

The Ranchos de Taos Church is in need of financial assistance. The parishoners, faced with the perpetual maintenance problems inherent in adobe construction, have decided to protect the church with a coating of stucco. Until now the church has been surfaced in the traditional way with adobe mud plaster which contributes to the beautiful soft contours of the edifice.

Hard cement plaster, altho it protects the surface from erosion, destroys the flowing, organic quality which is the visual delight of New Mexico's Colonial buildings. The church is one of the most famous and most photographed landmarks in the Southwest. Built soon after 1776 by the Spanish settlers, the church is one of our most important Colonial monuments.

It would seem most appropriate for the architects of New Mexico to take the lead in its preservation. The value of this particular church far outstretches the confines of the small parish responsible for its maintenance. It has become apparent in the past few years that the Archdiocese has been either unable or unwilling to undertake the responsibility for the maintenance of the valuable historical monument under its jurisdiction. A void exists, which time and the ravages of weather refuse to acknowledge.

At the moment, the Ranchos church is the one most in need of immediate action. Donations are needed for the expensive process of re-mudding the exterior. Once this immediate task has been accomplished, a long range study of the possibilities of adobe preservation must be undertaken. Some research has been carried on in the areas of applied silicons. More effort must be spent in this field so that the many adobe relics which surround us in this vast New Mexico country can be retained for the pleasure and education of future generations. Let the New Mexico Chapter AIA, assume the responsibility for the task!

Donations for the Ranchos Church are earnestly and hastily solicited. Please send them to the editor, *NMA*.



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