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璀璨聖光之意象：在公東教堂中的重現

The Chapel of St. Joseph at Kung-Tung Technical Senior

High School in Tai-Tung—Spiritual Meaning and

Lighting Strategies in a Modernist Liturgical Space

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English Abstract

Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School (KTHS, 私立公東高級工業職業學校) in downtown Taitung is one of the early masterpieces of modernist architecture in postwar Taiwan, designed by Swiss architect Justus Dahinden (1925–2020) for the *Bethlehem Mission Society* (*Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem*; SBM, 白冷會). This thesis investigates the role of light in shaping sacred experience in Saint Joseph's Chapel. Completed in 1960, the chapel stands as a unique example of modernist Catholic architecture in East Asia, created during a period of liturgical reform and cultural transition. Drawing on architectural theory, iconographic analysis, and site observation, the study explores how Dahinden's use of both natural and artificial light creates a sense of spiritual focus, intimacy, and contemplation within the chapel.

Special attention is given to the stained-glass windows and liturgical furnishings by Swiss artist Albert Wider, whose visual language enhances the sacred atmosphere. The thesis also places the chapel in conversation with contemporary European church architecture, particularly the works of Le Corbusier (1887–1965) at Ronchamp (1950–55) and La Tourette (1953–60), to show how Dahinden adapted modernist principles to the cultural and environmental context of Taiwan. Ultimately, this study offers a framework for understanding light as both a symbolic and spatial element in modern sacred architecture.

Keywords: Justus Dahinden (1925–2020), Albert Wider (1910–85), Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Senior High School, Taitung, *Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem* (SMB), Lighting, Religious art, Stained Glass, Le Corbusier (1887–1965)

Chinese Abstract

本論文探討光線在塑造公東教堂（Saint Joseph's Chapel）宗教空間經驗中的關鍵角色。該教堂由瑞士建築師賈斯特斯·達興登（Justus Dahinden, 1925–2020）設計，建於 1960 年代初，位於台灣台東的公東高級工業職業學校（Saint Joseph's Technical Senior High School），是東亞地區少見的現代主義天主教建築實例之一，亦反映出當時禮儀改革與文化轉型的時代背景。研究結合建築理論、圖像分析與現地觀察，分析賈斯特斯·達興登如何透過自然光與人工照明營造出專注、親密與沉思的靈性氛圍。特別著重於瑞士藝術家艾伯特·威德爾（Albert Wider, 1910–85）所設計的彩繪玻璃苦路十四景（stations of the cross）與禮儀聖器，這些元素強化了整體的宗教象徵性。論文亦將聖若瑟禮拜堂與歐洲同期的教堂建築進行比較，特別是勒·柯比意（Le Corbusier, 1887–1965）在廊香教堂（Notre-Dame-du-Haut in Ronchamp, 1950–55）和拉圖雷特修道院（Sainte Marie de La Tourette, 1953–60）的作品，藉此探討賈斯特斯·達興登如何將現代主義建築理念轉化並融入台灣的文化與環境脈絡中。最終，本研究提出一套理解光線作為現代宗教建築中象徵性與空間性語彙的方法論。

關鍵字：賈斯特斯·達興登，艾伯特·威爾德，公東教堂，臺東，白冷會，亮光，宗教藝術，彩繪玻璃，勒·柯比意

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Introduction

Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School in Taitung (KTHS, 私立公東高級工業職業學校) is among the early masterpieces of modernist architecture in postwar Taiwan. Swiss architect Justus Dahinden (1925–2020) received the commission in 1958 by the *Bethlehem Mission Society* (*Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem*; SBM, 白冷會), a missionary association within the Roman Catholic Church, and completed the project in 1960. The chapel is located on the upper floor of a four-story building that combines the functions of a school and a place for worship. Situated in downtown Taitung, a city in the southern part of Taiwan, on section 1 of Zhongxing Road, the school and chapel serve as an intellectual and spiritual shelter for students, faculty, and the surrounding community. Architecturally, it stands as a key example of modernist design, reflecting a commitment to innovation through its clear lines and minimalist aesthetic.

Designed as a space for worship and reflection, Saint Joseph's Chapel promotes unity, offers spiritual solace, and encourages religious tolerance within the school community. Constructed economically using cost-effective materials—such as small steel bars and locally sourced sand and stone—the chapel embodies simplicity and elegance, reflecting the monastic spirit grounded in practicality.

Considering that the Roman Catholic Church established a Technical Senior High School in eastern Taiwan, it was named “Kung-Tung,” reflecting its mission and location. While the Chinese term “Kung” denotes the “Universality” of the Catholic Church, “Tung” means “eastern.” Furthermore, the biblical figure of St. Joseph, who was a carpenter and the husband of the Virgin Mary, was chosen as the chapel's patron, referring to the school's specialization in the technical field. Today, it is rather

interpreted as symbolizing hard work in the domain of industrial technology.¹

The chapel of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School, located on the top floor of the building, showcases an architectural language reminiscent of Le Corbusier's architectural language. major religious works, the pilgrimage chapel Notre-Dame du Haut of Ronchamp (1950–55) and the Dominican convent Sainte Marie de La Tourette (1953–60) at Éveux-sur-l'Arbresle near Lyon. These buildings played a seminal role in shaping post-war ecclesiastical architecture in Europe and beyond.

The stained glass plays an important role in Le Corbusier's churches, while it was completely absent from Dahinden's ecclesiastic works. Although Dahinden's architectural language shares many similarities with Le Corbusier's buildings, it deserves in-depth study, particularly when analyzed and refined through his church architecture theory. Among Dahinden's religious works, only the chapel of Kung-Tung incorporates stained glass; the others focus on minimizing the use of color while enhancing the creation of light leaks in the building.²

This thesis strives to thoroughly explore Justus Dahinden's design for the chapel of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School within the context of modernist ecclesiastical architecture in postwar Europe. A special focus will be on the different aspects of light in the chapel, where four basic lighting techniques are employed: First, the light entering through the apertures above the sanctuary, combined with the sunlight's path, gently illuminates the wall behind the altar. Second, the colorful windows on the west wall, designed by the Swiss artist Wilhelm Albert Wider (1910–85) as rectangular openings, function as a picture wall representing the Stations of the Cross while simultaneously allowing light to enter the chapel's nave; this effect

¹ Gu Chao-Guang (顧超光), *The Restoration and Reutilization Project of Historical Architecture in Taitung County* [臺東縣歷史建築：私立公東高級工業職業學校教堂—修復及再利用計畫], Taitung: Taitung County Government Department of Cultural Affairs, 2008, p. 2.13.

² Ibid.

becomes particularly striking in the afternoon. Third, the nave is lit by a band of concealed clerestory windows hidden in a rift along the ceiling. Fourth, light can enter from the north through the entrance located behind the community. Fifth, simple round lamps made of frosted glass are seamlessly embedded in the concrete ceiling.

To this end, comparisons will be made with Corbusier's religious works, with particular emphasis on the different forms of lighting. Finally, the thesis will evaluate the significance of Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School within the history of European art and architecture.



State of Research

The study of Christian church architecture, particularly the impact of modernist influences from the West and their relationship to liturgical functions, has recently gained prominence as a significant area of academic research in Taiwan. This section examines the current state of scholarship relevant to the chapel of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School, positioning it within its broader architectural, artistic, and theological contexts (fig. 1). The analysis is organized around four key themes: first, the development of research on modernist architecture in Taiwan in general and on Saint Joseph's Chapel in particular; to gain a deeper understanding of the history of the school and its chapel, it is also essential to examine the impact of the *Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem* in Taiwan; second, the historical evolution of European modern church architecture and its influence in Taiwan; third, the role of light in liturgical spaces; and, fourth, the contributions of architect Justus Dahinden and artist Albert Wider to religious architecture and art. The research methodology of this thesis integrates historical analysis, architectural research and its theoretical foundations, as well as artistic interpretation.

The emerging academic interest in Taiwanese modernist architecture and its western roots was demonstrated by a catalog titled *Rustic and Poetic: An Emerging Generation of Architecture in Postwar Taiwan* (粗獷與詩意：台灣戰後第一代建築) published in 2008 by two Taiwanese architectural historians, Shyu Ming-Song and Wang Chun-Hsiung.³ The book explores the island's architecture from the 1950s to the 1970s through a series of short monographic chapters arranged in chronological order also including a brief section on Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School by Wang

³ Shyu Ming-Song (徐明松) and Wang Chun-Hsiung (王俊雄), *Rustic & Poetic: An Emerging Generation of Architecture in Postwar Taiwan* [粗獷與詩意：台灣戰後第一代建築], New Taipei City: ECUS Publishing House, 2008.

Chun-Hsiung.⁴ Wang highlights Justus Dahinden’s impact on Taiwan’s modernist church architecture. He explores his fusion of rationalist and symbolic design represented by the school building on the one hand and the chapel on the other, the global modernist influences he brought to Taiwan, and the role of missionary efforts in shaping Taiwan’s architectural landscape.

Since most monographs on Taiwan’s architectural history focus on a single theme and period, Fu Chao-Qing (傅朝卿) compiled, instead, his 40 years of research on Taiwan’s architecture and published it in 2019.⁵ Fu explored the influence of Western powers and missionaries on Taiwanese architecture in the seventeenth century, the development of architecture in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period, and the development of Taiwanese architecture from the post-war period to the present.

At about the same time, scholars began dedicating studies to the works of the leading masters of postwar architecture in Taiwan, culminating in a couple of exhibitions, among them “SOS Brutalism—Save the Concrete Monsters!,” by the Deutsches Architekturmuseum Frankfurt am Main (DAM), co-organized in Taipei by the JUT Foundation.⁶ The show tried to attract public interest and create understanding for “brutalist” architecture. The term derives from French “béton brut,” referring to the treatment of a building’s primary material, architectural, raw and rough concrete, which retains visible traces of its production process, particularly the imprints left by the wooden formwork.⁷ Many buildings from the period of the 1950s to the 1970s now

⁴ Wang, in: Shyu and Wang, *Rustic & Poetic*, 2008, pp. 60–69.

⁵ Fu Chao-Qing (傅朝卿), *An Illustrated Cultural History of Taiwanese Architecture: Architectural Transformations from the 17th to the 21st Century* [圖說台灣建築文化史—從十七世紀到二十一世紀的建築變遷], Tainan: Society of Architectural Historians of Taiwan, 2019.

⁶ Taipei, Jut Art Museum, July 4–November 29, 2020. Website at: <https://jam.jutfoundation.org.tw/en/exhibition/107/2261> (accessed February 15, 2025). Catalog by Oliver Elser and Wang Chun-Hsiung, *SOS Brutalism: Selected Projects from Taiwan and the World*, Taipei City: Chung-Tai Architecture Culture and Art Foundation, Chung-Tai Art Museum, 2020 (bilingual Chinese–English).

⁷ Elser and Wang, *SOS Brutalism*, 2020, pp. 10–15.

require restoration due to the corrosion of their concrete surface, ironically addressed as “monsters” in need of saving. One such example was Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School, which was prominently featured in the exhibition as a significant case of brutalism in Taiwan.⁸ In the short paragraph, the building is interpreted as a multifunctional organism composed of two sections corresponding to its functions: the schoolrooms in the three lower stories, and the chapel on the top floor, described as receiving a “sensitive Symbolist approach.”⁹ Such ideas, together with comparative references to Corbusier’s Ronchamp and La Tourette, will be examined in greater depth throughout this thesis.

Against the background of a growing interest into modernist architecture in Taiwan, Saint Joseph’s Chapel received more intensive study during the recent two decades. In his 2008 Master’s thesis *The Restoration and Reutilization Project of Historical Architecture in Taitung County*, Gu Chao-Guang investigated a great array of historical archive material, including the correspondence related to the planning and execution of the chapel of Kung-Tung, sourced from chapel archives and architectural institutions. The book features a collection of Chinese-language papers and architectural construction drawing drafts published in Taiwan over the past decade.¹⁰ Gu conducted a technical survey, along with data testing, and research analysis on the church. The study integrates diverse historical contexts and developmental documents to offer informed suggestions for the now-completed restoration and adaptive reuse. Importantly, the book includes historical photographs of Dahinden’s school and chapel building together with the surrounding structures of the Kung Tung Campus during and after the construction stemming from the “Taitung Bethlehem

⁸ Elser and Wang, *SOS Brutalism*, 2020, pp. 90–91.

⁹ Elser and Wang, *SOS Brutalism*, 2020, p. 91.

¹⁰ Gu, *Restoration and Reutilization Project*, 2008.

Mission Office,” the “Kung-Tung 25th Anniversary Special Issue”, and the collection of Dahinden’s architectural drawings preserved at KTHS collection.

In his 2019 doctoral thesis titled *On Church Architecture in SMB Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School* [白冷會公東教堂之研究], Huang Kuan-Chih investigated Dahinden’s architectural language when working for the Bethlehem Mission Society in Taiwan.¹¹ Huang adopted a broad approach, examining not only the chapel’s form but also its position within European architectural traditions and its influence on Taiwan. A major strength of this work is its attention to the construction history of both the school and the chapel, particularly the collaboration between Dahinden and local contributors.

Cai Guang-Ming’s 2008 Master’s thesis *On the Church of St. Joseph, Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School—Architectural Vocabulary and Theological Meaning* [公東教堂建築語彙與神學意涵之研究] applies a theological-iconographical approach.¹² Cai, too, juxtaposed Dahinden’s building with relevant examples of Catholic modernist architecture in Europe, in particular with Le Corbusier’s chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut and his convent of Sainte-Marie de La Tourette. The author underscores a range of theological concepts inherent in the architecture, for example, the ideas of passion, redemption, and resurrection. Moreover, he pointed out to functional commonalities, such as the student dormitories in Kung-Tung and the layout of the monks’ cells at La Tourette.¹³

In her 2014 Master’s thesis *Take the Ark as the Research of the Cathedral’s Visual Sign – The Six Churches for Example in Taiwan* [以方舟作為視覺符號之教堂建築研

¹¹ Huang Kuan-Chih (黃冠智), *On Church Architecture in SMB Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School* [白冷會公東教堂之研究], PhD Thesis, Tamkang University, New Taipei City, 2019.

¹² Cai Guang-Ming (蔡光明), *On the Church of St. Joseph, Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School—Architectural Vocabulary and Theological Meaning* [公東教堂建築語彙與神學意涵之研究], Tainan: NCK University, 2008.

¹³ Cai, *On the Church*, 2008, pp. 108–109.

究—以國內六間教堂為例], Li Shu-Han explores the Genesis flood narrative through the imagery of Noah's Ark (Gen. 6–8) as a symbolic reference for the design of Saint Joseph's Chapel.¹⁴ She analyzes the architectural language of six churches in Taiwan—both Presbyterian and Catholic—along with Saint Joseph's Chapel, in which she identifies the motif of the Ark. This iconographic theme, rooted in European ecclesiastical architecture, was newly embraced by post-war modernist churches across Europe.¹⁵ The validity of Li's interpretation of the chapel as a symbolic embodiment of the Ark will be examined below.

Two extensive and detailed studies on Saint Joseph's Chapel were published by art historian Yu Li-Pen in the *Journal of Artistica* of Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA). The 2011 article on *European Modern Church Architecture in Taiwan: A Unique Perspective of Justus Dahinden's Design for Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School* [歐洲現代教堂在台灣：以 Justus Dahinden 的公東高工為例] explores how Dahinden's design for Saint Joseph's Chapel differs from other ecclesiastical buildings in Taiwan that incorporated Western motifs and decorations.¹⁶ The author analyzes how European missionaries merged modernist aesthetics with local cultural elements.¹⁷ She investigates how interior space and decoration were integrated with visual effects, liturgical concepts, and religious symbolism. In addition, Yu examines the development of contemporary European church architecture in relation to the modern liturgical movement. Yu's historical approach is notably detailed and well-informed, and she

¹⁴ Li Shu-Han (李舒涵), *Take the Ark as the Research of the Cathedral's Visual Sign – The Six Churches for Example in Taiwan* [以方舟作為視覺符號之教堂建築研究—以國內六間教堂為例], Hualien: NDH University, 2014, pp. 87–116.

¹⁵ Li, *Take the Ark*, 2014, pp. 51–86.

¹⁶ Yu Li-Pen (于禮本), “European Modern Church Architecture in Taiwan: A Unique Perspective of Justus Dahinden's Design for Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School” [歐洲現代教堂在台灣：以 Justus Dahinden 的公東高工為例], in: *Journal of Artistica TNNUA* [南藝學報] 2, 2011, pp. 203–229.

¹⁷ Yu Li-Pen (于禮本), “German Modern Church Architecture in Taiwan: The Jing Liao Holy Cross Church and the Xue Jia Catholic Church Designed by Gottfried Böhm” [德國現代教堂建築在臺灣：哥特佛瑞德·波姆 (Gottfried Böhm) 的菁寮聖十字堂與學甲天主堂], in: *Journal of Artistica TNNUA* [南藝學報] 8, 2014, pp. 83–125.

incorporates a substantial body of original German documents to contextualize the background of missionary architecture.¹⁸ In her article of 2016 “The Stained Glasses by Albert Wider in the Church of Kung-Tung” [燦輝照映，心之昕昕—初探艾柏特·威爾德的公東高工聖堂彩窗系列], Yu develops a study on Wider’s Stations of the Cross against the background of the history of stained-glass painting, from its peak during the Gothic period, through its decline in the Renaissance and Baroque eras, to its revival in the nineteenth century, particularly in connection with the Arts and Crafts Movement, which laid the foundation for its increasing popularity in European modern art.¹⁹ She further situates Wider’s stained-glass work at Saint Joseph’s Chapel within the artistic developments of the period, noting stylistic parallels while also emphasizing his creative independence.²⁰ Finally, she situates the Stations of the Cross at Kung-Tung within the broader trajectory of the artist’s stylistic development, highlighting his stronger use of abstraction through symbolic forms towards the end of the 1950s.²¹

Justus Dahinden was not only a prolific architect but also a productive author who, throughout the various phases of his career, articulated his ideas in theoretical writings. As both an architectural practitioner and academic, he combined practical experience with research to investigate fundamental aspects of building, such as the relationship between people and space, form and function, and the psychological influence of architecture on human well-being.²² This approach began with his 1956 doctoral thesis, *Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Gegenwartsarchitektur* (An Attempt to Define

¹⁸ “Die, [sic!] Cité de Dieu’ ist ein ernstes Anliegen moderner Pastoration. Den Kirchenbau ergänzen vielfältige Stätten der Begegnung und Besinnung.” Justus Dahinden, *Bauen für die Kirche in der Welt*, Zurich: NZB Buchverlag, 1967, p. 99. The German text here cited after Yu, *Dahinden*, 2011, p. 220.

¹⁹ Yu Li-Pen (于禮本), “The Stained Glasses by Albert Wider in the Church of Kung-Tung” [燦輝照映，心之昕昕—初探艾柏特·威爾德的公東高工聖堂彩窗系列], in: *Journal of Artistica TNNUA* [藝術學研究] 18, 2016, pp. 65–134, here pp. 72–76.

²⁰ Yu, *Stained Glasses*, 2016, pp. 87–88.

²¹ Yu, *Stained Glasses*, 2016, pp. 89–90.

²² See, for example, Justus Dahinden, *New Trends in Church Architecture*, New York: Universe Book, 1967 (original edition: *Bauen für die Kirche in der Welt*, Zurich: NZB Buchverlag, 1967), and *Denken Fühlen Handeln* [*Thinking Feeling Acting*], Stuttgart: Karl Kraemer; Paris: Bibliotheque des arts, 1973.

the Position of Contemporary Architecture), published in the same year, which earned him his degree and paved the way for his academic career.²³ It is therefore not only possible to trace certain ideas we find executed in Saint Joseph's Chapel but also necessary to critically examine his publications in order to distill his concepts of on space and light. Relevant texts will be discussed in detail in a separate chapter below.²⁴ Particular attention will be given to his writings on ecclesiastical architecture, one of his preferred and frequently explored subjects. With *New Trends in Church Architecture* (1967), he dedicated a monograph to ecclesiastical architecture and the mission as important task of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council;²⁵ the fact that he published an English translation of the book in the same year testifies to his desire to reach a broader audience for his ideas. The book *Denken, Fühlen, Handeln* (*Thinking, Feeling, Acting*) of 1973 includes a more extensive section on the subject, featuring an interview with the architect.²⁶

The Swiss artist and architect Albert Wider contributed to the endowment of Saint Joseph's Chapel not only through his stained-glass work at the western wall, but also as sculptor and designer of ecclesiastical furnishings in the chancel (fig. 2). However, literature on Wider remains scarce. Apart from the already mentioned articles by Yu Li-Pen, only an early essay of 1944 and two Swiss monographs can be cited, the book "Glaube + Bild" (Faith + Image), which appeared in 1960 on the occasion of Wider's 50th birthday,²⁷ and a bulky volume by Johannes Huber of 2015.²⁸ Yet, Wider's works

²³ Justus Dahinden, *Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Gegenwartsarchitektur* [*An Attempt to Define the Position of Contemporary Architecture*], PhD Thesis Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH), Zurich, 1956 (print Zurich: Girsberger, 1956).

²⁴ See below chap. 5, "Justus Dahinden as an Architectural Theorist."

