In this chapter we shall attempt to define the notion of legitimization in religion, then we shall demonstrate how it is expressed, particularly in the Church of Scientology. As we shall further see, people use several ways of legitimizing their belief. Among them is the resort to the authority of science. How does this resort to science operate, and, more precisely, what domain of science does it refer to? Is it the prevailing mode used to legitimate a creed?

This is indeed a complex problem, because what we call “science” is not homogenous. Theories sometimes diverge, some of them are opposed, and public knowledge of science is often little more than an idealized image of the scientific domain.

In order to examine the problem of the appeal to the authority of science, we will present a number of considerations on the theme of legitimization in religion. We will try to define the terms of legitimization, validation, authentication, confirmation, which designate the means by which a creed is deemed true, and then we will study the case of the Church of Scientology, which I have been studying since 1986.\(^1\)

### The Question of Legitimization in Religion

Max Weber describes two positions with regard to belief and assurance. A religious message may be accepted by faith alone (\textit{sola fide}) and provide in itself the assurance of salvation (\textit{certitudo salutis}) with no other justification. Truth may also be perceived through its manifestations in the surrounding world. When we apply these criteria to Protestantism this duality is expressed in the following way: “The religious believer can

\(^1\) (Regis Dericquebourg, 1998), (Dericquebourg, 2001) (Dericquebourg, 2009).
make himself sure of his state of grace either in that he feels himself to be the vessel of the Holy Spirit or the tool of the divine will. In the former case his religious life tends to mysticism and emotionalism, in the latter to ascetic action; Luther stood close to the former type, Calvinism belonged definitively to the latter. The Calvinist also wanted to be saved *sola fide*, but since Calvin viewed all pure feelings and emotions, no matter how exalted they might seem to be, with suspicion, faith had to proved by its objective results in order to provide a firm foundation for the *certitudo salutis*. It must be a *fides effica* c, the call to salvation, an effectual calling (expression used in the *Savoy Declaration*).

“If we now ask further, by what fruits the Calvinist thought himself able to identify the true faith? The answer is: by a type of Christian conduct which served to increase the glory of god. Just what does so serve is to be seem in own will as revealed either directly through the Bible or indirectly through the purposeful order of the world (...). Only one of the elect really has the *fides efficax*, only he is able by virtue of his rebirth and the resulting sanctification of his whole life, to augment the glory of God by real, and not merely apparent, good works. It was through the consciousness that his conduct, at least in its fundamental character and constant ideal, rested on a power within himself working for the glory of God; that is conduct, at least in its fundamental character and constant ideal, rested on a power within himself working for the glory of God; that is not only willed of God but rather done by God that he attained the highest good towards which this religion strove, the certainty of salvation (...). Thus, however useless good works might be of attaining salvation, they are indispensable as a sign of election. They are the technical means, not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation” (Weber, 1930).

A religion with no means for legitimizing belief would be based on the intellectual acknowledgement of a moral, transcendent and distant god, impervious to men’s petitions. The role played by the ‘Great Architect of the Universe’ in the lower degrees of Freemasonry is the extreme example of this phenomenon. Another example is the cult of the ‘Supreme Being’ practiced by Theophilanthropists, widely inspired by Masonic practices. It can also be based on the mystic feeling of being merged into a God of love.

In any case, these attitudes are not widespread. Many believers are not satisfied with the affirmation “God is”. They try to find in the world confirmation of their belief. Max Weber defines this practice as follows: “The most elementary forms of behavior motivated by