

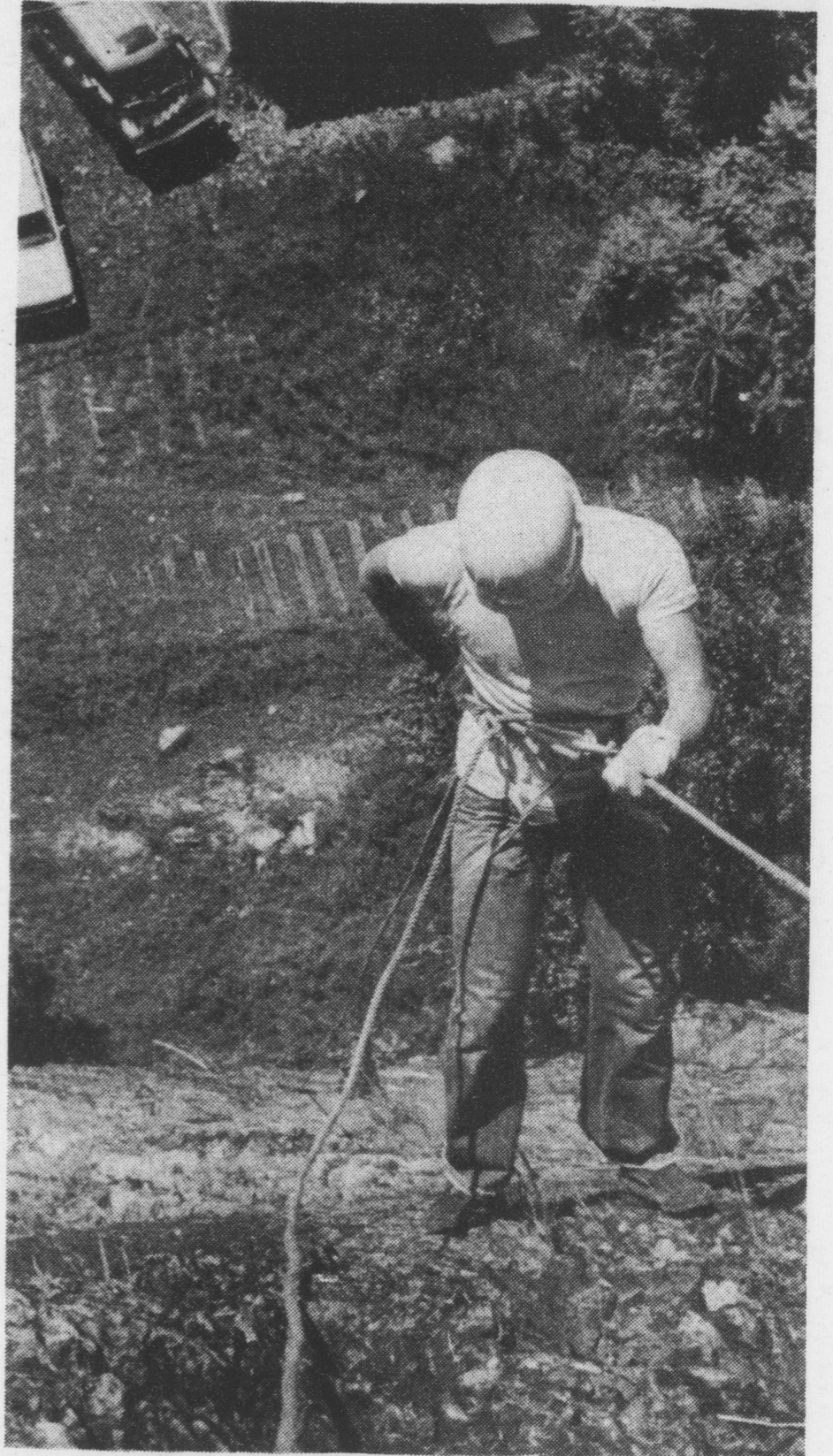
Youths learn rappelling on Chiques Rock

*It's part of the summer program sponsored by
the Congregational Bible Church*



Ror Miller, Larry Wilkinson, and Don Lamb watch as Bob Bowers backs off the edge of Chiques Rock, far

above the railroad tracks below. This technique is called "Rappelling."



Jeff Caldwell rappels.

by Ron Miller,
outdoor activities instructor

Duane had nervously backed up to the edge of the cliff. "I'm scared, man. I don't know about this." "Just do exactly as I say and you'll do fine," countered his instructor. It was Duane's first attempt at rappelling. Looking down that 80 foot drop on Chiques Rock he was facing a very difficult decision: to give in to his fear and quit, or to trust the instructor's experience and words and rappel. What would he do? "Lean back. Lean back." "I am, man. I'm scared!" "Lean back a bit more; don't move your feet yet." All of a sudden in a fit of fear, Duane moved too quickly. His feet slipped as he frantically tried to stop his progress, ignoring the instructor's words. "I can't....," backwards he went, "I'm falling!" he screamed. But he didn't fall. A safety line tied around his waist and controlled by his instructor held him suspended in the air just below the edge of the cliff. There he hung, upside down but safe! "Get me up, I'm falling," he managed to gasp, "just get me up!" "If you will work with me I can help you regain your correct position," urged the instructor, "but I can't do a thing without your helping yourself, too." For five minutes a battle of the wills ensued. Finally Duane managed a little control

over his fear, realizing he actually was safe and was not going to fall. He worked his feet back into proper position as directed by the instructor and gently inched his way down the cliff. "Way to go, buddy!" Encouraged the instructor. "You can do it!" Duane even tried a few small hops on the way down. As he touched the ground at the bottom of the cliff, the tension broke. Yet his feeling of accomplishment was announced by a shaky smile. "You did it! I knew you could!" Later Duane was heard to mention "once I started going down, it was fun. But that top part - Whew!"

Rappelling, rock climbing, canoeing, caving, camping, backpacking, fishing...what do these activities have to do with a local church's influence on its community? For ten weeks this summer, these activities, along with day trips, traditional camps, and corn roasts have been a major part of Congregational Bible Church's attempt to affect mental, social, and spiritual change in the lives of those youth with whom it has come in contact.

Eight counselors, aged 17-26, guided by trained instructors and financially and prayerfully supported by the people of CBC, have been spending their full time in these activities building close relationships with many of the youth. As

friendships strengthen these counselors also have been working towards sharing their faith in Jesus Christ's ability to positively change lives through spiritual renewal and Biblical standards for moral, ethical and social life.

The program is the brainchild of Congregational Bible Church's education director Mr. Gary Newton. Newton's philosophy of education proposes that positive interpersonal relationships build better people, open in roads to teaching from personal experience, and provide the strongest base for sharing a personal faith in Jesus Christ. He views the program as the practical outworking of his philosophy: a philosophy developed from study of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. There have been low points as well as high points throughout the summer. But in the long run, Newton feels that the relationships and experiences of this summer will leave a long lasting effect on the youth and counselors who have been involved.

For those interested, Congregational Bible Church plans to continue its youth outreach thru the school year. There will be evening activities at its youth center on Front St. in Marietta and special youth programs on Wednesday evenings at the church, located on Route 441, Marietta.



Author Ron Miller checks the knots before a descent.