²⁵ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967.

²⁶ Dahinden, *Denken, Fühlen, Handeln*, 1973, pp. 78–89.

²⁷ *Glaube + Bild. Der Bildhauer Albert Wider: Zum 50. Geburtstag des Künstlers* (*Faith + Image. The Sculptor Albert Wider: For the Sculptor's 50th Birthday*), Frankfurt a. M.: Main Verlag, 1960.

²⁸ Johannes Huber, *Albert Wider. Bildhauer und seine Zeit: Leben, Werk, Botschaft* (*Albert Wider. Sculptor and his Time: Life, Work, Message*), Widnau: Verein "Albert Wider, Bildhauer, Widnau;" Altstätten: Verein für Geschichte des Rheintals, 2015.

in Saint Joseph's Chapel are barely mentioned in these two publications not allowing any deeper insight into the design history of the chapel of Kung-Tung; however, the volumes provide extensive biographical information and are richly illustrated throughout, making them valuable resources for comparative analysis of the works in Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung and his substantial oeuvre.

The article, written by an anonymous author and published in the first volume of the Swiss local journal *Unser Rheintal* of 1944, portrays young Wider—characteristically for the time—as a son of his homeland, the Rhine Valley, celebrating his simplicity, down-to-earth attitude, and deep belief expressed in his religious works.²⁹ *Glaube + Bild*, which appeared 16 years later, was an anniversary publication dedicated by friends and colleagues; nevertheless, Wider himself oversaw of the book's design, aiming for a formal minimalism together with compositional quality.³⁰ The images, which play a crucial role in the book by showcasing the artist's work, are mostly accompanied by thematically related pious texts from the Bible, prayers, or writings by Catholic authors. The book highlights two key aspects of Wider's work: his strong Catholic background, which is evident not only in the title's reference to the sign of a Greek cross—with the double meaning of the cross and the conjunction “and” (German: Glaube *und* Bild)—and the works on the jacket but throughout the book, and his contributions to missionary architecture, particularly in Africa. Wider's commitment to missionary work is highlighted in a text by Dom Frédéric Debuyst OSB (1922–2017), a distinguished member of the Liturgical Movement and then director of the Belgian journal *Art d'Église*.³¹ In the chapter dedicated to this theme, “Christliche

²⁹ Anonymous, “Der Rheintaler Bildhauer Albert Wider von Widnau,” in: *Unser Rheintal* 1, 1944, pp. 73–80.

³⁰ *Glaube + Bild* 1960, p. 151.

³¹ *Glaube + Bild* 1960, p. 138 (Engl. translation at the end of the book; s. p.). Debuyst was director of the trimestral journal *Art d'Église* between 1959–80. On Debuyst, see Donal O'Sullivan, “Sacred Art Today,” in: *The Furrow* 10, No. 4, April, 1959, pp. 259–262.

Architektenhilfe für die Missionen” (Christian Help for Architects for the Missions), a notable photography depicts a maquette of Dahinden’s Kung-Tung Senior High School, clearly illustrating an early stage of the project.³² This will be examined in greater detail below.³³

Johannes Huber’s lavishly illustrated biography of 2015, which takes a distinctly historical approach, provides valuable insights into Wider’s background, his deep ties to his homeland, and the conservative religious outlook reflected in his art. For the purposes of this thesis, the chapters on Wider’s artistic work—particularly the section on stained glass—are especially instrumental; they not only elucidate the artist’s development throughout his career but also provide sources for understanding the intellectual background of his works.³⁴ Huber draws attention to the significance of stained-glass design as an inherent architectural element, one that defines the boundary between interior and exterior, functioning as a transparent wall that actively shapes space and light while mediating both.³⁵ It should be noted that Huber had evidently never visited Taiwan and therefore refrained from a more detailed analysis of Wider’s stained-glass windows in Saint Joseph’s Chapel.³⁶

As observed by several authors writing on Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School, Le Corbusier’s two major religious works, the pilgrimage chapel of Ronchamp and the convent of La Tourette at Éveux, significantly influenced both Justus Dahinden’s architectural language and his concept of light in liturgical spaces.³⁷ Therefore, a precise analysis of the master builder’s works and comparative analyses are essential. To this end, the extensive bibliography on Le Corbusier’s architecture—

³² For an illustration of the maquette, see *Glaube + Bild*, p. 142; the relative caption, on p. 146, reads as follows: “S. 142: Werkschule Taitung, Formosa, Dipl.-Arch. Dr. Dahinden.”

³³ See below chap. 3.3., “The Western Wall: Light Source and Illuminated Picture Board.”

³⁴ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, pp. 268–275.

³⁵ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, pp. 269, 273.

³⁶ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, p. 325, end note, where the work is mentioned.

³⁷ Cai, *On the Church*, 2008; Yu, *Dahinden*, 2011; Li, 2014; Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019.

particularly on his ecclesiastical buildings—was examined. In order to not exceed the limits of this State of Research, only a selection of publications, deemed most relevant to the present context, may be cited here.

Danièle Pauly’s monograph “Le Corbusier: The Chapel at Ronchamp” offers a profound analysis of the building, its history, and its artworks.³⁸ Drawing on in-depth visual analysis, the author emphasizes the plasticity of the architecture and the harmony among the various artistic media integrated into the structure. Although Le Corbusier’s treatment of light appears to be of lesser importance in Pauly’s analysis, the chapter titled “Volumes Bathed in Light” nonetheless offers valuable insights into the architect’s complex approach to light management in the chapel.³⁹ James Stirling (1926–92) made a significant contribution to the understanding of the church in his 1956 article, which was based on an early site visit shortly after its completion and included his own critical observations.⁴⁰

A seminal aspect of Le Corbusier’s ecclesiastical architecture is his creative exchange with the French Dominican friar and artist Marie-Alain Couturier (1897–1954), which was influential for building the chapel of Ronchamp and the convent of La Tourette. This fruitful collaboration has recently attracted increased attention from scholars. A joint article by Samuel O’Connor Perks, Rajesh Heynickx, and Stéphane Symons titled “At the Crossroads between Catholicism and Modernist Art: Marie-Alain Couturier and the Conceptual Zigzags,” published in 2017 in *Church History and Religious Culture* highlights Father Couturier’s complex and sometimes inconsistent body of ideas, which had a significant impact on post-war modernism.⁴¹ Since 1937,

³⁸ Danièle Pauly, *Le Corbusier: The Chapel at Ronchamp*, Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier; Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2008.

³⁹ Pauly, *Le Corbusier*, 2008, pp. 88–94.

⁴⁰ James Stirling, “Ronchamp. Le Corbusier’s Chapel and the Crisis of Rationalism,” in: *Historical Review* 119, 1956, pp. 154–161.

⁴¹ Samuel O’Connor Perks, Rajesh Heynickx, and Stéphane Symons, “At the Crossroads between Catholicism and Modernist Art: Marie-Alain Couturier and the Conceptual Zigzags,” in: *Church*

as co-editor and contributor to the journal *L'Art Sacré*, Couturier expressed his progressive views on church art and architecture in various articles. Shortly before his untimely death, he recorded his thoughts on the still unfinished chapel of Ronchamp in a 1953 essay, where he outlined his definition of what an ideal modern sacred building is: “A truly sacred edifice is not a secular one made sacred by a rite of consecration or by the eventual use to which it is put; it is sacred in its very substance, made so by the quality of its forms.”⁴² With this commitment to artistic quality in mind, we must examine Dahinden’s Saint Joseph’s Chapel and ask whether the Swiss architect was familiar with Couturier’s writings.

The role of light in Saint Joseph’s Chapel has not yet been explored as a specific research topic. After the realization of this work, Justus Dahinden abandoned the use of stained glass in his church designs and, instead, made full use of indirect lighting techniques that emphasized the altar area or specific spaces. The use of stained-glass windows at the chapel was an exception in Dahinden’s work.⁴³ It is particularly important for this thesis to explore the reasons for the transition between Le Corbusier’s impact on Dahinden and the development of his own architectural vocabulary.

This thesis begins by reviewing the historical and theoretical context of the project, examining Justus Dahinden’s architectural vision—both in Saint Joseph’s Chapel and his writings—within the framework of the contemporary theological discourse on the reorganization of ecclesiastic architecture in the Catholic Church, as well as the role of the *Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem* in Taiwan. To this end, archival materials, historical narratives, and architectural literature will be analyzed.

History and Religious Culture 97, No. 1, 2017, pp. 71–95.

⁴² Marie-Alain Couturier, *Sacred Art*, texts selected by Dominique de Menil and Pie Duployé, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989, pp. 153–154. On the biography of Couturier, see: Dominique de Menil, “Biographical Note,” in: *ibid.*, pp. 157–159. See also Joanna Weber, ed., *The Father Marie-Alain Couturier, O.P. (1897–1954) Papers. Couturier Collection at Yale University. Archival Register*, June 1994, pp. 2–10, available online, at: web.library.yale.edu (accessed May 5, 2025).

⁴³ Yu, *Dahinden*, 2011, p. 213, note 49.

The main body of this thesis presents a detailed a survey of the various forms of lighting employed by Dahinden in the chapel. Five distinct types of natural and artificial light are identified: first, the illumination of the sanctuary or altar area; second, the light wall by artist Albert Wider, which reflects the collaboration between Dahinden and Wider; third, the supplementary lighting of the nave by clerestory windows; fourth, the light that enters the nave through the open entrance door; and finally, electric light sources. Each of these lighting strategies will be examined through close visual analysis, with attention to their implementation and effect within the liturgical context. In a subsequent section, potential historical sources and influences will be explored. Particular focus will be given to how light functions in the chapel’s design both as a physical element and as a bearer of spiritual meaning.

Rather than treating light merely as a decorative or technical feature, this thesis proposes a new interpretive approach to the liturgical space of Saint Joseph’s Chapel using the concept of “light revealing form.” This term may help to more precisely define how Dahinden—early in his career and working within the spatial constraints of a school chapel—employed varied methods of directing light to achieve diverse architectural effects. Dahinden referred to this principle under the general term “Introversion”:

“Introversion

Directed light *reveals the depth of form* - Spatial significance
Communication by visual methods -
Horizons that give rise to expectations
Increase of the receptive stimuli - Sensitivity [...].”⁴⁴

With the phrase that “directed light reveals the depth of form,” Dahinden encapsulated—as will be shown in this study—a broad range of effects. By the time this text was written, in 1973, the architect had already established himself as a master

⁴⁴ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 32 (my italics).

of manipulating light in churches. Characteristic of his approach is the idea of sensitivity, or the psychological effects that can be evoked through the manipulation of light.

The concept of light revealing form, observable in modernist ecclesiastical architecture of the 1950s—such as in Le Corbusier’s pilgrimage chapel Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp and his Dominican convent Sainte-Marie de La Tourette—offers a framework for understanding how Justus Dahinden integrates light to enhance the sacred atmosphere, transforming perceptions of space, time, and worship. This approach resonates with the views of Père Marie-Alain Couturier, who in 1937 emphasized that “[w]hat the Church expects from stained glass [...] is that daylight does not disturb our ‘inner light’ [...] but instead surrounds it, protects it, fosters it, enriches it.”⁴⁵ In this view, light is not only a physical agent but a spiritual medium that deepens contemplation and elevates sacred experience. Such a theological and phenomenological understanding of light closely parallels Dahinden’s integration of space, form, and illumination in the Saint Joseph’s Chapel.

The thesis will analyze Albert Wider’s stained-glass designs by comparing their stylistic and symbolic features with key examples of European modernist church architecture. It will examine archival materials, design drawings, and photographic documentation to trace influences and innovations. Through detailed case studies, the research will identify patterns in the use of light and color within liturgical spaces. Finally, the study will develop a structured analytical framework that integrates architectural theory, liturgical function, and visual analysis to systematically assess how light shapes spiritual experience and architectural form in modern churches.

⁴⁵ “Ce que l’Église attend du vitrail [...] c’est de faire que la lumière du jour ne vienne pas troubler notre ‘lumière intérieure’ [...] qu’elle vienne l’envelopper, la protéger, la favoriser, l’enrichir.” Marie-Alain Couturier, “Ce que l’Église attend du vitrail,” in: *L’Art Sacré* 36, December 1938, pp. 344–346. Here quoted after Isabelle Saint-Martin, “Le vitrail dans les combats de *L’Art Sacré*,” in: *Revue de l’art* 214, No. 4, 2021, pp. 116–127, here p. 118.

1. Catholic Faith and Education in Taiwan: Prehistory of the Project

1.1 The Historical Situation after 1945

Following the end of World War II and the retrocession of Taiwan to the Republic of China in 1945, Taitung—situated on the island’s southeastern coast—underwent significant political, social, and cultural transformations. Marked by relative geographic isolation and a high concentration of indigenous populations, the region remained considerably underdeveloped in comparison to western Taiwan. During this period, educational infrastructure was minimal, and access to formal schooling in rural and indigenous communities was severely limited.

The introduction of new administrative systems led to shifts in governance, land use, and civil affairs. However, persistent poverty, a shortage of trained personnel, and continued geographic isolation posed significant obstacles to progress, particularly in education and healthcare. In response to these challenges, religious organizations began to play an increasingly active role in community development. The urgent need for humanitarian and educational support created new opportunities for missionary engagement, especially by Catholic groups.

The postwar era in Taitung was thus characterized by a complex interplay of opportunity and hardship. For many communities, the 1950s marked a pivotal moment in which external support—particularly from religious missions—began to establish the foundations for sustained social investment and development.

1.2. The *Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem* (SMB) and Taiwan

The *Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem* (Bethlehem Mission Society; SMB) is a Catholic missionary association founded in Switzerland in 1921. Its objectives are grounded in the principles of spiritual outreach and service, particularly through education, healthcare, and community development. In the postwar period, the SMB

responded to calls for missionary assistance in East Asia, focusing its efforts on regions where both spiritual guidance and material support were urgently needed.⁴⁶

The SMB's mission in Taiwan began in 1953, with a particular focus on the underserved region of Taitung. At the time, the Catholic Church in Taiwan was still in the early stages of its postwar expansion, characterized by limited local clergy and minimal ecclesiastical infrastructure. The missionaries of the SMB sought not only to evangelize but also to establish sustainable institutions—particularly in education and healthcare—that would contribute to the long-term development and empowerment of local communities.⁴⁷

Among the SMB's earliest initiatives in Taiwan was the establishment of parishes, schools, and vocational centers that served not only as religious institutions but also as vital access points for education and healthcare. What distinguished the SMB was its commitment to cultural integration, evidenced by sustained efforts to engage with Indigenous communities through learning local languages and respecting traditional customs. Within this context, the foundation of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School assumes particular significance.

⁴⁶ Wang, in: Shyu and Wang, *Rustic & Poetic*, 2008, p. 61.

⁴⁷ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, pp. 85–89.

2. Architecture in Taiwan after 1945

2.1. General Situation

In his prologue of *Rustic & Poetic: An Emerging Generation of Architecture in Postwar Taiwan* [粗獷與詩意：台灣戰後第一代建築], Shyu Ming-Song (徐明松) re-examined Taiwan's first generation of postwar architecture, selecting several representative buildings and analyzing how they reflected the socio-political climate of the period, particularly amid Taiwan's sensitive political circumstances.⁴⁸

Before World War II, Taiwan's architectural landscape was shaped primarily by three groups of practitioners: architects from Mainland China, Taiwanese architects trained under the Japanese colonial system, and foreign architects associated with Western religious missions. Their works were deeply influenced by the prevailing political and ideological contexts—ranging from postwar American aid and Taiwan's anti-Communist nation-building agenda to the objectives of Christian evangelism. In each case, their buildings embodied specific interpretations of historical and regional significance, ultimately becoming influential models of their respective eras.

At the same time, Taiwan's architectural education remained underdeveloped. As Shyu asserts:

“Although local architectural training began in the early 1910s, it was largely limited to low-level vocational programs. It was not until 1944 that a formal architecture department was established at Tainan Technical Senior High School, marking the inception of higher architectural education in Taiwan. However, before any students could graduate, the institution was restructured by the Nationalist government and renamed the Provincial Institute of Technology (now National Cheng Kung University; 國立成功大學).”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Shyu Ming-Song (徐明松), and Wang Chun-Hsiung (王俊雄), *Rustic & Poetic: An Emerging Generation of Architecture in Postwar Taiwan* [粗獷與詩意：台灣戰後第一代建築], New Taipei City: ECUS Publishing House, 2008, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Shyu and Wang, *Rustic & Poetic*, 2008, p. 14. If not otherwise stated, all translations into English are mine.

Among these projects, Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School was founded in 1960 by the Swiss Bethlehem Mission Society (SBM) in Taitung, then one of Taiwan's most remote regions. The mission sought to serve marginalized communities through education and social development. By the 1970s, over one hundred chapels had been constructed.⁵⁰ Renowned Swiss architect Justus Dahinden was invited to design the campus of a new technical high school in the city.⁵¹ Following World War II, Taiwan's architectural landscape gradually transitioned from Japanese colonial styles toward modernist designs; however, this shift was uneven. Most trained architects remained Japanese, while local Taiwanese had limited access to advanced architectural education. The departure of Japanese professionals created a leadership vacuum and disrupted established systems. Without clear leadership or updated systems resulting in a crisis of direction and identity within Taiwan's architectural field. This context helps explain the distinctiveness of Saint Joseph's Chapel, designed by a Swiss architect but realized under the supervision of Taiwanese builders.⁵²

After World War II, Taiwan's challenging economic conditions and complex geopolitical situation led to increased involvement of foreign architects in local projects. These architects introduced a variety of architectural languages and construction techniques that often diverged significantly from established local norms. Their contributions not only influenced architectural development but also aligned with government efforts to modernize the country and enhance Taiwan's international profile. Among these foreign professionals were notable figures such as Swiss architect Justus Dahinden and German architect Gottfried Böhm. A key factor driving reliance on foreign expertise was the fragmented training of Taiwanese architects at the time—

⁵⁰ Shyu and Wang, *Rustic & Poetic*, 2008, p. 61.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Shyu and Wang, *Rustic & Poetic*, 2008, p. 9.

many were educated under diverse regional and institutional systems, lacking a unified architectural education. This fragmentation complicated cohesive development and highlights the particular significance of projects like the Saint Joseph's Chapel, which was designed abroad but constructed locally. This cross-cultural collaboration exemplifies both the challenges and creative potentials within Taiwan's architectural landscape during a period of transition. The chapel thus represents not only an experimental instance of modern architecture in Taiwan but also a concrete manifestation of postwar social dynamics, educational shortcomings, foreign assistance, and religious practice converging into a unique architectural expression.

In his *An Illustrated Cultural History of Taiwanese Architecture: Architectural Transformations from the 17th to the 21st Century* [圖說台灣建築文化史—從十七世紀到二十一世紀的建築變遷], Fu Chao-ching (傅朝卿) notes that Taiwan remained a relatively closed society during this period; direct connections to the West were scarce. Consequently, the few buildings influenced by Le Corbusier's architectural language appeared mainly through indirect channels, particularly through Japanese intermediaries.⁵³ Fu mentions in this regard:

“Due to the political isolation of Taiwanese society, there were no direct disciples or architects working under Corbusier or his studio, yet several buildings inspired by Corbusier's style and concepts began to appear. These were mainly indirect adoptions, transmitted through Japanese interpretations or publications.”⁵⁴

None of the local architects had ever been personally in touch with Le Corbusier's architectural firm. Interestingly, his works played a significant role in shaping Taiwan's postwar modern architectural history.

⁵³ Notably, Le Corbusier had traveled to Japan to design the Western Art Museum in Ueno Park, Tokyo (1956–59), which contributed to the diffusion of his ideas in the region. Irene Chin, “Le Corbusier's Musée à croissance illimitée: A Limitless Diagram for Museology,” in: *LC2015 – Le Corbusier, 50 years later*, at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4995/LC2015.2015.584> (accessed June 1, 2025).

⁵⁴ Fu, *Illustrated Cultural History*, 2019, p. 762.

2.2. The Construction of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School

The Swiss architect Justus Dahinden finished the design drafts between 1957 and 1960. The church building was completed in 1959, with the Albert Wider's interior furnishings and decorations drawing sheet finalized by the workshop Andreas Kübele Glasmalerei in 1960 (fig. 3).⁵⁵ Swiss engineer Emil Schubiger (1903–93) carried out the structural design of the chapel.⁵⁶ Unlike local buildings in Taiwan of the time, it is made of reinforced concrete, beamless panels, and external *brises-soleil* on the east wall. The Swiss artist Wilhelm Albert Wilder was invited to design a series of colorful and stylistically bold stained-glass windows on the south wall of the single nave representing the Stations of the Cross.⁵⁷

A comparison between the architectural drawing (fig. 4) and the completed west façade of Saint Joseph's Chapel (fig. 5) reveals several significant modifications that reflect a shift from geometric planning toward a more expressive and atmospheric approach. In the original design, the area beneath the central cross features a symmetrical arrangement of rectangular openings, carefully spaced and aligned (fig. 4). In the built version, these openings appear less regular, with variations in size and placement that create a more dynamic visual rhythm (fig. 5). The bell tower, initially conceived with a sharply angled wall and a prominent square opening framing the bell, was ultimately executed with a smaller and more enclosed aperture, possibly due to structural or environmental considerations. A large rectangular opening on the upper left, marked clearly in the drawing, remains in the completed building but is simplified,

⁵⁵ Andreas Kübele, Glasmalerei, *Stained-Glass Construction Drawing of Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung*, National Taiwan Museum, 1960. Yu, *Wider*, 2016, p. 81, note 40. On the glass painter Andreas Kübele (1907–65) and the long tradition of his studio located at Unterer Graben 55, St. Gallen, see *VitroSearch*, at: <https://vitrosearch.ch/de/persons/2680173> (accessed July 2, 2025).

