



# Sabbath & Religious Liberty

**By Jacques B. Doukhan**  
Editor, *Shabbat Shalom*



**D**eborah Fountain never expected she would have a problem with Sabbath work scheduling when she accepted a job as a flight attendant. She had been up front with the airline and had explained her need to have the seventh-day Sabbath off during the exit interview at the end of the 5 ½ week training period. She was assured that it would not be a problem. Then it happened: in the second month of her employment Deborah found her name posted to a Friday-Saturday flight schedule. Explaining to the company that she could not work this schedule brought no solution. She could have simply “called in sick” and thus avoided the problem. Refusing to lie however, Deborah stood firmly by her convictions-the result was a suspension.

Committed Seventh-day Adventist Miguel Hernandez had worked for one of the United States’ largest copper mines for more than 10 years when the company changed hands and new management came on board. Consequently, Miguel’s long-standing Sabbath accommodation was abruptly withdrawn. It did not take him long

to miss enough Sabbath work to be fired. Almost overnight his salary, benefits and way of life were gone.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases. Sabbath observance and work schedule conflicts occur at all types of jobs and can happen at any time. Losing your job, or facing suspension from it because you refuse to compromise your religious beliefs is a major step in faith. Neither Deborah Fountain nor Miguel Hernandez could have ever imagined that their determination to follow God’s plan for their lives would one day place them before a U.S. House of Representatives hearing. Both Deborah and Miguel were able to tell their stories before members of Congress, and encourage the passage of legislation that would assist people of faith in obtaining better protection for workplace religious accommodation.