalem" was not in the original text, according to JTA, a Jewish news service.

After criticism, the Democratic party added language to its platform affirming Jerusalem as Israel's

capital--as well as adding a reference to "God" that had been removed. The platform already included a section on the importance of faith.

The full video of Rabbi Wolpe's prayer is here.

Tonight Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York gives the closing benediction.

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