⁵⁶ Gu Chao-Guang has hosted the project on *The Restoration and Reutilization Project of Historical Architecture in Taitung County, Taiwan—the Church of St. Joseph, Kung-Tung High School*, Taitung: Taitung County Government Cultural Office, 2018, p. 2.19.

⁵⁷ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, pp. 184–189.

lacking the detailed substructure originally indicated. Additionally, the small fenestrations below the cross were adjusted in both scale and position, departing from the rigorous grid of the drawing to accommodate practical lighting and interior needs. Overall, the changes suggest a transition from a formal, geometric syntax to a design more responsive to light, texture, and the spiritual character of the space. This evolution aligns with Justus Dahinden's architectural philosophy, which values the sensory and symbolic dimensions of sacred architecture over strict formalism. It is evident that the final west wall represents a synthesis of architecture and art, incorporating contributions from both Dahinden and Wider.

In his doctoral thesis, Huang Guan-Zhi offers a thorough examination of the spatial relationship between the overall layout of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School and Saint Joseph's Chapel.⁵⁸ He emphasizes the close connection between the campus planning concept and the chapel. According to Huang, the initial layout of the campus was based on European monastic models, which follows an inward-looking and cohesive spatial organization. This approach continues the tradition of religious spatial communities and was not intended merely to provide functional school facilities. From the outset, the chapel was integrated into the spatial composition as the spiritual and organizational center of the site.

As Huang asserts, the chapel was not placed at the end of the campus's central axis. Instead, it was intentionally located on the eastern side, facing the main traffic road and mountain landscape. Through its height, window arrangement, and contrast in massing, the chapel's spiritual quality is made visually prominent. This design strategy not only avoids turning the chapel into a symbolic monument but also allows it to maintain accessibility and visual permeability in daily campus life. Furthermore, by placing the

⁵⁸ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, pp. 184–192.

chapel in a four-story-high structure near the eastern gate, it emerges from its environs and breaks away from the low-rise scale of the surrounding classrooms and dormitories. This creates a sense of elevation and spiritual distinction.⁵⁹

As Huang argues, when compared with the school's other low-rise buildings and functional spaces, the chapel is no longer a subsidiary liturgical facility. Rather, it becomes a religious building that actively engages with the urban environment, mountain views, and circulation patterns. He interprets this as a strategy of spatial decentralization, freeing the chapel from conventional axial symmetry by highlighting its spiritual and participatory role. Through this analysis, Huang successfully reveals how Saint Joseph's Chapel maintains its architectural independence and symbolic significance within an educational setting, becoming a meaningful part of the regional spiritual landscape.

Taken together, Huang's interpretation portrays the chapel as a spiritually centered yet spatially decentered building. However, this approach may also reduce its accessibility and frequency of use in the school's everyday life. Today, Saint Joseph's Chapel is no longer a distant landmark elevated above its surroundings. Instead, it functions as a religious spatial interface that is more participatory and integrated into the rhythms of daily campus life.

Huang highlights that the three main buildings, the woodworking building, the administrative building, and the chapel, differ in form but achieve coherence through modern architectural concepts such as a box within a box and intentional spatial gaps. He further emphasizes that Dahinden adapted the building to southern Taiwan's tropical climate by designing open staircases and corridors.⁶⁰ The author compares the chapel with Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* and the Fagus Factory in Alfeld on the Leine

⁵⁹ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, pp. 187–188.

⁶⁰ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, p. 189.

(1911–13) by Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer, emphasizing that Saint Joseph’s Chapel does not merely imitate modernist design, but rather asserts an independent architectural stance.⁶¹ Instead, it adapts key ideas such as structural transparency, overlapping functions, and spatial openness into religious architectural expression. The chapel is a spiritual box embedded in an educational setting. Although located on the edge of the campus, its spatial form and circulation design allow it to function as the spiritual core of the school, offering a new way to integrate religious architecture into an educational environment. Although Huang compares Saint Joseph’s Chapel to the Unité d’Habitation and the Fagus Factory, one key point is missing. The chapel hides the sense of everyday life seen in the Unité d’Habitation, with a simpler and more modest exterior that avoids strong colors. Though functionally mixed like the factory, it lacks any sense of glassy industrial modernity. This restraint shifts focus to the rooftop cross, enhancing its sacred presence.

It draws attention to Dahinden’s description of the “box” in his doctoral thesis:

“The Villa Savoye (1929 to 1931) in Poissy, a crystalline derivative of the recent past, evokes one of the most important aspects of modern architecture: the ‘flying box.’ Here, Le Corbusier raised a cubic building mass, possessing neither top nor bottom, from its earth base using pilotis. The corresponding supporting element is denied the predominant load; the result is the astonishing dynamics of an unresolved vectorial field of tension. The spatial elements appear cardboard-like, in a sense de-substantiated. Every proportion here is an artistically individual manifestation.”⁶²

Dahinden carefully designed the three surrounding school buildings to ensure that visitors would experience varying spaces, lighting conditions, and visual effects from different viewpoints as they moved between the structures.⁶³ This approach echoes the

⁶¹ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, pp. 148–149.

⁶² Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 17.

⁶³ Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, p. 184.

idea of Le Corbusier's concept of the *promenade architecturale*—the observer's journey through built space—which was a central element of his architectural urban planning philosophy. It refers to the sequence of visual impressions that unfold before the observer's eyes as they gradually progress through the structure.⁶⁴

Fu also highlights the chapel's elevated and secluded placement as a deliberate spatial strategy that reinforces its sacred character:

“From a spatial perspective, the early campus of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School in Taitung was designed as an inward-facing, compact architectural ensemble. [...] Unlike conventional Catholic schools where the chapel is typically placed near the center of the campus, the chapel here was reached via a climb up the dormitory staircases, making the ascent itself a ritual journey.”⁶⁵

By situating the chapel on the top floor, accessed through a progressive vertical journey from everyday spaces like workshops and dormitories, the design mirrors a spiritual ascent. The transition from the active world to a peaceful rooftop courtyard and into the quiet chapel reflects a liturgical procession in architectural terms. This integration of religious symbolism, spatial hierarchy, and movement reflects a sophisticated understanding of how architecture can embody theological meaning within a modern educational setting.

The building that integrates Saint Joseph's Chapel is located on the east side of the campus of Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School (fig. 6). The four-story classroom and dormitory block is formed as a concrete slab. The building has a cubic, elongated, rectangular form with two principal façades on its long eastern and western sides, differentiated according to their functions. Its simple appearance features vertical fins on the east façade and horizontal slits on the west. While part of a multi-functional

⁶⁴ Jacques Sbriglio, *Le Corbusier: The Villa Savoye*, Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier; Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Publishers, 2008, pp. 12–36.

⁶⁵ Fu, *Illustrated Cultural History*, 2019, p. 763.

complex, the chapel's rooftop placement and simplified exterior distinguish it as a sacred space within the school campus.

The east façade is defined by a bold geometric composition shaped by a dense array of slender vertical concrete louvers, which both animate the surface and filter the intense morning sunlight typical of Taiwan's east coast (fig. 7).⁶⁶ Far from being subdued, this façade exhibits a rhythmic interplay of shadow and structure, conveying both functional purpose and modernist aesthetics. Previously, an inscription featuring four large Chinese characters spelling “Kung-Tung Technical High School” (公東高工) was mounted on the wall of the top floor, emphasizing the school's presence to the environs of the school campus and the adjacent main road (fig. 8). Above the louvers, a scattering of small, irregular slit windows adds visual variety without compromising the wall's overall solidity. A projecting stair volume at the far right further defines the façade's edge. Given the façade's public orientation, the design prioritizes clarity and visual identity. Stained-glass elements, which might have conflicted with the signage and shading system, were likely relocated to the more inward-facing west elevation, where they could serve a liturgical and spatial function. The plan change in favor of today's solution with the stained-glass windows at the building's inner façade is evidenced by the early maquette that was published in Albert Wider's *Glaube + Bild* of 1960 (fig. 9–11).⁶⁷

The north elevation reveals the buildings functions, serving as the main circulation side for both daily campus life and access to the upper-level chapel. Its weathered board-formed concrete surface gives the wall a strong material presence. Behind it, a

⁶⁶ Group photo of the first class of graduates at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School with faculty and students. Catalogued by the Public History Research Center, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Dong Hwa University. Source: National Cultural Memory Bank, https://tcmb.culture.tw/zh-tw/detail?indexCode=Culture_Event&id=551519 (accessed July 2, 2025).

⁶⁷ Wider, *Glaube + Bild*, 1960, p. 142. Huang Kuan-Chih has already pointed out to the differences between the maquette and the executed building. Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, p. 177.

long interior staircase connects the first floor to the fourth-floor chapel, guiding a vertical movement that is both practical and meditative. Along the stairway, a sequence of small square and rectangular windows, some irregularly placed, offers changing views of the schoolyard and distant landscape. These framed glimpses, aligned with points along the ascent, turn the act of climbing into a contemplative journey. This careful coordination of movement, structure, and visual rhythm reflects Dahinden's design approach, in which circulation becomes an integral part of the spiritual experience.

The west side of the chapel feels more open and is designed with clear horizontal layers. Since it faces the inside of the school, where people move between spaces, the layout follows a regular and practical pattern. On the ground floor, nine tall glass doors with wooden frames are evenly spaced, allowing natural light to enter the rooms. On the three upper floors, long balconies are set back into the building, functioning as outdoor hallways. These are lined with rows of narrow horizontal windows and red-framed doors, around eight to ten on each floor. At the top, the wall is cut with a group of square and rectangular openings in different sizes and angles, introducing a sense of lightness and playfulness to the solid wall. These openings contain Albert Wider's stained-glass panels of the chapel, placed to catch the soft afternoon sunlight from the west. The light that enters is subtle and gentle, adding a reflective mood to the worship space. Taken together, the combination of balconies, windows, and openings shows a design that is both practical and refined, carefully balanced in function and expression.

At the corner where the west south sides of the building meet, a small white-painted additional room is attached to the chapel. This side room, probably used as an office or administrative space, has long narrow windows with wooden frames and a sloped concrete roof (fig. 12). Its smaller size and modest design create a clear contrast with the chapel's rough texture and heavy appearance. This auxiliary space brings a

more approachable, human scale to the building at the ground level and also adds practical use to the overall layout. The material contrast—smooth painted walls on the side room and rough board-patterned concrete on the chapel—further accentuates the main building’s solid and striking form.

3. Forms of Light in Saint Joseph’s Chapel

Justus Dahinden considered light not merely as functional but as an instrument to enhance spatial illusions and elevate the sacred atmosphere. As noted in his 1963 article on Catholic church architecture, “glare-free lighting” (*blendungsfreie Lichtführung*) is essential in guiding the congregation toward inner stillness and devotion.⁶⁸ He explains:

“Suitability of Catholic church construction for prayer [*Bethaftigkeit*] has become a top priority today! [...] To achieve this, it is essential to utilize all available contemporary technical means to create spatial effects that direct the gaze forward and upward. Differentiated, glare-free lighting within the church interior fosters reflection and guides attention toward the essential; more than any other element, it has the capacity to impart a sense of sacrality to the space.”⁶⁹

This paragraph highlights the intensive search for new forms of liturgical spaces that utilize modern technology to evoke a sacred atmosphere. Dahinden regarded lighting as the primary element for achieving “spatial effects,” aiming to bridge two fundamentally different realms: modern rationalism and the sacred. With the specific term *Bethaftigkeit*—an expression which Dahinden used more often and appears today in the context of texts about Swiss churches, which can only be approximately

⁶⁸ Justus Dahinden, “Katholischer Kirchenbau heute,” in: *Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home: Internationale Zeitschrift* 17, No. 2, 1963, p. 87.

⁶⁹ “Die Bethaftigkeit im katholischen Kirchenbau ist heute zu einem ersten Anliegen geworden! [...] Es gilt, hierzu alle zur Verfügung stehenden technischen Mittel der Gegenwart einzusetzen, um Effekte zu schaffen, die den Blick nach vorne und oben weiten. Die differenzierte, blendungsfreie Lichtführung im Kirchenraum regt zur Besinnung an und führt auf das Wesentliche; sie ist mehr als alles andere in der Lage, die gewünschte Weihe in den Raum zu tragen.” Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

translated as “suitability for prayer”—he describes a space that offers the faithful a setting conducive to concentration and introspection.⁷⁰ The concept of *Bethaftigkeit* embodies the inherent tension between architectural functionalism and the desire to create spaces imbued with spiritual significance. In this context, light becomes a primary medium through which architecture expresses theological meaning and emotional tone.

This approach is evident in Saint Joseph’s Chapel, where the architect employed various forms of illumination—both natural and artificial—which will be examined in this chapter. First, the sanctuary or altar space receives natural light through clerestory windows positioned above. Second, in the nave, colored light enters through the stained-glass windows by Albert Wider, located in the west wall. Third, the space is lit by a band of concealed clerestory windows hidden in a rift along the ceiling. Fourth, the large sliding door at the entrance is also to be used as light source. Fifth, simple round lamps made of frosted glass are seamlessly embedded in the concrete ceiling.

Fu comments on the use of light in Saint Joseph’s Chapel, noting that the chapel evokes a calm, contemplative atmosphere through three distinct sources of natural light:

“The interior of Saint Joseph’s Chapel of Kung-Tung fully demonstrates the architect’s mastery of the relationship between light and architecture, deeply influenced by Le Corbusier’s work. Within the Chapel, a serene atmosphere infuses the entire interior. Three natural light sources each play a distinct role. The altar is illuminated by indirect natural light, a soft, gradient light illuminating the rough gray-blue walls and the abstract bronze image of Jesus, as if from heaven. [...] This lighting method was also used in Corbusier’s Sainte-Marie de La Tourette. The irregular rectangular openings on the west wall are inlaid with colored glass in warm colors, and soft light is reflected on the rough wall, like the shadow of the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp. The horizontal high window band under the eaves of the west

⁷⁰ See, for example, Dahinden, *Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

sloping roof plays another role, casting a peaceful light on the concrete slab that divides the east and west parts of the church.”⁷¹

3.1. Liturgical Space as Stage

Since the Early Christian times, the altar—originally shaped as a cube and, from the Middle Ages onward, as an oblong block—was the focal point of the church building and has therefore held a central position in the liturgical space for communal worship. It carries multiple associations, most notably with the Eucharistic sacrifice and table of the Last Supper.⁷² The Christian altar functions as a table for the celebration of the Eucharist, symbolically prepared in reference to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. The community gathers before the altar, which may be elevated by a few steps to enhance visibility of the ritual. Importantly, in the Roman Catholic Church, the area surrounding the altar, the sanctuary, is still regarded as possessing a higher degree of sanctity compared to the space occupied by the congregation.⁷³ The Liturgical Movement and the Second Vatican Council reinterpreted the altar as a “people’s altar,” from which the priest, standing behind it, faced the congregation (*versus populum*). Furthermore, it was recommended to position the altar at the center of the congregation to symbolically foster a sense of community. This suggestion was articulated in the 1964 instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, which outlined liturgical norms following the Second Vatican Council.⁷⁴ As a result, traditional church buildings incorporated additional altars

⁷¹ Fu, *Illustrated Cultural History*, 2019, p. 766.

⁷² Edmund Bishop, *On the History of the Christian Altar*, Stratton-on-the-Fosse: St. Gregory’s Society, 1905, p. 15. John N. Lupia, “Altar (3. Western to c. 1550),” in: *Oxford Art Online*, 2003 (updated 2023), at: *Grove Art Online*, <https://0-doi-org.opac.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T002021> (accessed May 20, 2025).

⁷³ Lupia, *Altar*, 2003.

⁷⁴ *Inter Oecumenici*, chap. V, II, 91, English version (September 26, 1964): “The main altar should preferably be freestanding, to permit walking around it and celebration facing the people. Its location in the place of worship should be truly central so that the attention of the whole congregation naturally focuses there.” The text is available online, at: <https://adoremus.org/1964/09/inter-oecumenici/> (accessed May 20, 2025). See Ralf van Bühren, “Raum, Kunst und Liturgie. Praktische Auswirkungen der Liturgiereform auf den Kirchenbau nach dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil,” in: Reimund Haas, ed., *Fiat voluntas tua. Theologe und Historiker – Priester und Professor. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Harm Klueting am 23. März 2014*, Münster: Aschendorff, 2014, pp. 73–100, esp. pp. 75–79.

positioned toward the community to comply with the new regulations, while newly constructed churches responded by designing centralized spaces with pews arranged around the altar, thereby reducing the boundaries between the sanctuary and the congregation.⁷⁵

Against this background, Saint Joseph's Chapel reflects a combination of traditional and reformed liturgical elements (fig. 13). The altar space and elongated nave, furnished with two rows of pews of unequal width, maintain the traditional frontal orientation of the faithful toward the altar. This is, of course, also attributable to the chapel's layout, which—being situated atop a school building—must conform to the overall architectural concept of the structure. The altar block, instead, is already freestanding, allowing the priest to celebrate the liturgy facing the people (*versus populum*) (fig. 14).

Dahinden's Saint Joseph's Chapel exemplifies already a mature application of indirect lighting as a means of shaping sacred space. In this modest but conceptually refined structure, natural light filters through hidden slits above the altar wall and narrow openings in the bell tower, creating a soft, immersive illumination (fig. 15). The altar becomes the focal point, bathed in diffused light that avoids visual distraction, an embodiment of Dahinden's assertion that "space that does not trigger emotion is empty. The essence of architectural space design lies in the orchestration of experience."⁷⁶

This approach reflects principles first articulated in his 1956 dissertation, where he wrote that "to make a ceiling appear as weightless as possible, it should not be visibly or statically articulated. Appropriate lighting effects can enhance this illusionistic impact."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Van Bühren, *Raum, Kunst und Liturgie*, 2014, pp. 79–80.

⁷⁶ Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

⁷⁷ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 86: "Soll zum Beispiel eine Decke möglichst gewichtslos über dem Raum schweben, so darf sie in keiner Weise visuell-statisch gegliedert sein. Entsprechende Lichteffekte können die illusionistische Wirkung steigern."

Dahinden believes that light, together with space and color, acquires meaning only when it functions as part of a unified and lived architectural experience. It helps localize the environment, guides human orientation indirectly, and reflects the relationship between people and space. Light is not important on its own but becomes meaningful through its connection to comfort, typical human activities, and the events that unfold within the space.⁷⁸

In the Trigon village project, Dahinden showed a clear interest in how color, light, and form influence perception and emotion in architectural space. “To emphasize the nature of this building game, some elements have been vividly coloured in reds, oranges, yellows and blues. The remaining grey concrete looks much lighter and gayer in contrast.”⁷⁹ It means by combining bright and highly saturated primary colors with neutral grey concrete created a lively contrast was that made the environment feel lighter, more dynamic, and welcoming. This approach reflects his belief that architecture should not only meet functional needs but also uplift daily experience through visual and emotional richness.

This same idea can be seen in Saint Joseph’s Chapel. Although the chapel uses more subtle tones, Dahinden still carefully applied color and light to shape atmosphere and guide experience. For example, the colored glass brings warmth and meaning into the space, while the changing natural light throughout the day encourages quiet reflection. It shows a consistent idea, which is that the color and light are not just decorative, but essential tools for creating spaces that speak to the senses and spirit.

The sanctuary is strongly recessed on both sides in relation to the nave, with concealed spaces located behind the lateral walls. The altar area is progressively elevated in front of the pews, first by a single step leading to a landing, and then by

⁷⁸ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 68–70.

⁷⁹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 104.

three additional steps to the podium. The whitewashed south wall serves as a backdrop for the dark altar block, designed by Albert Wider, and for his black metal crucifix positioned to the left (fig. 16). The wall is strongly illuminated by skylights embedded in the raised north wall, which remains hidden from the view of the congregation gathered in the nave. Their advantage is that natural light from the north allows for glare-free illumination without the formation of shadows. This creates a pronounced theatrical effect, particularly because the light source remains concealed from the nave. The north-facing skylights softly illuminate the space—and especially the white wall—with natural light, while the interior lacks any visible openings to the outside world—apart from doors, which are typically kept closed—that might distract the community’s attention. For the priest celebrating Holy Mass at the altar, the north-facing windows also ensure that he is not blinded by direct sunlight. Additionally, the limited exposure to direct sunlight positively influences the indoor climate by reducing unwanted heat gain.⁸⁰

In his writings, Justus Dahinden referred to the altar area as *a stage*, where divine action unfolds, underscoring the performative and symbolic nature of the liturgy.⁸¹ Dahinden treats the altar space as a stage, using focused lighting to draw attention and create a sense of spiritual drama. Light becomes a key element to define the sacred center while connecting worship with communal use. Commenting on the structure of his newly built church, Saint Paul in Dielsdorf near Zurich (1960–62), in a 1963 article,

⁸⁰ The newly installed windows are now fitted with an electric opening mechanism, which contributes to improvement in the indoor climate.

