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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



CATHOLICS 'NEEDED COMPETITION,' SO SUPPORTED METHODISTS

By HAMPTON DUNN

SAN ANTONIO --- Roman Catholic "brethren" have consistently helped a struggling little Methodist church here to survive for more than half a century.

This small community, nestling among the lakes, hills and groves of Pasco County is near the town of St. Leo which is dominated by a thriving Catholic college and church. Both villages sit astride uncongested State Road 52 west of Dade City.

The Rev. H. Fred Spencer, pastor of the San Antonio Methodists, graciously credits the Catholics for their help through the years. Starting with the birth of the church in 1913, the ground was given by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Flanagan, members of the Catholic church and he was County Tax Assessor.

"It seems there was a Father Felix in San Antonio who held the philosophy that the Catholics needed competition, else they would cease to be hardworking and active at doing the Lord's work, so he said that San Antonio needed a Protestant church," the Methodist history states.

At the dedication of a new church school building in 1965, also supported by local Catholics, the Methodist pastor commented, "Perhaps we have not given him (Father Felix) the competition he had hoped for, but we will promise a better showing in the future."

Inside the sanctuary are a couple of keepsakes. The pulpit is the only remains of a little Methodist church at Pasco Station. An old 2 x 6 plank, placed there during a revival many years ago as a very temporary altar rail, remains in service.

