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New Orleans' summit targets Congress

Nine San Diego religious activists are leaving for New Orleans today to join a national summit designed to bring more attention to the ongoing help needed to rebuild the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast.

"We're coming together from across the country for Congress to take note. They seem to have been forgotten," said Gloria Cooper, an evangelist-missionary from Antioch Church of God in Christ, who is among those going to New Orleans.

The destruction from last year's hurricanes is America's problem and has to be addressed by America, said the Rev. Donald Barrett of the Greater Gospel Center Church of God in Christ, another San Diego participant.

"I believe that as part of the faith-based community, we have to be the conscience of America," he added. Going to New Orleans, he said, "helps keep the issue on the front burner."

In all, an estimated 150 religious leaders from 80 cities are expected to launch a national campaign tomorrow to support Louisiana's request for more federal help. The clergy summit is being organized by PICO, a national network of socially active congregations (including the San Diego Organizing Project), in conjunction with an interfaith umbrella group in Louisiana.