⁸¹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 83: “Round this eucharistic core will be grouped a larger community room equipped with movable seats planned for theatre, concerts, discussions, conferences as well as œcumenical services. Movable partitions will allow the two volumes to be integrated into a single total space. In this way, the usual parish hall becomes superfluous. In one of my last realisations, I went so far as to design the platform for the choir at the threshold of two volumes so that it can be transformed into a stage and the confessional box can become the projection room for cinema shows.”

published in the January issue of *Bauen und Wohnen*, he discusses the relationship between the sanctuary and the nave in the context of the Second Vatican Council:

“The integration of the nave and altar area, which is increasingly being pursued today, results in a unified floor plan. In order to ensure that the boundary between the chancel and the public area remains perceptible despite the closest possible spatial connection between the altar and the congregation, an apse was created. This apse is clearly distinguished by an elevated spatial form and indirect lighting.”⁸²

When we compare the situation of Saint Paul with that of the Chapel of Saint Joseph at Kung-Tung, it becomes evident that, although indirect lighting has been successfully implemented in the latter building creating a stage effect, the arrangement of the sanctuary and nave remains still traditionally pre-conciliar. The orientation of the pews facing the altar, along with the spatial separation of the altar area indicates that, due to architectural constraints, these elements could not be modified in accordance with the directives of the Second Vatican Council. Le Corbusier’s slightly earlier Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp also exhibits in the nave similar limitations in adapting to the new liturgical regulations.

For Dahinden, light plays a key role in a sense of dramatization. In Frank Lloyd Wright’s Great Workroom of the Johnson Wax Administration Building (1936–39) in Racine, Wisconsin, Dahinden admired the use of indirect lighting through rooflights and the resulting *chiaroscuro* effect: “How convincing such a general melody of horizontal bands can be is shown by Erich Mendelsohn’s Schocken Chemnitz department store (1929/30). The alternation of light (balustrade) and dark (glass) has something of a wallpaper-like quality and is entirely in the service of creating the most

⁸² Justus Dahinden, “Katholische Kirche St. Paulus, Dielsdorf bei Zürich,” in: *Bauen und Wohnen*, January 1963, pp. 92–94, here p. 94: “Die heute wieder in vermehrtem Maße angestrebte Integration von Kirchenschiff und Altarraum führen [sic!] zur grundrißlichen Einheit. Damit sich die Grenze zwischen Chor und Volksraum trotz größtmöglichem räumlichem Kontakt des Altares mit der Gemeinde nicht verwischt, ist eine Apsis ausgebildet worden, welche sich in einem überhöhten Raumgebilde mit Indirektbeleuchtung klar absetzt.”

comprehensive illusion possible.”⁸³ The long corridor of Saint Joseph’s Chapel also follows this design concept. Although it does not use the same glass materials, it employs sunshades that extend to the end of the corridor. When sunlight enters the corridor, it creates a contrast of light and shadow resembling wallpaper-like patterns. As people walk through, it feels like entering an illusion where everyday life and ritual spaces transition within this area. Light plays a dramatic role here, with the interplay of dark and light creating a dynamic visual effect that makes the architectural space more lively and fluid.

Dahinden deeply valued the theatrical potential of light in architecture. In his commentary on Frank Lloyd Wright’s Great Workroom in the Johnson Wax Administration Building (1936–39) in Racine, Wisconsin, he admired how indirect light from the roof dissolved the visibility of the structural columns, making the interior appear as if it were floating.⁸⁴ He noted that light could blur the logic of structural weight, transforming a rational space into an emotionally charged one. Similarly, in Erich Mendelsohn’s Schocken department store, Dahinden observed how alternating light and dark elements were used to create a visual rhythm that served the illusion of depth and motion.⁸⁵ This perspective directly relates to Dahinden’s design of Saint Joseph’s Chapel. The narrow skylight above the altar allows a concentrated shaft of natural light to fall onto the liturgical center, isolating and elevating it from the rest of the space. Much like Wright and Mendelsohn used light to challenge spatial logic and heighten visual impact in their secular buildings, Dahinden used light to dramatize the sacred in a technical sense. In the chapel, light is not simply functional but symbolic. It

⁸³ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 69.

⁸⁴ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 70.

⁸⁵ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 69. “Wie überzeugend sich eine solche Generalmelodie von waagrechten Banden auswirken kann, zeigt Erich Mendelsohns Kaufhaus Schocken in Chemnitz. Der Wechsel von Hell (Brüstung) und Dunkel (Glas) hat etwas Tapetenhaftes und steht ganz im Dienste einer möglichst umfassenden Illusionierung.”

creates contrast, guides attention, and dissolves the boundary between structure and experience. Through this, Dahinden achieved a space where the spiritual atmosphere emerges from the interplay of architecture and light.

Through strategic indirect illumination, the space becomes both expressive and emotionally resonant. Of course, the situation in Saint Joseph's chapel is much simpler compared to Wright's administration building and, typologically, they have not much in common. However, the cited text shows that, already in his doctoral thesis of 1956, Dahinden has carefully studied such effects in historical and modernist architecture.

A possible source of inspiration may have been Le Corbusier's architecture; he was a master in the use of contained light. A striking element can be found in the small chapels at the pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp, where a beam of light—undiminished by glass—falls directly from above onto the austere altar block (fig. 17). This shaft of light becomes a symbol of divine presence, powerfully connecting heaven and earth. A comparable idea is present in Saint Joseph's Chapel, where natural light enters from above the altar, guiding movement and emphasizing the sacred center. Although different building materials are used and the cultural background of the building is different, both architects use light not just as an aid to vision, but as a vehicle for belief. Dahinden's use of softer, filtered light creates a gentle and atmospheric spiritual experience through carefully choreographed movement within the space. In contrast, Le Corbusier's beam, lacking glass, emphasizes purity and transcendence in a bold, direct way. This comparison raises a key question: is the sense of sacredness produced mainly by the quality of the light itself, or by how the architecture shapes and reveals that light? This question will be explored in more detail in a later section.

In the two churches Justus Dahinden realized in Switzerland during the 1960s—Saint Paul in Dielsdorf (1960–62) and Maria Krönung in Zurich-Witikon (1963–65)—shortly after his work on Saint Joseph's Chapel, the same ideas are executed with

greater technical sophistication. Inspired in part by Frank Lloyd Wright's use of ambient light, which Dahinden described as "indirect lighting with strong emotional effect, both churches incorporate concealed skylights and clerestories to bathe the space in a luminous atmosphere."⁸⁶ These light sources are designed not to be seen but to be felt, echoing Dahinden's assertion that "the boundary between inside and outside is defined by light, by openings, and not by mass."⁸⁷ Dahinden views light as an essential element that shapes spatial meaning, human behavior, and spiritual experience. He states that we orient ourselves through "space, body, colour, light," which contribute to "the image of the 'setting'" and lead to "crystallisation of a definite circle of events or of ways of human behaviour." Rather than being decorative, light is integral to how space is lived and understood. As he explains: "This is why space and light are never a pronouncement." Instead, they gain meaning through their relationship with human presence. In sacred architecture, this role becomes even more profound, as "pinpointed luminosity opens the depths of an introverted building form and creates within a transcendental meaning." Through these insights, Dahinden reveals light as both a functional and symbolic medium, central to the architectural experience.⁸⁸

Across all three churches, in Taitung, Dielsdorf, and Zurich-Witikon, whether situated in the tropical context of Taiwan or the temperate landscapes of Switzerland, Dahinden consistently uses light not only as a technical requirement but as a spiritual medium. This is most clearly manifested in the sanctuary, which, within the Catholic tradition, is regarded as the most sacred part of the liturgical space. Lighting here is carefully hidden yet emotionally present, an orchestration of visibility and concealment that mirrors Dahinden's vision of sacred architecture as an immersive experience.

⁸⁶ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 74.

⁸⁷ Dahinden, *Versuch*, p. 86.

⁸⁸ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 68, 70, 74.

3.2. Light from the Nave Ceiling

The light descending from the ceiling resembles an invisible path, guiding the faithful from the entrance toward the altar. This movement is not only a physical journey but also a spiritual pilgrimage. In this way, Dahinden's lighting design emphasizes the sense of spatial direction and orientation, turning the church itself into a structure that leads and inspires. "With the aspect of a 'way' the church is an open house where one meets and where one mingles occasionally with those who have the same faith."⁸⁹ Dahinden regarded the church as more than a sacred enclosure. He envisioned it as a pathway, a place of openness where people come together, share moments of faith, and experience a sense of community. His design philosophy emphasized the church as a welcoming environment, one that supports both individual contemplation and occasional interaction among believers. This reflects his broader view that architecture should serve as a meaningful backdrop for human connection and spiritual experience.

In Saint Joseph's Chapel, the nave ceiling is a complex construction that is both structurally and visually integrated with the space of the oblong nave below (fig. 18). A crucial element of the spatial composition is the unequal width of the ten lines of pews on two sides of the nave divided by an aisle. The pews on the west—or on the right when facing the sanctuary—are twice as wide as those on the east side. This asymmetry reflects the unequal division of the roof and ceiling (fig. 19).

Externally, the concrete roof is split up along the longitudinal axis into two oblong pitched parts differing in inclination (fig. 20). The underside of this division is articulated in the interior as the ceiling itself (fig. 21). The heavier western portion of the ceiling is supported by four transversal concrete fasciae that function as beams, while the smaller eastern section remains free of such support. These transverse

⁸⁹ Justus Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 77.

elements are intersected by a longitudinal beam extending from the entrance to the altar wall and spanning the length of the nave. Because the larger western section of the ceiling is elevated to a higher level, a clerestory with windows facing east is created (fig. 22). This longitudinal beam serves a dual function: structurally, it stabilizes the roof; visually, it conceals the clerestory while simultaneously acting as a *brise-lumière*, shielding against direct light and guiding it into the interior in a controlled manner.⁹⁰ In this way, the clerestory admits indirect light, which softly illuminates the ceiling and creates an impression of lightness (fig. 23). This luminous effect visually counterbalances the mass of the fasciae, mitigating their optical weight and enhancing the spatial harmony of the interior.

A closer examination of the relationship between space and ceiling reveals, on the one hand, the structural complexity of the upper enclosure in comparison to the simple oblong outline of the nave, and on the other, the deliberate separation of ceiling and walls through the contrasting surface treatments and coloring of the concrete. There is a striking contrast between the rough surface of the walls, coated with *gunnite* (sprayed concrete) and subsequently whitewashed,⁹¹ and the gray exposed concrete of the ceiling and fasciae. This treatment recalls Le Corbusier's chapel of Ronchamp, where a similar application of *gunnite* on the walls creates a stark contrast with the sculptural mass of the vault (figs. 13, 14).⁹² Dahinden's language, of course, varies significantly according to the specific task and context of a school chapel. In this case, the fasciae

⁹⁰ This term was used by Pauly, *Le Corbusier*, 2015, pp. 36, 42, 91, 92. In the context of the clerestory of Saint Joseph's Chapel, it seems more fitting than Corbusier's *brise-soleil*.

⁹¹ The technical term *gunnite* (or *gunite*) appears in Le Corbusier's *Œuvre complète* to describe the wall surface of the chapel at Ronchamp. Willy Boesiger, ed., *Le Corbusier. Œuvre complète*, vol. 6: 1952–1957, Zurich: Les Éditions d'Architecture, 1957, p. 72. Corbusier used the technique for the first time in his housing project of Pessac. Brian Brace Taylor, "Le Corbusier at Pessac: Professional and Client Responsibilities," in: *MIT Press Open Architecture and Urban Studies • The Open Hand*, April 23, 2021, available online at: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/2717f6ed-22ac-4b86-bb64-a11c1eefe9ed.pdf> (accessed May 19, 2025).

⁹² As James Stirling mentioned, the *gunnite* of Ronchamp has a depth of about 2 inches (c. 5.08 cm). Stirling, *Ronchamp*, 1956, pp. 154–161, here p. 156.

evoke the appearance of actual wooden beams, an effect enhanced by the imprint of the wooden sheathing used during their casting, which remains visible on their surface.

In Justus Dahinden's vision, the ceiling, illuminated by indirect light, appears visually detached from the surrounding walls and, by extension, from earth's gravity: "These are creative means that contribute *directly* to the 'overcoming of the earth's gravity.'"⁹³ This creates the impression that the ceiling is floating, thereby reinforcing the sense of spiritual elevation inherent in the space. In his doctoral thesis, he stated in general: "If a ceiling is intended to appear as weightless as possible above a room, it should not be visually structured in a way that suggests static support. Appropriate lighting effects can enhance this illusion."⁹⁴ This idea is further elaborated in *Denken Fühlen Handeln*: "Indirect light makes the source disappear and emphasizes the effect of the space. It does not draw attention to itself, but to what it illuminates."⁹⁵ These observations demonstrate Dahinden's reflections on lighting effects and architectural illusionism since the preparation of his doctoral dissertation. Furthermore, the notion of a ceiling hovering above a space recalls Le Corbusier's chapel of Ronchamp, where this effect is taken to an extreme: a narrow light gap creates the illusion that the massive sagging vault is weightlessly suspended above the building's walls (fig. 24). Whether Dahinden had already seen Le Corbusier's chapel at such an early stage (1956) is difficult to determine, but the similarities invite reflection on the possibility. In his doctoral thesis, he only mentions the Villa Savoye at Poissy (1929–31),⁹⁶ the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille (1947–52),⁹⁷ the Pavillon Suisse at the Cité Universitaire in

⁹³ "Es handelt sich hier um gestalterische Mittel, die auf *direktem* Wege zur 'Überwindung der Erdschwere' führen." Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 86.

⁹⁴ "Soll [...] eine Decke möglichst gewichtslos über dem Raum schweben, so darf sie in keiner Weise visuell-statisch gegliedert sein. Entsprechende Lichteffekte können die illusionistische Wirkung steigern." Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 86.

⁹⁵ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 82.

⁹⁶ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, pp. 17, 20, 64, 71, 74, 79.

⁹⁷ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 37, note 24.

Paris (1930–32),⁹⁸ and the proportional system of the *Modulor*.⁹⁹ Also, he had read the 1923 *Vers une architecture (Toward an Architecture)*, which is listed in his bibliography.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, even if he had only known Ronchamp through black-and-white photographs—possibly from the sixth volume of Le Corbusier’s *Œuvre complète* (1957)—the impression must still have been striking (fig. 25).¹⁰¹

In Saint Joseph’s Chapel, Dahinden’s ideas are fully integrated into the context of his own architectural language. This is particularly evident in the subtle lighting embedded within the beams above the congregation. These light sources are largely hidden, allowing the walls and ceiling to act as reflectors. The result is a nuanced play of light and shadow, producing varying shades of gray that enrich the spatial experience without drawing attention to the lighting fixtures themselves.

3.3. The Western Wall: Light Source and Illuminated Picture Board

In Saint Joseph’s Chapel, the western wall functions as both a light source and an illuminated picture board displaying the fourteen Stations of the Cross, designed by Albert Wider in 1960. Slightly recessed into the interior, this wall forms a glowing narrative surface that guides the faithful in their contemplation of Christ’s journey to Golgotha. Light filters through the stained-glass windows, casting prismatic patches onto the red terracotta pavement and wooden pews. While, from the interior, the windows appear integrated into the wall surface—like slides on a light-box—the wall’s full structural depth is only revealed from the exterior (fig. 26). From a vantage point below, the west front presents a formal arrangement of openings along the upper floor’s

⁹⁸ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, pp. 68, 71, 74, 79.

⁹⁹ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, pp. 36–38.

¹⁰⁰ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 90.

¹⁰¹ In his thesis, he mentions only the vols. 3 and 5 of the *Œuvre complète*; Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 7, but not vol. 6, which includes Ronchamp and La Tourette. Willy Boesiger, ed., *Le Corbusier. Œuvre complète*, vol. 6: 1952–1957, Zurich: Les Éditions d’Architecture, 1957, pp. 16–41 (Ronchamp), pp. 42–49 (La Tourette; under construction).

external wall strip, visually connecting with the terrace openings that face the chapel's entrance. A total of eleven rectangular openings, differing in size and oriented perpendicularly, are distributed across four distinct groups (fig. 27). The smooth, lustrous colored window panes set in metal frames stand in stark contrast to the rough wall surface, coated with *gunnite* and successively whitewashed (fig. 28). The openings, furthermore, correspond with an arrangement of similar apertures in the north wall that light the stairwell (fig. 29).

It is worth noting that the maquette featured in Albert Wider's 1960 anniversary publication shows an earlier stage of the project.¹⁰² The side of the upper floor with the windows was still positioned on the opposite front of the building. In this version, the windowed wall is positioned atop the grid of sun-breakers covering the three lower floors on today's rear east side. The reasons behind Dahinden's decision to alter the orientation of the windowed front remain unclear. It may have been related to the desired effect of afternoon light, which tends to be more pronounced on the west side.

There can be no doubt that Saint Joseph's Chapel and Le Corbusier's pilgrimage chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp are—functionally and structurally—fundamentally different buildings. Saint Joseph's Chapel is integrated into a larger architectural complex, whereas Ronchamp is conceived as a freestanding monument. The former features a low, rectangular interior enclosed by thin walls, while the latter is characterized by a sculptural, monumental form with walls of varying thickness that define the liturgical space through an act of embrace. Despite these clear differences, certain elements of Saint Joseph's Chapel invite a sideways glance toward Ronchamp.

¹⁰² Wider, *Glaube + Bild*, 1960, p. 142. Huang Kuan-Chih has already pointed out to the differences between the maquette and the executed building. Huang, *On Church Architecture*, 2019, p. 177 (as fig. 7).

Each side of Le Corbusier's Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp exhibits a distinct structural and architectural character, shaped by the interior's functional and experiential requirements. On the exterior, the north wall is articulated with multiple rectangular openings (fig. 30). This method of wall composition—forming a mosaic of decorative apertures—appears to have served as a model for the design of Dahinden's walls as viewed from the exterior (fig. 31). However, his approach is more orderly and less experimental, reflecting a more appropriate response to the functional and contextual demands of a school building.

While Justus Dahinden did not mention Saint Joseph's Chapel explicitly, so that we have no record of his specific thoughts on its west wall, he speaks about the dematerialization of architectural boundaries, particularly between interior and exterior spaces. This concept supports the design of a glowing wall that functions as both a visual threshold and a symbolic picture board, such as the backlit Stations of the Cross. He writes: "The space experience arises through movement and consists in the impression of complete dematerialization of the outer shell [...] transitions are blurred; outside and inside begin to interpenetrate."¹⁰³ In this sense, light blurs the boundary between structure and meaning, between narrative and space.

Despite the structural differences between the two buildings, the use of a wall as a visual or pictorial support positioned to the right when facing the altar (fig. 32), is reminiscent of Le Corbusier's design (fig. 33). At Ronchamp, Le Corbusier himself designed the stained-glass windows embedded in the south wall, reinforcing the wall's role as both a boundary and a medium for visual expression. Both the Ronchamp Chapel and Saint Joseph's Chapel employ strong contrasts between the images illuminated from the outside and the wall surface. A key similarity lies in their use of illuminated

¹⁰³ Dahinden, *Versuch*, 1956, p. 55.

images set against rough, white-plastered walls. In Ronchamp, Le Corbusier installed painted windows featuring colorful motifs—such as stars, sun, moon, birds, and inscriptions (“Marie”)—that refer either directly or symbolically to the Virgin Mary, who holds a place of special veneration in the church. These elements were set against whitewashed surfaces, creating striking visual effects through the interplay of light and color (fig. 34). Danièle Pauly has noted Le Corbusier’s distinctive use of primary colors and their blends, a characteristic approach that also appears in his other works from the 1950s.¹⁰⁴

Dahinden’s design for Saint Joseph’s Chapel features backlit images of the fourteen Stations of the Cross embedded in a clean white wall, using light to emphasize religious storytelling. Despite these shared visual strategies, the chapels diverge in their treatment of wall form and light integration. Dahinden utilized a flat wall with windows positioned behind an internal layer, resulting in a smooth exterior that allows light to emanate subtly. In contrast, Le Corbusier created a sculptural wall with the glass set at the exterior.¹⁰⁵ This design produces dramatic shadows and conveys a powerful sense of mass and depth.

The iconographic approaches of the two chapels also differ significantly according to place and iconographical choices. Le Corbusier’s imagery is mostly abstract and deeply personal, with hand-drawn symbols and cosmic references that Pauly characterizes as “declensions of the architect’s poetical vocabulary and language of plasticity.”

By contrast, Dahinden’s depiction of the traditional fourteen Stations of the Cross provides a concrete religious narrative deeply rooted in Catholic tradition.¹⁰⁶ Both

¹⁰⁴ Pauly, *Le Corbusier*, 2015, pp. 45–46.

¹⁰⁵ Pauly, *Le Corbusier*, 2015, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ Herbert Thurston, S. J., *The Stations of the Cross. An Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, London: Burns & Oates, 1914.

architects employed white walls and light as expressive tools for spirituality. However, Dahinden and Wider prioritized clarity and inner illumination, whereas Le Corbusier focused on sculptural form, shadow play, and symbolic freedom.

3.4. Light from the Entrance Door: Fluidity of Space

The longitudinal space of Saint Joseph's Chapel is preceded by a shallow, open-air courtyard, which must be crossed from the staircase in order to reach the interior. Shield walls to the east and west not only obstruct views to the outside but also prevent sightlines from below into the forecourt. Entry to the chapel is granted through a wide opening, closed by two wooden sliding shutters mounted on solid metal guides (fig. 35). The asymmetrical design of the doors reflects the spatial asymmetry of the chapel itself: the left panel is significantly narrower than the right. This entrance solution represents a locally adapted innovation, one that would be highly unusual in the context of church architecture in Dahinden's homeland. In European Catholic churches—including those in Switzerland—it is more common to find smaller entrances with shutters or doors that open outward, not least for reasons of safety. In fact, the sliding shutters of Saint Joseph's more closely resemble a garage door than the entrance to a liturgical space. Such an entrance must be understood primarily in terms of its functionality. The width of the opening—and the resulting gap between the shutters—can be adjusted according to weather conditions. In the event of a larger gathering, the doors may be fully opened, allowing for a spatial integration of the chapel interior with the forecourt. In this instance, the wide opening plays a key role in bringing natural light into the nave.

Such fluidity between interior and exterior reflects modernist principles of spatial integration, wherein walls—or, as in this case, doors—are conceived as permeable boundaries rather than fixed enclosures. Le Corbusier explored this idea of spatial fluidity in his design for the Villa Savoye at Poissy (1928–31), where the boundaries

between the interior space and the exterior terraces are deliberately softened.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp adheres to the principle of flexibility between inside and outside. Rather than functioning as definitive boundaries, the sculptural walls serve to circumscribe space while intentionally leaving openings that make the presence of the outside perceptible. It, furthermore, aligns with the concept of the church as a multifunctional space, characterized by adaptable boundaries and movable walls as outlined by Justus Dahinden. The integration of diverse functions was explicitly advocated by Dahinden in his 1963 article “Katholischer Kirchenbau heute.” He declared:

“Thus, the space for the teaching service, the presentation and preparation of the offerings, the place of sacrifice, and the area for the sacrificial meal are separated not only by the expansive surrounding area designated for the congregation, but also by one or more cell-like bays intended for smaller groups [...].”¹⁰⁸

Ten years later, in *Denken Föhle Handeln*, he asserts: “Movable partitions will allow the two volumes to be integrated into a single total space.”¹⁰⁹

It should also be noted that Justus Dahinden emphasized the significance of threshold spaces and gradual spatial transitions. In this context, light functions not merely as illumination, but as a means of guiding movement and articulating spatial rhythm. “Pinpointed luminosity opens the depths of an introverted building form and creates within a transcendental meaning.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ William J. R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms*, London and New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 1986 (reprint 2001), pp. 94–98.

¹⁰⁸ “So gliedert sich zum Raum für den Lehrgottesdienst, zum Raum für die Abgabe und Zubereitung der Opfergaben, zum Ort der Opferstätte und zum Bezirk für das Opfermahl nicht bloß der großangelegte Umraum der Gläubigen, sondern ebensosehr eine oder mehrere zellenartige Buchten für kleinere Gruppen [...].” Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

¹⁰⁹ Dahinden, *Denken Föhle Handeln*, 1973, p. 83.

¹¹⁰ Dahinden, *Denken Föhle Handeln*, 1973, p. 74.

Tent-like church of the Coronation of Our Lady in Zürich-Witikon, 1965-1966. The entrance sequence at Saint Joseph's Chapel exemplifies this principle. Before accessing the main worship space, visitors pass through a forecourt that filters sound and light, preparing heart and mind for a sacred experience. This small-scale surrounding area" ("der kleinmaßstäbliche 'Umraum'") as Dahinden calls it, marks the transition from the secular world into the sacred, with light as a guide and threshold.¹¹¹ Although in the European Catholic context such front zones are typically understood as vestibules, serving as transitional buffer spaces between the exterior and the liturgical interior, the underlying spatial principle bears meaningful comparison to the forecourt of Saint Joseph's Chapel.

Finally, the south-north orientation of the entire school building merits attention. Dahinden's chapel is thoughtfully attuned to Taitung's tropical climate. The north-facing sliding doors help to mitigate direct harsh sunlight while welcoming soft, indirect illumination, a strategy deeply rooted in traditional Taiwanese residential architecture, particularly in courtyard houses (*sanheyuan*; 三合院)¹¹² Cai highlights the theological meaning of the original entrance sequence at Kung-Tung Technical High School, which led through a semi-enclosed courtyard resembling a *sanheyuan*. This space reflects monastic layouts and echoes the traditional *atrium* in Latin or *parvis* in French, a symbolic paradise one must leave before entering the sacred. However, Cai shows less evidence to explore further how the hierarchical and defensive features of the *sanheyuan* compare to the spatial logic of this Western-style church. As a result, the

¹¹¹ Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87. "Nur der kleinmaßstäbliche 'Umraum' ist in der Lage, dem 'passiven' Menschen in seiner Zaghafteit den nötigen psychischen Halt und die Geborgenheit zu geben, welche nötig sind für sein individuelles Gebet." ("Only the 'small-scale surrounding area' is able to give the 'passive' person in his timidity the necessary psychological support and security that is necessary for his individual prayer.")

¹¹² Cai, *On the Church*, 2008, pp. 41.57.

light entering through the doorway does not compete with carefully orchestrated interior lighting, but rather complements it.

3.5. Artificial Lighting

In the preceding sections, we examined the various sources of natural light that illuminate the Chapel through multiple openings. Given that in Taiwan darkness falls early throughout the year, artificial lighting was essential during the darker hours. Throughout the chapel, a single type of simple, round lamps is mounted directly onto the concrete surface (fig. 36). It is likely that Dahinden intended to use ceiling spotlights in the most discreet form possible so as not to disrupt the integrity of the concrete forms. As evidenced by historical photographs, electric light appears to have been regarded as a secondary supplement to natural daylight (fig. 37). For practical reasons, though, it was not feasible to embed the lamps into the concrete surface. In the course of restoration, the original lamps were replaced by new spotlights; however, the decision to use spots with black metal frames resulted in a visual contrast that makes them appear overly prominent against the exposed concrete surfaces.

Upon approaching the chapel entrance, nowadays, visitors are first guided by two recessed spotlights positioned above the exterior wooden sliding doors (fig. 38). These fixtures are discreetly installed within the overhanging concrete canopy and serve to gently illuminate the entrance threshold. Their presence ensures both safety and a sense of arrival without disrupting the architectural integrity of the chapel's original concrete wall structure.

As visitors slide open the doors and step inside, their movement naturally follows the left-side aisle. Along this pathway, four recessed downlights are embedded in the concrete ceiling slab above, casting a soft and even glow onto the corridor below. This

subtle illumination assists with orientation and movement, especially in dimmer conditions, while preserving the solemnity of the interior. As one proceeds deeper into the nave and turns toward the seating area along the west wall, the lighting arrangement reveals another carefully designed layer. Along the structural beams near the stained-glass windows, two downlights are installed on each of the four beams, totalling eight in all. These spotlights provide gentle lighting over the pews on the right side of the nave, helping to illuminate reading zone without overpowering the rich natural light that filters through the colored glass. By embedding the lights within the architectural elements and orienting them downward, Dahinden ensured that artificial lighting remained subordinate to the spatial and spiritual experience. Finally, eyesight reaching the sanctuary—the climax of the chapel’s spatial procession—two warm-toned spotlights dramatically highlight the crucifix of the Risen Christ. Unlike the cooler artificial lights elsewhere in the chapel, these warmer beams distinguish the liturgical stage from the surrounding space, reinforcing the altar’s symbolic and performative centrality. The focused lighting casts expressive shadows that emphasize the verticality and emotional intensity of the sculpture. As Dahinden notes: “Directed light reveals the depth of form, spatial significance, communication by visual methods.”¹¹³ Through this contrast of temperature, direction, and intensity, Dahinden choreographs a sensory and spiritual journey that culminates in a theatrical yet reverent moment of encounter with the sacred.

The lighting here does more than illuminate. It communicates symbolically, elevating the theological meaning of the space through a choreographed play of light and shadow. Regarding the crucifix and altar antependium, Yu mentioned:

“The upright body of Christ and his outstretched arms form the image of an implied, absent cross; this method of simplified suggestion is also seen on the

¹¹³ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 32–33.

altar, where the bowed lamb, bound and pierced, is placed upon a cross-like form. Below it, the design is framed by two joined hands, evoking a gesture of prayer” (fig. 39, 40).¹¹⁴

Yet, it is Dahinden’s precise use of artificial lighting that enriches the expression of sacrificial offering in these sacred images, deepening the faithful’s sense of devotion and belief.

4. Justus Dahinden as a Theorist: Architecture and Light in his Writings

Justus Dahinden was not only a builder but also eager to articulate his ideas on architecture through books and articles. Unlike Le Corbusier, who also wrote extensively, Dahinden pursued a regular academic career alongside his architectural practice, earning a PhD in 1956 at the renowned ETH (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) Zurich on the topic “Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Gegenwartsarchitektur” (An Attempt to Define the Position of Contemporary Architecture).¹¹⁵ Later, as a gifted educator, he devoted himself to guiding new generations of architects, both in speech and in writing. Consequently, one can gain firsthand insight into his thoughts not only from his buildings but also from his writings.

In 1963, Dahinden published two articles in the Swiss architectural magazine *Bauen + Wohnen* (Building and Habitation). The first was on “Present-Day Catholic Church Construction” (“Katholischer Kirchenbau heute”), in which he provides precise guidelines for the structure of contemporary churches within the context of the Second Vatican Council, envisioning an ecclesiastical building as a multifunctional space.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Yu, *Stained Glasses*, 2016, pp. 86–87.

¹¹⁵ Justus Dahinden, *Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Gegenwartsarchitektur*, PhD thesis, ETH Zurich, Winterthur: Druckerei Geschwister Ziegler & Co., 1956 (published as a book Zurich: Girsberger, 1956).

¹¹⁶ Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

In a second essay, he presented his own church St. Paulus at Dielsdorf near Zurich.¹¹⁷ The architect describes the Catholic church space as a multifunctional place for the “liturgy of the word, for the liturgy of sacrifice, for the common meal and for the administration of the sacraments such as baptism, confession and marriage.”¹¹⁸

Dahinden’s first book after his dissertation was also about church building, originally published in 1967 under the German title “Bauen für die Kirche in der Welt” (literally translated: “Building for the Church in the World”), but in the same year also released in an English edition titled *New Trends in Church Architecture*.¹¹⁹ While the English title reflects the ideas of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) on ecclesiastic architecture, the German title reveals the Council’s dedication to missionary work. Embodying these key themes, the book serves as a major source for understanding Dahinden’s ideas on ecclesiastical architecture, reflecting the optimistic spirit of renewal within the Catholic Church inspired by the Council.¹²⁰ Consequently, he titled his first chapter “A rejuvenated Church.”¹²¹ It is important to emphasize that, while Dahinden’s *New Trends in Church Architecture* builds upon the progressive ideas of the Second Vatican Council, Saint Joseph’s Chapel was constructed a few years before the Council took place. However, the Chapel expresses a belief in the integration of religious architecture and modern art, reflecting parallels with progressive circles that may have influenced certain aspects of the Council. The ideas on church architecture

¹¹⁷ Justus Dahinden, “Katholische Kirche St. Paulus, Dielsdorf by Zürich (St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Dielsdorf near Zürich),” in: *Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home: Internationale Zeitschrift* 17, No. 2, 1963, pp. 92–94.

¹¹⁸ Dahinden, *Katholischer Kirchenbau*, 1963, p. 87.

¹¹⁹ Justus Dahinden, *Bauen für die Kirche in der Welt*, Zurich: NZB Buchverlag, 1967; English edition *New Trends in Church Architecture*, New York: Universe Book, 1967. His doctoral thesis “Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Gegenwartsarchitektur” (An Attempt to Define the Position of Contemporary Architecture) was accepted in 1956 at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) Zurich; available online at: <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/132069/eth-32248-01.pdf>. The dissertation was published in print under the same title in Zurich: Girsberger, 1956.

¹²⁰ See the two prefaces by Joseph Hasler, Bishop of St. Gallen, and Br. Cajetan J. B. Baumann OFM, in: Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, pp. 7, 9.

¹²¹ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, pp. 11–14.

formulated by Dahinden in 1967 do not appear to have been fully developed during the design period of the Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung (1957–60). Nevertheless, the church architecture provided a place for theoretical exploration and practical verification.¹²²

In Saint Joseph's Chapel, Justus Dahinden integrated light as both a theological and artistic element, making it central to the building's spiritual impact. Such concepts are explicitly developed in a section of his book titled *The Contribution of Light and Shadow*, where he writes that “light and shadow in church architecture, more than anywhere else, are compositional parts of the scheme and as such become particularly functional.”¹²³ For Dahinden, light is not decorative but essential. It animates the sacred space, creates atmosphere, and evokes spiritual rhythm. He further emphasizes that “the rhythmic change of light and dark and the opposing increase in density of light are capable of rendering alive an interior space that becomes a breathing body.”¹²⁴ This vision affirms that architecture, when illuminated by theological meaning, can awaken the soul through a dynamic interplay of form and perception. Light becomes a medium through which the divine is encountered the guiding, spiritualizing, and dematerializing boundaries within the church.

The 1973 book *Denken Fühlen Handeln (Thinking Feeling Acting)* combines elements of autobiography (first section), theoretical treatise (chapter “Reflexions”), and work catalog (“Projects and realisations”). It compiles multifarious texts on architecture and urbanism, which, according to the author in his introduction

“gather[ed] together some documentation which, in a student seminar, would demonstrate the aims of architecture. It had to consist of a synthesis between the theory, intellectual digressions and empathy in the plan, between analysis

¹²² Yu, *Dahinden*, 2011, p. 219.

¹²³ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 88.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

and intuition, between utopia and reality.”¹²⁵

Dahinden emphasizes here the dual necessity of realism and sensitivity as essential qualities in a good architect. As he reveals in the introduction, the title *Thinking Feeling Acting*, which expresses the development of building from the idea to the project, was derived from a quotation by Ernst Hiesmayr (1920–2006), at the time Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture at the University of Technology in Vienna (Technische Hochschule Wien).¹²⁶ Shortly after the book’s publication, in 1974, Dahinden was appointed full professor and head of the Institute for Spatial Design and Design at the TU Vienna.¹²⁷

The introductory section, titled “I am like my buildings,” reveals his Catholic background and his belief in the Church’s diminished influence, key factors in his drive to revive church architecture.¹²⁸ The chapter further unveils his emotional temperament as well as his critique of certain principles of modernism, such as productivity and functionalism.¹²⁹ Characteristically, the book includes a chapter that—by repeating the German title of his 1967 monograph “Bauen für die Kirche in der Welt” (new English title: “Buildings for the Churches in the World”)—leads far beyond architectural theory, but presents new ideas for a profound structural reform of the Catholic Church.¹³⁰ He writes:

“The church as a place for all to meet is no longer characterized by institutionalized systems enforced by the religious buildings but it has

¹²⁵ Justus Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln (Thinking Feeling Acting)*, Stuttgart: Karl Kraemer; Paris: Bibliotheque des arts, p. 8. The book appeared in a trilingual (German, French, and English) form. The English translation contains inconsistencies; for example, the term “*ein romanisches Bauwerk*” was mistranslated as “Roman” instead of “Romanesque,” which is crucial for understanding Dahinden’s formal preferences.

¹²⁶ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 8, 23. On Ernst Hiesmayr, see the architect’s website, at <https://www.ernst-hiesmayr.at/gelebtes/biografisches/> (accessed April 1, 2025).

¹²⁷ Erstellt von / compiled by Franz Karner, Beatrix Prucha, Anton Kottbauer, *TU Wien Mourns the Loss of Prof. Justus Dahinden Technical University Vienna*, at: <https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/aktuelles/news/die-tu-wien-trauert-um-prof-justus-dahinden> (accessed April 16, 2020).

¹²⁸ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 16.

¹²⁹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 17, 21.

¹³⁰ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 76–80.

become a common service. This service [...] must first of all create[,] step by step and in complete freedom, the scene which it needs for communion without material restraints, yet still producing a form that is pledged and functional to a high degree.”¹³¹

In his definition of a church building, Dahinden uses the idioms “place” and “way”—describing the inherent characteristics of an ecclesiastic building as stability and mobility. Furthermore, he sees “assembly” (*Versammlungsgestalt*), “communion” (*Mahlgestalt*), “devotion and prayer” (*Andachtsgestalt*) as intrinsic essentials of the edifice.¹³² Finally, Dahinden depicts his ideal of a church, which, surprisingly, is not a building, but

“a temporary area on the lines of *son et lumière* which would crystallize in time and space a point of the town and create a church just long enough to allow the required religious activities that were planned, to take place. In the sphere of my researches for a new town (Radio City) I studied in advance the problem of the creation of spaces by means of *son et lumière* structures. Audio-visual ‘structures’ create a virtual volume for a given time. [...] The spatial environment obtained through *son et lumière* mediums is not only symbolic on the fundamental plan of the relationship between God and man but could also be considered as a link between reality and transcendence.”¹³³

In the original German text, he refers to the imagined structure as a “Licht-Ton-Zelt” (light–sound–tent), which he envisioned as a mobile installation that could be moved throughout the city according to the necessities of the “mass of the faithful” (*Kirchenvolk*).¹³⁴ When considering Dahinden’s concepts and techniques for integrating light into ecclesiastical architecture, his “creation of spaces by means of *son et lumière* structures” deserves special attention. Recent scholarship has traced the origin of *son et lumière* (sound and light) performances to May 1952 at the Château de

¹³¹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 79–80.

¹³² Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 77.

¹³³ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 79–80.

¹³⁴ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 80, 88–89.

Chambord, a Renaissance castle situated along the Loire River in France.¹³⁵ Inspired by film, opera, and passion plays, these shows combine spectacular light projections with sound—including music and the human voice—in order to capture visitors’ attention by creating a dramatic atmosphere set against the backdrop of a historical architecture.¹³⁶

Through these innovations, Dahinden demonstrated that his architectural principles were not abstract theory, but concepts he continuously tested and realized in both built and conceptual works, always following his belief that sacred space must evolve with freedom, cultural awareness, and deep liturgical meaning. A permanent building might resist such change, but a temporary, mobile environment invites redefinition, encounter, and openness. The *son et lumière* model reflects precisely this logic: it embodies theatrical, collective, symbolic, and, above all, temporal qualities that allow sacred space to approach people where they are. For him, light and sound were not just sensory tools but theological instruments. They enabled a space to become “a breathing body,” shaped by rhythm, contrast, and symbolic clarity.¹³⁷ These media allowed him to achieve a form of architecture that was not just seen but experienced, not just constructed but enacted. The *son et lumière* arrangement, then, is not spectacle for its own sake, it is a tool of theological immediacy, revealing “a link between reality and transcendence.”¹³⁸ The same chapter of the book, furthermore, contains an interview, in which Dahinden mentions: “The choir at the threshold of two volumes so that it can be transformed into a stage and the confessional box can become the projection room for cinema shows.”¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Éric Monin, “Les techniques pionnières des premiers spectacles son et lumière” (Pioneer Techniques of the first Sound and Light Shows), in: *Revue Sciences / Lettres* 6, 2019, pp. 1–14, here pp. 1–3, available online, at: <http://journals.openedition.org/rsl/2154>; accessed April 10, 2025.

¹³⁶ Monin, *Les techniques pionnières*, 2019, p. 2 (accessed April 10, 2025).

¹³⁷ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 88.

¹³⁸ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 63.

¹³⁹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, pp. 81–89.

Church should be “part of the collective activities of men” as a “house amongst other houses.”¹⁴⁰ He is imagining a small permanent eucharistic space which will house the main liturgical center. [...] Round his eucharistic core will be grouped a larger community room equipped with movable seats planned for theatre, concerts, discussions, conferences as well as œcumenical services.”¹⁴¹

This chapter has demonstrated that Justus Dahinden’s architectural authorship is inseparable from his theoretical vision, pedagogical commitment, and spiritual convictions. Unlike many architects who construct buildings first and articulate their principles later through publications, Dahinden consistently formulated and communicated his architectural ideals through academic writing, lectures, and books. His works, and especially *New Trends in Church Architecture* (1967) and *Denken Fühlen Handeln* (1973), reflect an evolving vision of church design rooted in the post-Vatican II liturgical renewal, while also extending beyond its immediate influence. From his emphasis on assembly, communion, and devotion to his concept of the church as a temporary light and sound environment, Dahinden envisioned sacred architecture as an adaptable and experiential process rather than a fixed structure. His integration of light as a central theological and artistic medium reinforces this perspective. Whether realized in permanent buildings or imagined through *son et lumière* installations, Dahinden’s churches embody both intellectual clarity and emotional resonance. His work ultimately suggests that sacred space must respond to the needs of contemporary life not by abandoning tradition, but by reinterpreting it through sensory experience, spiritual depth, and cultural engagement.

¹⁴⁰ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 82.

¹⁴¹ Dahinden, *Denken Fühlen Handeln*, 1973, p. 83.

5. Albert Wider's Stations of the Cross

At the west wall of Saint Joseph's Chapel, Albert Wider interprets the traditional fourteen Stations of the Cross through a series of stained-glass panels (fig. 41). The images are set within eleven rectangular openings, gathered in groups loosely spread over the wall. In three instances, Wider combines—for compositional, iconographic, and practical reasons, as will be shown below—two stations into a single panel: Stations III and IV, VIII and IX, XII and XIII are each paired in this way (fig. 42). Every Station is identified by a Roman numeral composed into one corner of the panel, corresponding to key episodes in Christ's Passion, from the condemnation by Pontius Pilate and the journey along the *Via Dolorosa* to Golgotha, to crucifixion and entombment.¹⁴²

Only a small portion of the narrative concerning Christ's journey to Golgotha is included in the Gospels, which provide few detail about the hours preceding His Crucifixion. Of these, only Jesus's condemnation by Pilate (Matthew 27:11–26), the charitable act of Simon of Cyrene, who was chosen to carry the cross (Mark 15:21; Matthew 27:32), and Jesus's encounter with the women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27–31) were mentioned. These episodes were later incorporated as Stations V and VIII in the liturgy of the *Via Crucis*. The other scenes are based on apocryphal sources compiled in the liturgy of the *Via Crucis*.¹⁴³

The Stations of the Cross are among the customary furnishings of a Catholic church and remain common in modern ecclesiastical architecture.¹⁴⁴ Typically, fourteen Stations are arranged in sequence along the walls of the church nave. Traditionally, the Stations of the Cross appeared as small, chapel-like structures aligned

¹⁴² Traditional handbooks included the themes and associated texts to be read on Good Friday. See, for example, *The Stations of the Cross*, with fourteen illustrations by D.[ominik] Mosler, London: Burns and Lambert, 1859.

¹⁴³ On the history of the Stations of the Cross, see Wolfram Lübbecke, "Kreuzweg, Kreuzwegstationen," in: *RDK Labor*, 2025, at: https://www.rdklabor.de/wiki/Kreuzweg,_Kreuzwegstationen#cite_ref-9 (accessed June 30, 2025).

¹⁴⁴ Lübbecke, *Kreuzweg*, 2025.

along roadsides near churchyards.¹⁴⁵ Two aspects characterize their use: first, the commemoration and reenactment of Christ's Passion, particularly during the Holy Week; second, the paratactic arrangement of the scenes, which invites physical movement from one Station to the next. Both the vivid visualization of Christ's suffering and the act of progressing from Station to Station serve to make the events tangible, evoking the emotion and compassion in the faithful.

Bearing this in mind, it can be argued that with his stained-glass windows at Saint Joseph's Chapel, Albert Wider amalgamated two traditional functions of ecclesiastical art to create a new visual entity: the stained-glass window as a medium for instructing and edifying the faithful, as it had been known since the Middle Ages, and the Stations of the Cross as a ritual visualization of Christ's Passion. Also, in terms of imagery and panel composition, Wider adopted a middle ground between tradition and innovation. Rather than literal illustration, he focused on faces and hands, the most expressive parts of the human body, as well as individual symbolic motifs, such as spearheads, the heart, and the cross, distilling each Station to its essential elements. Only in four exceptional cases—such as Christ falling under the cross (III, VII, IX) and the angel at His tomb (XIV)—did Wider depict entire, albeit abstract, figures to illustrate the episodes. The first, the sixth and the last Stations—representing the tribunal, Veronica, and the entombment—feature the face of Christ, establishing a thematic counterpoint. In all three panels, Jesus's countenance is presented frontally, directly addressing the viewer. It is reduced to a wedge-shaped form, with eyes, nose, and mouth delineated by thin black lines. In this instance, Wider may have drawn inspiration from iconic representations of Christ in the Byzantine tradition, which are characterized by their

¹⁴⁵ Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2: *The Passion of Jesus Christ*, London: Lund Humphreys, 1972, p. 82. Stefano Zuffi, *Gospel Figures in Art*, Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003 (Ital. orig. ed. Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2002), p. 280.

frontality and direct gaze (fig. 43).¹⁴⁶ This directness fosters a sense of proximity to the viewer, serving as a catalyst for inward reflection and contemplation.

Station I, “Christ is Condemned by Pilate” (fig. 44), features a vertical format filled with bold, contrasting colors.¹⁴⁷ A deep red background suggests suffering and sacrifice. Jesus’s face is fragmented into sharp geometric shapes, with a red diagonal cutting across it, symbolizing both emotional anguish and physical pain. His eyes are rendered as black, hollow circles, evoking silent sorrow. The crown of thorns appears as intersecting green and yellow shards, emphasizing the expression of tension and suffering. Below, a yellow form represents the binding rope around His neck, referencing traditional iconography—for example, the comparable motif in Titian’s late *Christ Carrying the Cross* (c. 1565) housed in the Museo del Prado in Madrid—where Christ is shown tormented by the henchman.¹⁴⁸ The use of triangle-shaped blue and yellow at the base anchors the composition. Its formal counterpart at Station XIV depicts Christ in the tomb, His eyes closed in death (fig. 45).

Wider uses abstract forms, strong colors, and their contrasts to evoke emotional responses. He avoids detailed figures and settings, instead distilling the events of Christ’s Passion into symbolic shapes. The modernist style shifts focus from narrative to spiritual experience, using color and light to express meaning. Unlike traditional depictions of Christ’s suffering, Wider’s Stations of the Cross emphasize inner strength through stylized simplicity, creating a space for quiet reflection within the liturgical setting.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Temple, “Icon [Gr. *eikon*: ‘image’],” 2003, in: *Grove Art Online*, at: <https://0-doi-org.opac.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T039776> (accessed July 5, 2025).

¹⁴⁷ For the first Station, see, in comparison, *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 3–5.

¹⁴⁸ Titian, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1565, oil on canvas, 67 cm × 77 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid, inv. P000438; see the museum website, at <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/christ-carrying-the-cross/657fa964-0040-48df-971e-88f0de5c6714> (accessed August 5, 2025).

The second Station of the Cross represents traditionally the moment Jesus takes up his cross (fig. 46).¹⁴⁹ The composition is dominated by intense blue and red fields intersected by green diagonal bands representing the beams of the cross, emphasized through their central position. Two stylized red and black spearheads appear on each side, referencing Roman authority. This alludes, in abbreviated form, to the imperial soldiers commonly depicted in traditional representations of Christ's Passion, typically recognizable by their cuirasses, helmets, and lances (fig. 47).¹⁵⁰ At the lower right, Christ's hands are shown grasping the crossbeam, suggesting both acceptance and the burden of responsibility.

Albert Wider avoids literal storytelling and instead uses form and color to express emotional tension. The bright red areas convey urgency and suffering, while the deep blue provides a meditative contrast. The interaction between the hands and cross becomes the emotional focus, symbolizing Christ's willing acceptance of his fate. This abstraction allows viewers to connect with the event through contemplation rather than spectacle, characteristic of Wider's modernist, symbolic approach to sacred narrative.

The third Station of the Cross shows Jesus falling for the first time under the weight of the cross (fig. 48).¹⁵¹ Albert Wider uses bold geometric forms and strong colors to express the violence of the scene. A large green cross cuts diagonally across the image and intersects with the figure of Christ, who is depicted clothed in white. His arms are spread out, and his face, colored in a light pink tone, is turned upward, giving a sense of exhaustion and helplessness through simple but expressive lines.

The combination of colors like red, blue, and magenta creates a powerful contrast designed to evoke both emotion and compassion. The red background suggests intense

¹⁴⁹ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 6–7.

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, Simone Martini, *The Road to Calvary*, c. 1336–42, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Zuffi, *Gospel Figures*, 2003, p. 281.

¹⁵¹ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 8–9.

pain. Although the figure is simplified and lacks fine details, the sharp lines of the body and the dominant, diagonally positioned cross allude to Christ's physical and spiritual struggle. Regarding the observation of color, Yu believes that "the cross absent by Wider in the design of the crucifix in the altar area appears repeatedly in green in the seven scenes of the stained glass, which continues the interpretation since the Middle Ages that 'the cross is like the tree of life', and because of Jesus' death, the world has gained new life (fig. 49)."¹⁵² In addition, the color in Wider's design creates "the juxtaposition of hot orange and ice blue or dark blue, and the contrast between dark green and vermilion create a sense of movement and emotion."¹⁵³

In the prayer of the Good Friday, Christ falls three times at Stations III, VII, and IX.¹⁵⁴ By pairing the heaviness of the cross with the brutality of the act, this recurring episode adds both dramatic intensity and rhythmic structure to the narrative of Christ's journey and the reenactment of the Passion on Good Friday. Accordingly, Wider varies the scene depicting the small figure of Christ and the cross, once again placed diagonally over him and anchored within the panel, across the corresponding windows. Not only are the panels of the Stations III and IX (first and second fall) quite similar regarding their composition thus creating a returning counterpoint; they are also both part of a horizontal double panel combining each of the two consecutive Stations III and IV as well as VIII and IX.

The first episode of Christ falling under the Cross (Station III) is combined with the scene, in which Jesus meets His mother Mary on the path to Calvary (fig. 50), and second, with the encounter with the women of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁵ In the first composition (Station IV), the moment of meeting is expressed through an emotionally charged face-

¹⁵² Medieval Bible Window (*Bibelfenster*). Crucifixion, c. 1260; stained glass, Cologne Cathedral (Germany), at: <https://www.koelner-dom.de/rundgang/aelteres-bibelfenster> (accessed July 13, 2025).

¹⁵³ Yu, *Wider*, 2016, pp. 84–85.

¹⁵⁴ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 8–9, 16–17, 20–21.

¹⁵⁵ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 10–11, 18–19.

to-face interaction, with the two heads depicted in profile. Jesus appears on the left wearing the crown of thorns, His face streaked with blood rendered in tones of red and brown. This dramatic motif—blood running down Christ’s face—echoes the frontal depiction in Station I (fig. 51). Opposite Him, the Virgin’s face is pale and composed, framed by a white veil. The two faces are set against fields of bold colors and intersecting green beams that symbolize the burden of the cross.

Stations III and IV are placed together in one frame for three key reasons. First, they show a strong emotional contrast between Jesus’s fall and his meeting with Mary, blending pain and love in a single scene. Second, the stained-glass panel is located closer to the base of the chapel, near the lower hallway (fig. 52), so combining two Stations allows more light to pass through at eye level. This helps brighten the stairs on the passage and adds vibrant color to the walking experience. Third, the shared frame turns a spatial constraint into a meaningful design, marking a shift from isolation to shared sorrow and drawing the viewer into the unfolding narrative.

By representing an act of pure charity, the fifth stained-glass panel—depicting Station V, in which Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross—briefly interrupts the narrative of suffering (fig. 53).¹⁵⁶ Wider’s stained-glass compositions echo Dahinden’s vertical and horizontal façade rhythms, creating a visual continuity between interior and exterior of the building. The central green cross cuts vertically and horizontally through the nearly square image, dividing it into fields with vibrant colors of red, blue, and yellow. The focus is on two stylized hands gripping the cross from behind and below, subtly suggesting the shared burden between Jesus and Simon. In the upper left corner of the crossbeams, Simon’s face emerges from behind, his large eyes rendered in simple black outlines.

¹⁵⁶ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 10–11, 18–19.

From the lowest panels, like III and IV, which are set just 59 cm above the floor, to the highest panels, such as IX and XIII at 205 cm, the series guides the viewer from grounded readability to elevated reflection. As Yu notes the high quality of readability: “The low placement, structured color blocks, and relative figuration of the lower panels lend the program a “quiet, stable, and highly readable quality.”¹⁵⁷ Wider’s design may appear understated within the chapel’s overall aesthetic, yet, it plays a pivotal role in synthesizing narrative clarity with symbolic resonance, quietly anchoring the spiritual experience of the space.

From Station VI to Station IX (figs. 54–57), the Passion narrative intensifies through expressive composition and carefully orchestrated light.¹⁵⁸ Station VI, in which Jesus meets Veronica, isolates Christ’s face—or rather His complexion as an image on Veronica’s veil—in a tightly framed image, set against deep red and golden yellow fields that heighten emotional intensity.¹⁵⁹ With all context removed, the panel becomes a universal icon of pain and presence. As Herbert Gröger observes: “He must above all, while participating in reality, cultivate a symbolic expression valid for all times, by reaching a superior symbolism. And this double synthesis between realism and abstraction on one part and the vitality and spiritualization on the other, is precisely the artistic genius proper to Albert Wider.”¹⁶⁰ The use of warm light through segmented color fields invites quiet contemplation. Station VII (fig. 58) with the representation of Jesus’s second fall under the cross, follows at the visual and narrative center. Christ’s body collapses diagonally across blue and green tones, intersected by a long vertical green beam that links heaven and earth. The structure reflects what Gröger called

¹⁵⁷ Yu, *Stained Glasses*, 2016, p. 88.

¹⁵⁸ *Stations of the Cross*, 1859, pp. 14–15.

¹⁵⁹ Zuffi, *Gospel Figures*, 2003, p. 287.

¹⁶⁰ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, p. 161.

Wider's ability to "combine the solid, closed cubic concept with that of open surfaces."¹⁶¹

The combined horizontal panel featuring Stations VIII and IX (fig. 59)—Jesus's meeting with the women of Jerusalem and His third fall— is positioned high on the chapel wall, encouraging the viewer to look upward. Station VIII focuses on compassion through three expressive faces representing two women and a child below. The horizontal Station IX shifts again to physical struggle containing the single episode of the third fall, with Christ's body visually crossed by green diagonal beams. The X-shaped composition, white robe, and deep background colors create a dramatic and spiritual climax. As Yu Li-Pen explains:

"Elements such as Cubist-influenced shading, decorative motifs, and segmented pictorial space contribute to a dynamic expressiveness. Despite this abstraction, the vivid colors and assertive forms bring vitality to the images, while the compositions remain coherent and harmoniously integrated."¹⁶²

This makes Wider's stained glass more vibrant and abstract than his other works. Natural light animates these compositions, reinforcing their emotional depth.

Stations X and XI (figs. 60, 61) offer a contrasting rhythm. Station X removes all figures and instead uses geometric forms, diagonals, and a central circle to suggest the moment of stripping. The panel depicts with great intensity the henchman's hand reaching out to touch Christ's blood-stained cloak. Warm golden tones on the left and cool blues on the right create symbolic tension. Yu Li-Pen highlights that in stained glass, Wider achieves "enhanced cutting of the secondary parts of the picture," resulting in greater abstraction and liveliness.¹⁶³ Station XI, a later replacement after typhoon

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Yu, *Stained Glasses*, 2016, p. 90.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

Diana damage in 1965, shows a single hand bearing the nail wound.¹⁶⁴ Surrounded by planes of red, green, and blue, the gesture is rendered simply but powerfully. Compared to Stations II and V with Station XI, where hand gestures are bold, abstract, and full of expressive tension within multi-figure scenes, the restored hand appears more naturalistic and delicate. It is isolated, rendered with softer lines and less anatomical depth. These differences reflect its later origin, yet the panel still aligns visually with the overall series while quietly marking a moment of interruption and repair. Although more naturalistic, it still demonstrates what Gröger described as Wider's gift for uniting form and content through spiritualized surfaces. The clarity of color and direction of light give the image both weight and grace.

Stations XII, XIII and XIV (figs. 62–64) form the final arc of the cycle. In Stations XII and XIII, abstraction deepens. A pink shape of a heart appears first as pierced and then as supported, guiding the viewer from death to mourning. No figures are shown, only movement and color that shift from rupture to tenderness. Wider once recalled:

“As a young peasant boy, I enjoyed making puppets and little animals from the clay of our fields, making them the subjects of my fervent dreams. I also felt intimately connected, as if to beings from our world, to the statues of the saints in the church; and to the clouds drifting across the blue sky and the trees in the twilight darkness with names from the imagination and the spirit world.”¹⁶⁵

This tactile and elemental connection finds expression in these panels, where stained glass becomes a vessel for spiritual depth. Station XIV completes the journey. Its vertical composition presents a calm face below and the white figure of the angel rising

¹⁶⁴ Huang Qing-Tai (黃清泰), *An Educational Revolution Guided by a Veteran Principal: Swiss Apprenticeship Education at Kung-Tung* [一位老校長引導的學習革命—瑞士學徒制教育在公東], Taipei: Eurasian Press, 2017, p. 94.

¹⁶⁵ Here cited in translation after the German quote in Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, p. 21: “Als kleiner Bauernbub nahm ich Lehm von der Wiese und formte daraus Menschen und Tiere und träumte darüber Seligkeiten. Ganz nahe, wie erdhafte warme Geschöpfe waren mir die Heiligenfiguren in der Kirche; und die Wolken am blauen Himmel, die Bäume im Dämmerdunkel benannte ich mit Namen aus der Phantasie und Geisterwelt.”

above and pointing out to Heaven where Christ has risen. Placed beside the chapel exit, the panel directs the viewer's gaze upward, marking a passage from sorrow to hope. Gröger affirms that Wider achieves a superior symbolism that unifies narrative, structure, and spiritual illumination in a single act of artistic vision.¹⁶⁶

Across all fourteen panels, Wider uses abstract depiction of hands, hearts, beams of light, and geometric gestures to replace full scenes, creating a language that is both modern and liturgically rich. This artistic style works in harmony with the architecture of the chapel. Justus Dahinden's design emphasizes filtered light, inward focus, and contemplative atmosphere. Light becomes part of the artwork, activating the glass and bringing emotional energy into the space. The visual rhythm of the windows aligns with the spatial rhythm of the chapel's interior, leading worshippers along a meditative journey from the entrance to the altar, and finally to the last station near the exit. Stations I, VII, and XIV use a vertical format that stands out among the mostly horizontal panels. Each panel plays a key role in the visual and narrative structure of the chapel wall. Station I, near the entrance, introduces the story with a clear and upright figure. Station VII, placed at the center, marks the turning point with strong vertical weight, emphasizing the burden of the cross. Station XIV, near the exit, features two stacked panels that lift the viewer's gaze upward, ending the journey with a sense of spiritual release. These three vertical stations mark the beginning, the center, and the end of the journey. Their upright structure not only brings balance to the wall but also enhances the meditative rhythm of the space. Each one serves as a visual pause, reinforcing key turning points in the sequence and supporting the architectural flow of movement through the chapel.

¹⁶⁶ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, p. 161–162.

Albert Wider's compositional specifics—reducing the narrative to single elements—could have been inspired by the *Arma Christi*.¹⁶⁷ The Latin term *Arma Christi*, “Christ’s Weapons” used to conquer death or the instruments of His suffering, refers to the symbolic objects associated with the various stages of Christ’s Passion.¹⁶⁸ Widely used in Northern devotional art, especially during the Middle Ages, these symbols served to inspire reflection and gratitude for Christ’s sacrifice and the gift of redemption.¹⁶⁹

Common elements include the cross, crown of thorns, nails, spear, sponge on a reed, scourge, ladder, and sometimes the rooster, dice, or veil of Veronica.¹⁷⁰ These objects served not only as reminders of Christ’s physical pain, but also as tools of salvation, emphasizing that his suffering was willingly accepted for the redemption of humankind. In medieval and early modern art, *Arma Christi* imagery invited devotional reflection by offering a visual meditation on each stage of the Passion. Over time, artists adapted these symbols into various formats including altarpieces, manuscript illuminations, stained glass, and sculptural ensembles.

In Albert Wider’s stained-glass Stations of the Cross at Saint Joseph’s Chapel, several traditional symbols of the *Arma Christi* appear, distilled from narrative and prayers. The cross is suggested through intersecting vertical and horizontal lines, especially visible in the Stations V and VII. The crown of thorns encircles Christ’s head in Stations I and IV. The blood of His wounds from the *Arma Christi* is marked by small red shapes on the face and hands in Stations I, IV, and XI. In Station X, the moment when Christ is stripped of His garments and soldiers cast lots for his clothing is expressed through sharp contrasts in form and color. The sweeping red shape suggests

¹⁶⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Valentin Nussbaum, Graduate Institute of Art History, NTNU, Taipei, for this suggestion.

¹⁶⁸ On the *Arma Christi*, see Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 1972, p. 186.

¹⁶⁹ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 1972, p. 191.

¹⁷⁰ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 1972, pp. 184–185.

the violence of the removed cloth, while the fragmented angular forms hint at the act of dice-throwing. Although Christ is not depicted directly, His isolation and humiliation are conveyed through His absence, embedded in the structure of the very composition.¹⁷¹

Most notably, Station VI includes Veronica's veil, shown as a cloth bearing Christ's face, directly referencing one of the key elements of the *Arma Christi*. Although the scourge and ladder are not clearly depicted, some background textures and stair-like divisions may suggest them. These symbols are not shown literally but are reimagined through color, form, and geometry to invite quiet contemplation rather than narrative illustration.

Both Albert Wider's bronze sculpture of Christ on the altar wall and the angel in Station XIV show similar meanings. In both works, the figures raise their arms up. This movement is not a sign of sadness, but a way of showing connection to God. The sculpture of the crucified Christ shows a thin, abstract body with the stigmata on his hands. This turns the image of pain into a reference to His resurrection. The angel in the stained-glass window also points upward, emphasizing Christ's resurrection as narrated in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24: 5–7). Wider connects the idea of Christ's suffering and death with hope through His resurrection. The artist uses modern forms to express the traditional symbols of the Passion in a new and iconographically way.

Albert Wider's stained-glass series in the Chapel of Saint Joseph at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School presents a highly original interpretation of the Stations of the Cross. Albert Wider's stained-glass work at Saint Joseph's Chapel in Kung-Tung marks a turning point in his artistic journey. Compared to his earlier sculptures and stained glasses from the 1930s to 1950s, which featured expressive human figures and

¹⁷¹ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, p. 84.

narrative clarity, the Kung-Tung series moves boldly toward abstraction.¹⁷² Many of the panels focus on hands, symbols, and geometric forms rather than full human figures, using color and shape to express spiritual meaning. Despite this shift, Wider retains key elements of his earlier style, such as strong outlines, vibrant contrasts, and a sense of sacred tension. The series reflects a simplified, modern approach that invites quiet reflection, showing his adaptation of European religious art into a cross-cultural, modernist language. Through minimal form and natural light, he creates a deeply contemplative work that blends liturgical meaning with modern expression. Dahinden reveals a philosophical stance on architectural unity, demonstrating that:

“We reflect ourselves in space-colour-light: We find ourselves in the forms space-colour-light which have no importance in themselves but find a sense for man only in the context of their functional unity. For its special stamp, as a true image of the environment, the form draws first of all on a typical comfort [...].”¹⁷³

Demonstrating that he was not only responsible for the chapel’s structural and formal design, but also guided the experiential aspects of color and light. Although Albert Wider was the creator of the stained-glass windows, his work did not evolve independently. Instead, he adjusted the scale of the imagery, the intensity of the colors, and the proportions of the openings in response to Dahinden’s spatial, luminous, and atmospheric vision. In doing so, the elements of space, colour, and light were brought into harmony, forming a place of prayer truly designed for human experience.

¹⁷² Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, pp. 101–105.

¹⁷³ Huber, *Albert Wider*, 2015, pp. 69–70.

6. New Trends in Modernist Liturgical Spaces and the Aspect of Light Revealing

The evolution of stained-glass art and spatial light in twentieth-century liturgical architecture reveals not merely aesthetic innovations but profound theological and phenomenological redefinitions. In her comprehensive analysis of “Le vitrail dans les combats de l’art sacré,” Isabelle Saint-Martin traces the shifting ecclesiastical expectations toward stained glass, emphasizing its role in creating a sacred atmosphere rather than conveying strict iconographic narratives. Father Marie-Alain Couturier, a central figure in this discourse, articulated that “What the Church expects from stained glass [he affirms] is to ensure that daylight does not come to disturb our ‘inner light’ [...] that it comes to envelop it, protect it, favor it, enrich it.”¹⁷⁴ According to this view, stained glass should not disrupt the inner spiritual light. Rather, it should enrich, protect, and sustain it. This perspective resonates with broader liturgical reforms influenced by the Liturgical Movement since the 1920s and later Vatican II. This conceptual shift laid the groundwork for architectural projects such as Le Corbusier’s *Chapelle Notre-Dame du Haut* at Ronchamp and *Sainte-Marie de La Tourette*. In these works, natural light is manipulated not to depict biblical narratives but to cultivate contemplative engagement. At Ronchamp, for example, light pours through punctured walls of varying shapes and colors. This spatial composition aligns with Couturier’s belief that sacred space must primarily provide “an atmosphere that acts on the senses and the imagination and, through them, is felt by the heart” meaning an atmosphere that acts upon the senses and imagination, and by them reaches the heart.¹⁷⁵ This focus on sensory experience rather than on didactic clarity marks a decisive departure from earlier narrative-driven liturgical art.

¹⁷⁴ “[...] une atmosphère qui agisse sur les sens et l’imagination et qui, par eux, soient sensible au cœur.” Here quoted after Saint-Martin, *Le vitrail dans les combats*, 2021, pp. 118, 127, note 10.

¹⁷⁵ Saint-Martin, *Le vitrail dans les combats*, 2021, p. 118.

Justus Dahinden's Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School exemplifies a pivotal direction within new trends in modernist liturgical spaces, particularly in how light functions as a theological and architectural medium. Unlike the more abstract and sculptural approaches seen in Le Corbusier's La Tourette Monastery and Ronchamp Chapel, Dahinden's vision emphasizes participation, rhythm, and accessibility, aligning closely with post-Vatican II ideals. His treatment of light transforms the chapel into a spiritually dynamic environment shaped for communal worship and personal reflection. At La Tourette, light is treated as an ascetic and metaphysical phenomenon. As Philippe Potié describes, Le Corbusier designs cylindrical apertures or "light cannons" that "aim their truncated barrels at the sky, twisting and turning unavailingly towards the sun," thus creating "a poetic right angle" between architecture and light.¹⁷⁶ This approach heightens silence and spiritual detachment, reinforcing the monastic retreat. In contrast, Dahinden's concept focuses on spatial vitality. In *New Trends in Church Architecture*, he insists that "light and shadow in church architecture, more than anywhere else, are compositional parts of the scheme and as such become particularly functional."¹⁷⁷ He further explains that "the rhythmic change of light and dark and the opposing increase in density of light are capable of rendering alive an interior space that becomes a breathing body."¹⁷⁸ The Chapel at Kung-Tung thus becomes a space that moves with light, evoking spiritual rhythm and liturgical flow.

In Saint Joseph's Chapel, walls are not treated as neutral enclosures, but as instruments of light modulation, creating a dynamic relationship between interior experience and exterior reality. Just as Rowe identifies Le Corbusier's walls as

¹⁷⁶ Philippe Potié, *Le Corbusier: Le Couvent Sainte Marie de La Tourette The Monastery of Sainte Marie de La Tourette*, Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier; Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Publishers, 2001, p. 52.

¹⁷⁷ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 76.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

“negating all depth” while also suggesting rotational movement, Dahinden’s chapel façade oscillates between structural solidity and luminous permeability. Light enters through carefully placed clerestory windows and perforated surfaces, not to flood the space indiscriminately, but to “focus, localize, and contrast with shadow” echoing John Peponis’ insight that “[l]ight is sharply focused, localized, and always contrasted with shadow.”¹⁷⁹ In both buildings, then, the wall becomes a canvas for spiritual encounter. At La Tourette, the surface mediates between landscape and architectural presence; in Saint Joseph’s Chapel, it mediates between liturgical action and atmospheric transformation. Dahinden, too, was sensitive to modern visual language, and used patches of colored light from stained-glass panels designed by Albert Wider to “animate the interior space into a breathing body.” In this sense, both architects reject the notion of a static wall.

La Tourette exemplifies a central principle in modernist sacred architecture: the shaping of spiritual consciousness through spatial experience rather than through traditional architectural cues. The text observes that “He had recognized the tension that arises when a free arrangement of internal subdivision comes to meet a rectilinear and regular container. He proposed that the creation of this tension was a quite deliberate attempt to create a peculiar visual experience pertaining to our view of elevation.”¹⁸⁰ Colin Rowe observed that Le Corbusier deliberately created a visual tension at La Tourette by juxtaposing a freely arranged interior with a rigid, rectilinear concrete exterior. This contrast, especially visible from the north-western approach, was intended to produce a distinct and provocative experience of the building’s elevation.

¹⁷⁹ John Peponis, “The Architectural Configuration of Lyric Form at La Tourette,” in: *Ekistics* 60, September/October–November/December 1993, p. 238.

¹⁸⁰ Peponis, *The Architectural Configuration*, 1993, p. 237.

A comparable strategy is evident in Justus Dahinden's design for Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School. Although it is not a monastic chapel, it embodies a similar spatial theology. Rather than offering open, communal courtyards or overtly hierarchical configurations, the chapel uses its compact form, layered entrance sequence, and light-filled interior to quietly guide visitors inward, physically and spiritually. The text further explains that La Tourette's "architecture could thus be interpreted as a combination of a visual discourse intended to engender a contemplative attitude," and that it eliminates "those aspects of traditional monastic architecture that are deemed as inappropriate inducements to a relaxation of monastic rigor."¹⁸¹ Similarly, Dahinden removed conventional signs of ecclesiastical authority or grandeur in favor of a more abstract, modern language, one that frames the liturgical experience in terms of perception and presence. Saint Joseph's Chapel does not overwhelm the visitor with iconography or procession. Instead, it slowly reveals meaning through the modulation of light and shadow, the symbolic focus of the sanctuary, and the abstracted Stations of the Cross by Albert Wider.

According to Peponis, "La Tourette classifies every function upon a canvas of circulation and viewing points" resonates with Dahinden's layered spatial concept.¹⁸² The chapel's design allows for different levels of liturgical and personal engagement, from the sheltered entry space to the focused light above the altar, forming what could be called a canvas of spiritual attention. In both buildings, the experience of space is not merely functional but existential. It is meant to deepen awareness, not reduce it. In this regard, Dahinden's chapel follows the same modernist liturgical trajectory as La Tourette, redefining sacred space as an instrument of introspection and faith.

¹⁸¹ Peponis, *The Architectural Configuration*, 1993, p. 245.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

While Ronchamp and La Tourette lean toward mystical abstraction and symbolic monumentality, Saint Joseph's Chapel prioritizes emotional resonance, communal orientation, and theological accessibility. Dahinden's Saint Joseph's Chapel marks a distinctive path within modernist sacred architecture. Through carefully choreographed light and a deeply human-centered approach, it transforms architectural space into a vessel for liturgical participation and spiritual transformation. Light, as Dahinden envisioned, becomes not merely a visual or poetic gesture, but a functional and theological necessity that reveals meaning, shapes ritual, and invites presence. In doing so, he offers a modern church that is not only aligned with contemporary aesthetics but also grounded in ecclesial mission and community life.

Based on Justus Dahinden's thoughts expressed in *New Trends in Church Architecture* and Marie-Alain Couturier's ideas articulated in the journal *L'art sacré* Saint Joseph's Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical High School can be understood as a profound architectural response to the post-Vatican II liturgical renewal. Though located in remote East Asia, the chapel embodies the essential values of the new trend in church architecture, particularly through its treatment of sacred light. Dahinden emphasized that light is not merely a functional or aesthetic element but a theological and compositional force that animates the spatial rhythm of worship. In this regard, he wrote: "light and shadow in church architecture, more than anywhere else, are compositional parts of the scheme and as such become particularly functional."¹⁸³ In the Kung-Tung chapel, light is orchestrated through skylights, narrow openings, and Albert Wider's minimalist stained-glass Stations of the Cross, creating a contemplative atmosphere rooted in rhythm and symbolic clarity. This spatial experience reflects what Dahinden calls "Signal Art," where color and light embody spiritual meaning in

¹⁸³ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 88.

architectural form.¹⁸⁴ The stained glass functions not as decoration but as a mediator of the inner light of faith. As Couturier wrote in 1937, “what the Church expects from stained glass is that daylight does not disturb our ‘inner light,’ but rather envelops it, protects it, nourishes it, and enriches it.”¹⁸⁵ Wider’s abstract designs do precisely that, aligning with Dahinden’s goal to awaken symbolic and spiritual awareness through architectural light. In this way, the chapel transforms natural light into theological presence, fostering inner contemplation while maintaining a strong cultural identity. More than a regional example, the chapel stands as a vital contribution to the global redefinition of sacred space, demonstrating that light, understood as symbol, rhythm, and spiritual presence, can serve as a universal language in the Church’s architectural dialogue with the world.

Conclusion

The Master’s thesis presents the various lighting strategies applied by the Swiss architect Justus Dahinden at Saint Joseph’s Chapel at Kung-Tung Technical Senior High School in Taitung. The aim was to profoundly analyze the ways how the exceptional religious space, put on top of a school building, has been equipped with light sources to the end to create a sacred atmosphere, which is described by the architect with the particular term *Bethaftigkeit* (*suitability for prayer*). The realized building is examined in relation to a selection of Dahinden’s extensive body of writings—particularly his texts on religious architecture—in order to explore how he approached and conceptualized the spiritual dimensions of sacred space. It can be observed that Dahinden sought to integrate the ideals of his personal faith with the principles of modernist architecture. Formal austerity and strict functionality are

¹⁸⁴ Dahinden, *New Trends*, 1967, p. 33.

¹⁸⁵ Saint-Martin, *Le vitrail dans les combats*, 2021, p. 118.

deliberately applied to the sacred space, while lighting plays a central role in fostering the community's focus on the essential, encouraging a contemplative and spiritually attuned atmosphere.

The chapel uses light in five key ways to guide prayer, shape space, and express meaning. These include natural light from the ceiling and windows, stained-glass designs by Albert Wider, and carefully placed artificial lights. The analysis strived to answer the key question of how the play of light in spatial design is intended to shape and influence spiritual experience.

Given that post-war modernist Catholic architecture was profoundly influenced by two of Le Corbusier's seminal works of the 1950s—the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp and the Dominican Convent of Sainte-Marie de La Tourette at Éveux—it was essential to compare these buildings with Saint Joseph's Chapel. It can now be inferred that Dahinden was likely familiar with these projects, yet he developed his own design in a distinctly independent manner, building upon what he had learned from Le Corbusier.

Special attention was paid to the stained-glass windows depicting the Stations of the Cross, designed by Swiss sculptor and architect Albert Wider. Wider was also responsible for the other liturgical furnishings, including the altar, crucifix, and tabernacle. It could be demonstrated that the whole ensemble played an important role in the context of a decisive *mise-en-scène* in the sanctuary. His set of stained-glass windows resonates both formally and thematically with the crucifix and altar antependium. Moreover, the vividly colored panels are carefully integrated into the overall light composition of the liturgical space.

An examination of the impact of Catholic liturgical reform—foreshadowed by developments preceding the Second Vatican Council—on church architecture of the 1960s confirms that the chapel serves as a clear example of this transitional period.

Saint Joseph's Chapel, planned and constructed shortly before the Council, must be interpreted as situated at the intersection of pre-conciliar traditions and emerging progressive concepts. Lighting plays a decisive role in this development. A in-depth analysis of Albert Wider's fourteen stained-glass Stations of the Cross—focusing not only on the narrative content of Christ's Passion but also on the abstract visual language used to express each station—aimed to interpret the light wall as a medium of inward reflection and meditative engagement with suffering. The study shows how color, form, and light in these windows create a contemplative rhythm that harmonizes with the architectural and spiritual atmosphere of the chapel. This approach wants to offer a perspective on modern religious art as fully integrated within the liturgical space.

The final chapter synthesizes the research on the formal articulation of liturgical space. Once again, Saint Joseph's Chapel is examined in comparison with Le Corbusier's churches, in order to more precisely define the specific character of Justus Dahinden's approach to modernist ecclesiastic architecture.

Another important insight is how the light design in the chapel supports a changing experience of space, similar to what Le Corbusier called the "architectural promenade." As people move through the chapel, light guides their focus and transforms the feeling of each space. This supports Dahinden's idea that architecture should be experienced in motion and in harmony with prayer. In the Kung-Tung Chapel, changing light and shadow create a sense of spiritual journey, making the chapel not just a building, but a living space of faith.

A major contribution of this thesis lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which moves beyond conventional architectural analysis. By engaging with a wide range of domestic and international art historical theories, the study reframes architecture not merely as built form, and stained glass not solely as pictorial art, but as interconnected elements shaped by light and atmosphere. Through this lens, the thesis explores the

dialogue between the three-dimensional structure and two-dimensional artworks of the Saint Joseph's Chapel, offering an in-depth analysis of their artistic style and expressive character. It shows that light in this chapel is not just a design choice but a spiritual symbol. It helps people focus, feel calm, and enter a prayerful mood. The research also compares this chapel with famous modern churches in Europe, like Ronchamp and La Tourette, and finds that although the Kung-Tung chapel is smaller and less known, it shares many important ideas about space and sacred experience.

It is hoped that this thesis can help future scholars who want to study church buildings in Asia or explore how architecture can support religious meaning. However, this study mostly looks at the design and theory. It does not include interviews with people who use the chapel today. Future research could study how the chapel functions in real worship or compare it with other missionary churches around the world. More technical studies on how light changes throughout the day could also be helpful.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Saint Joseph's Chapel is an important example of modern church design in East Asia. It shows how architecture, light, and faith can work together. This chapel proves that sacred buildings do not need to be grand or famous to be meaningful. By using light wisely, and by combining art, rhythm, and prayer, the chapel becomes a space where faith is not only seen but also deeply felt.

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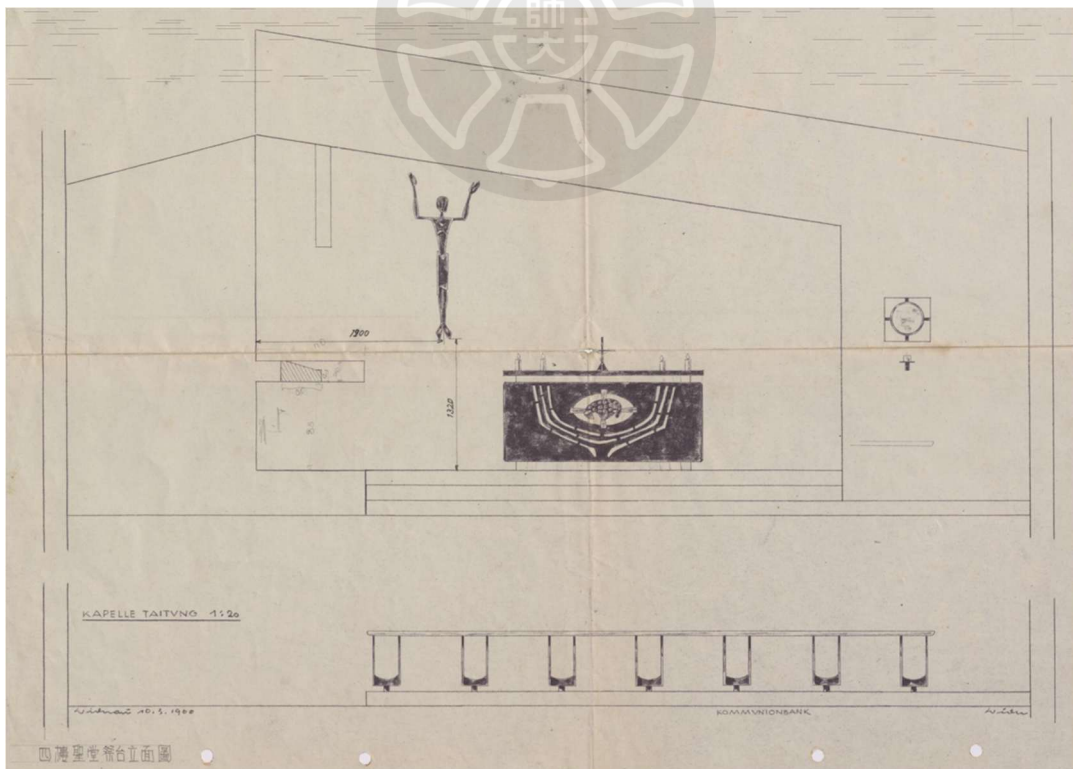
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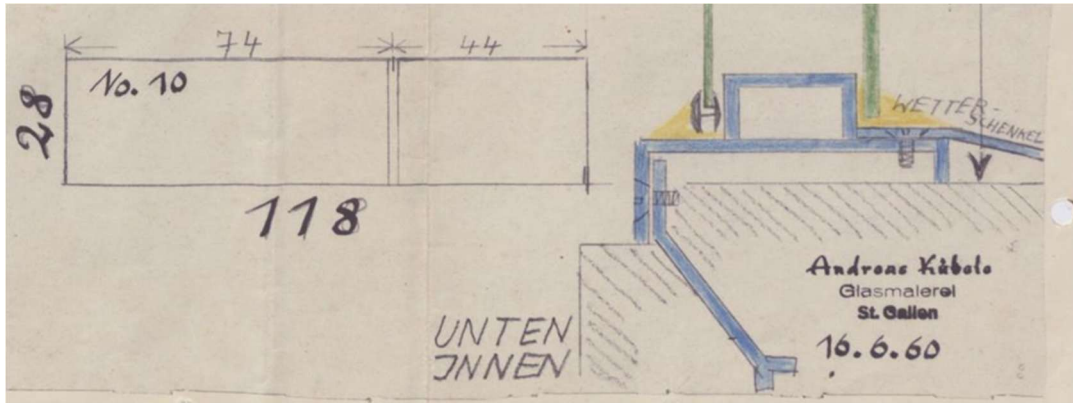
Illustrations



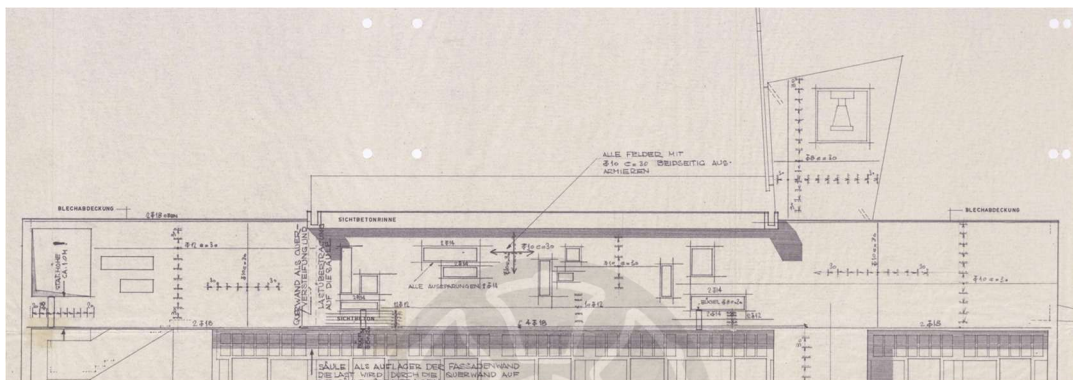
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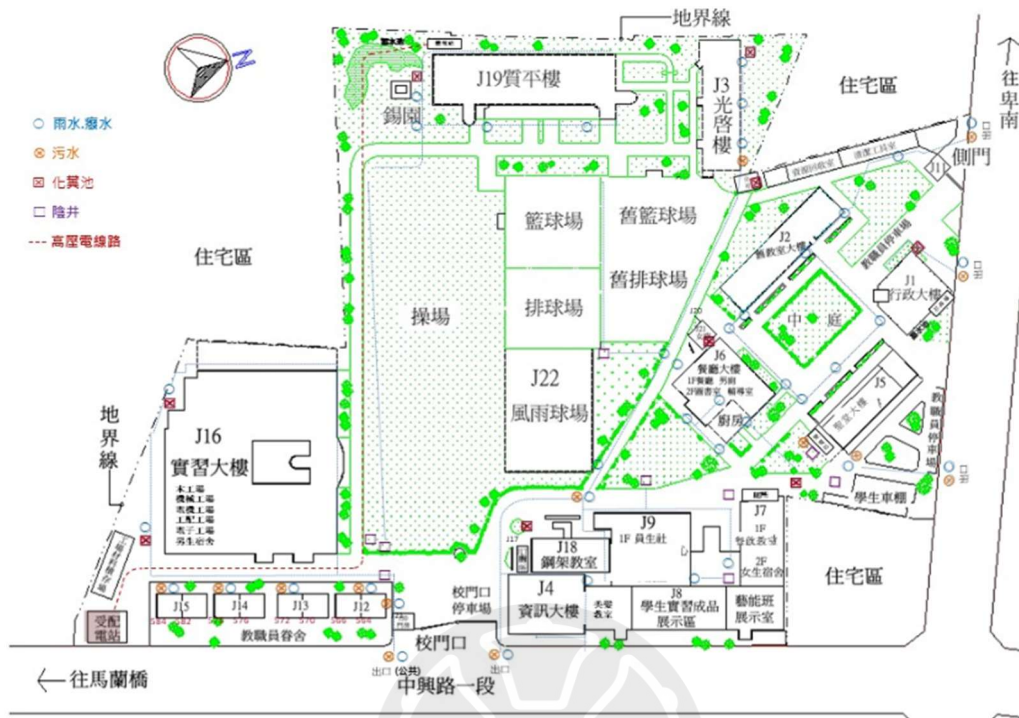


4. Justus Dahinden, *Plan of Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung* (detail), 1960, National Taiwan Museum, Taipei, Apertures of the West Façade

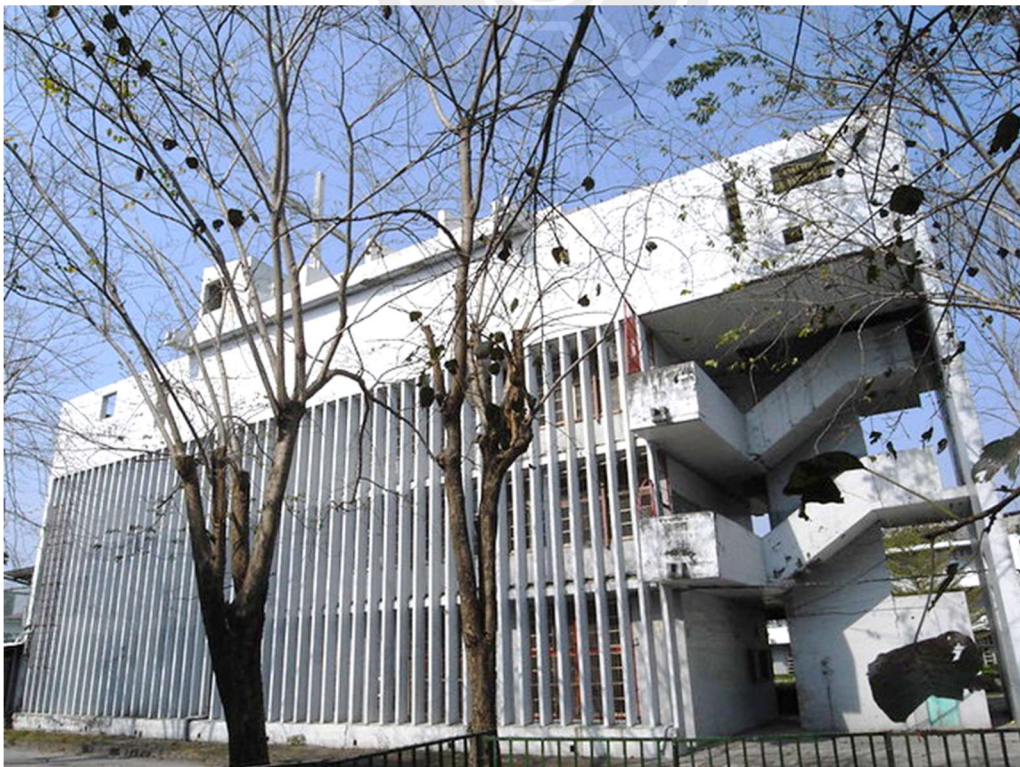


5. Justuts Dahinden, *Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung*, 1960, National Taiwan Museum, Taipei, Completed Apertures of the West Façade

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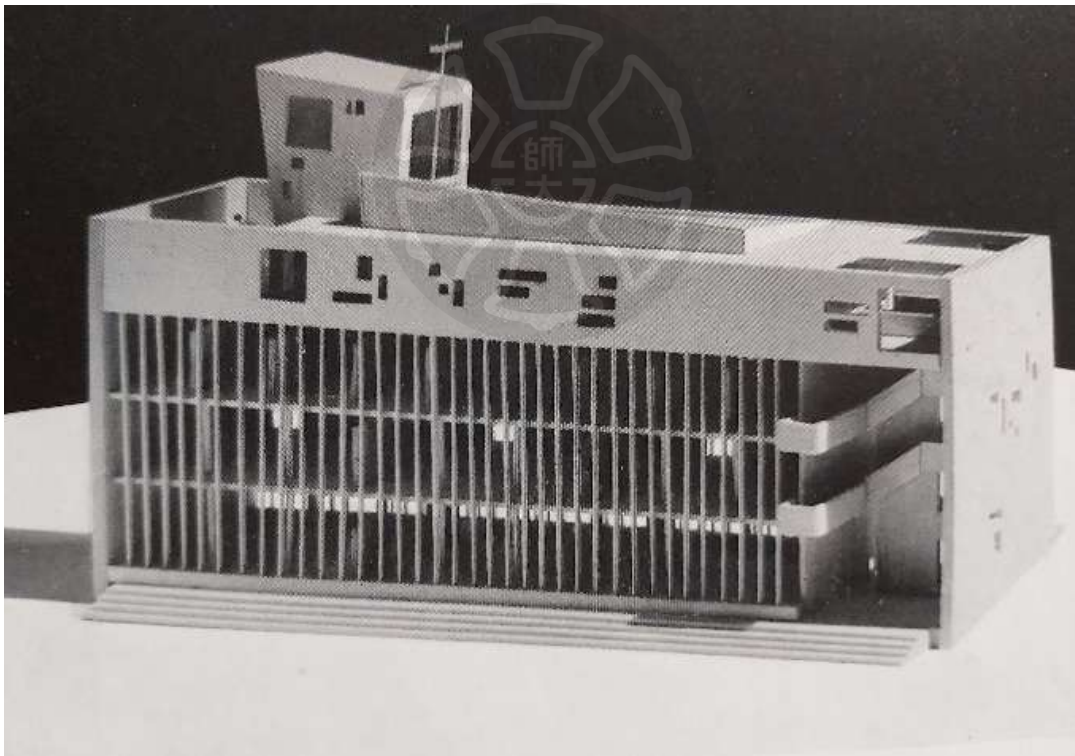
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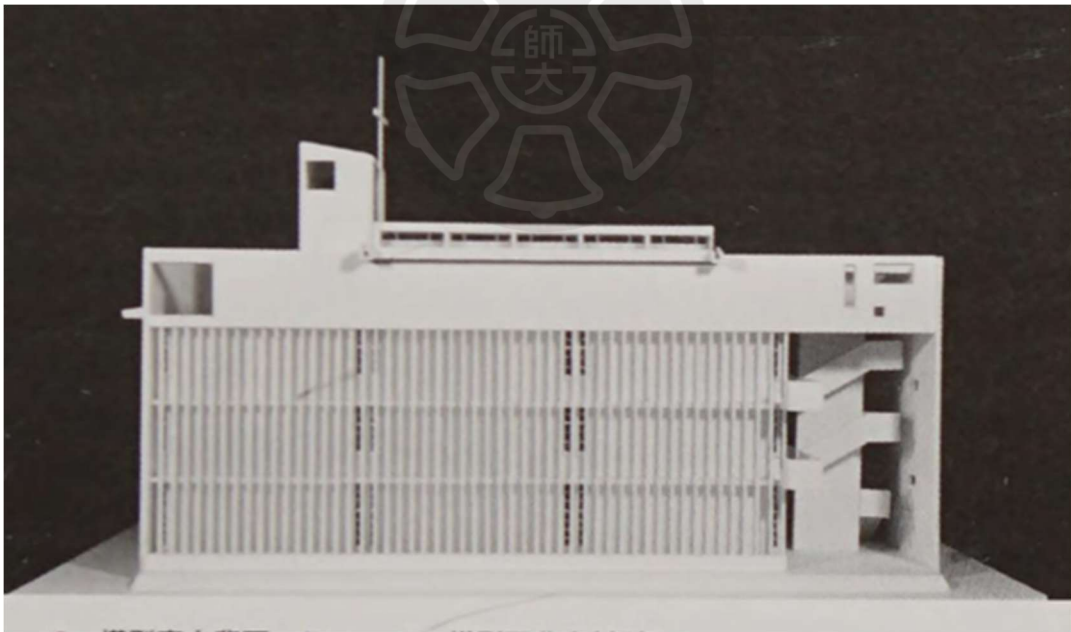
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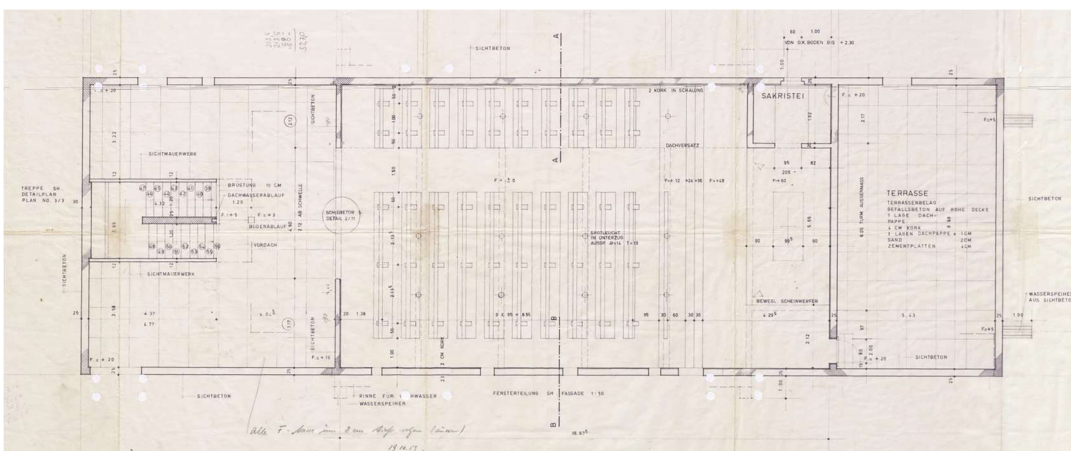
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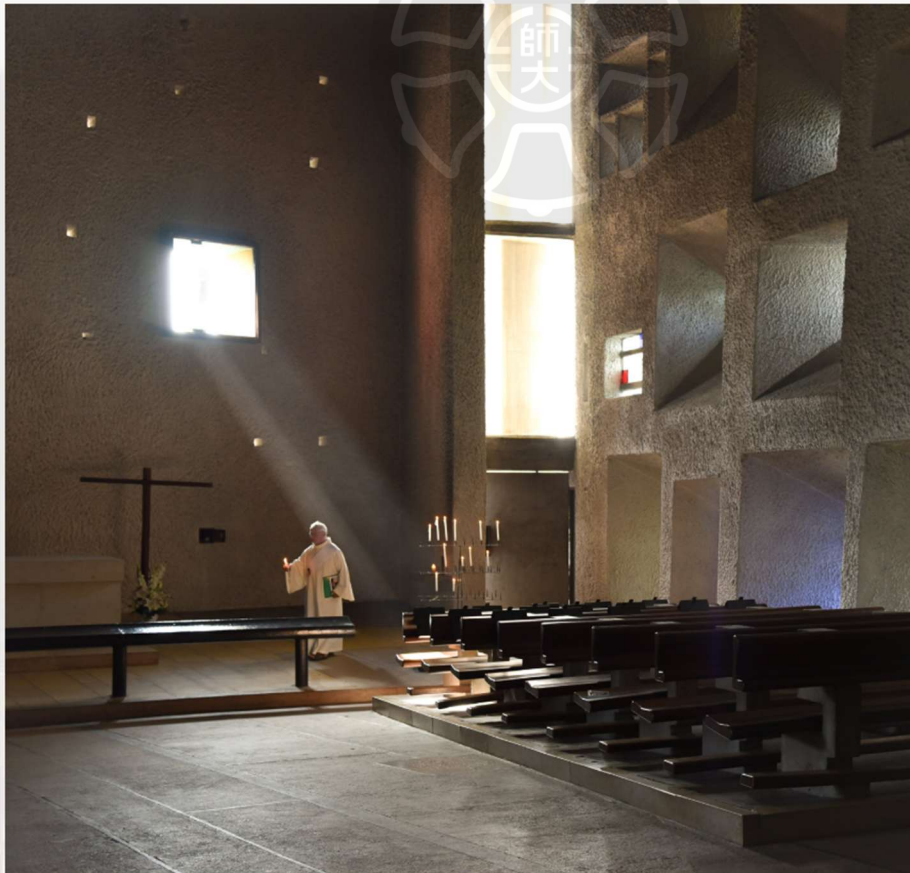
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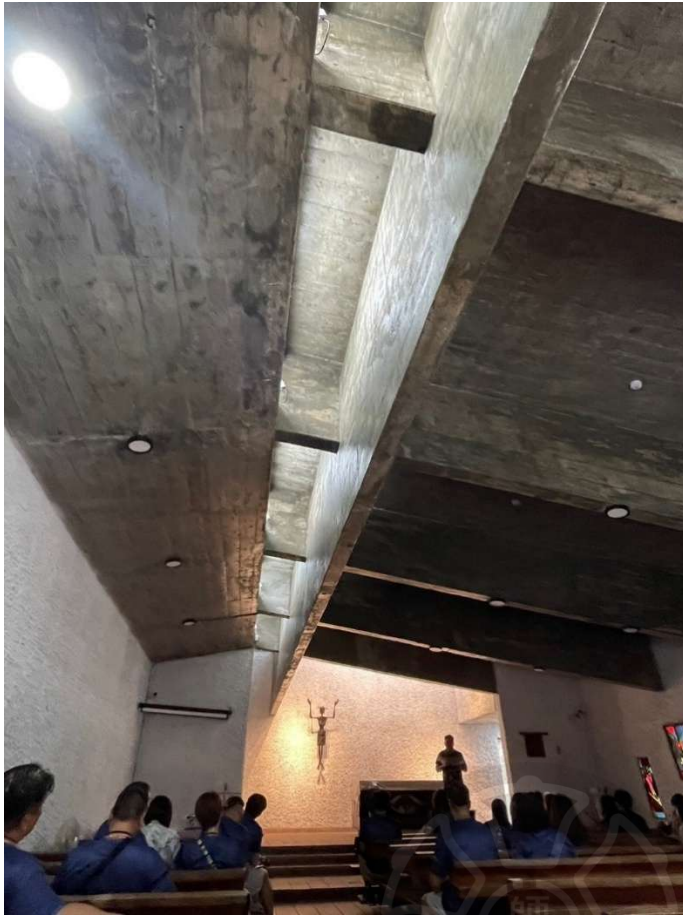
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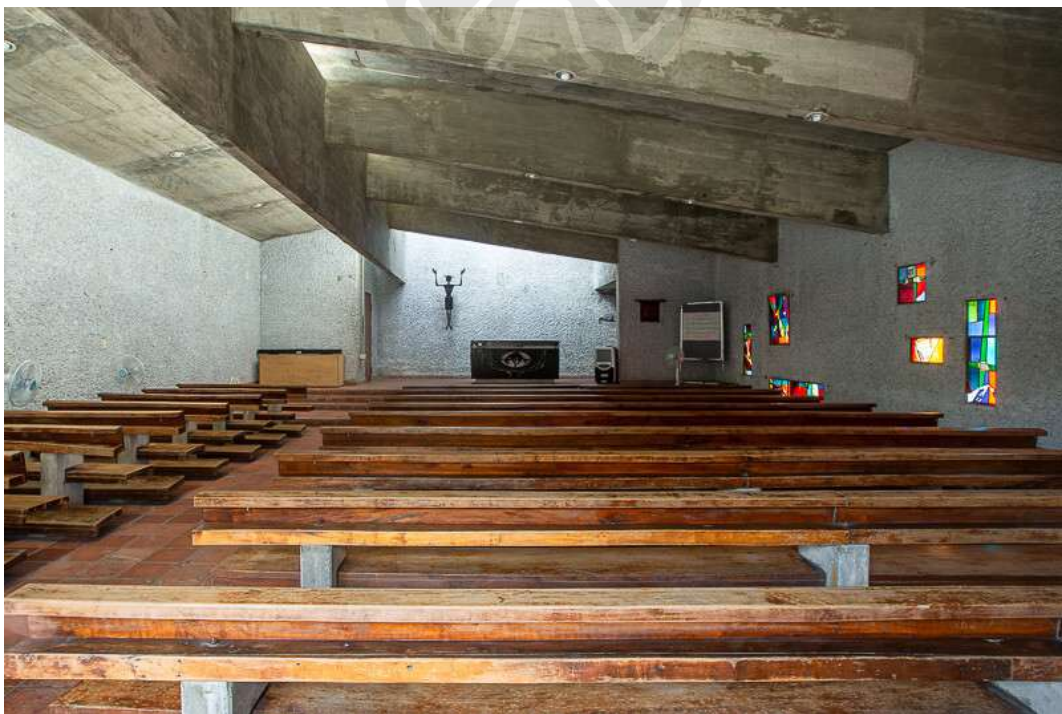
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21. Justus Dahinden, *Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung*, Western Portion of the Ceiling Supported by Four Transversal Concrete Fasciae



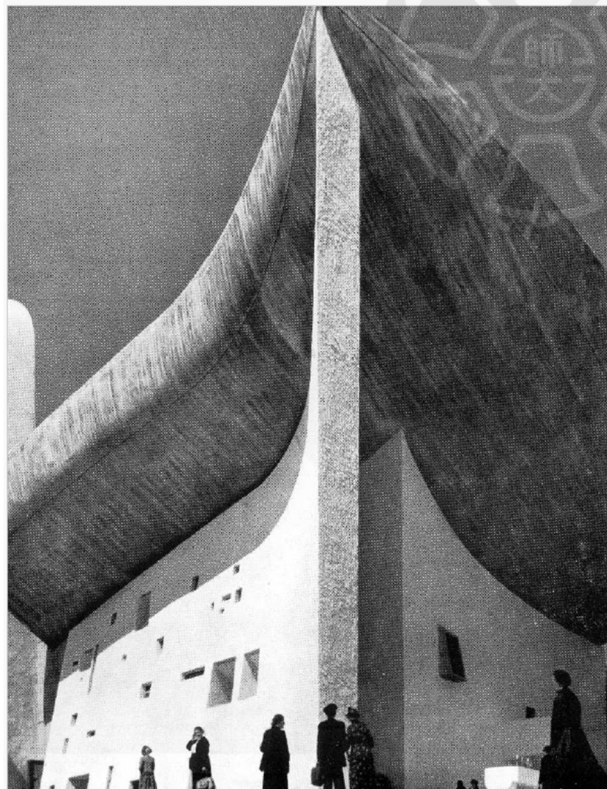
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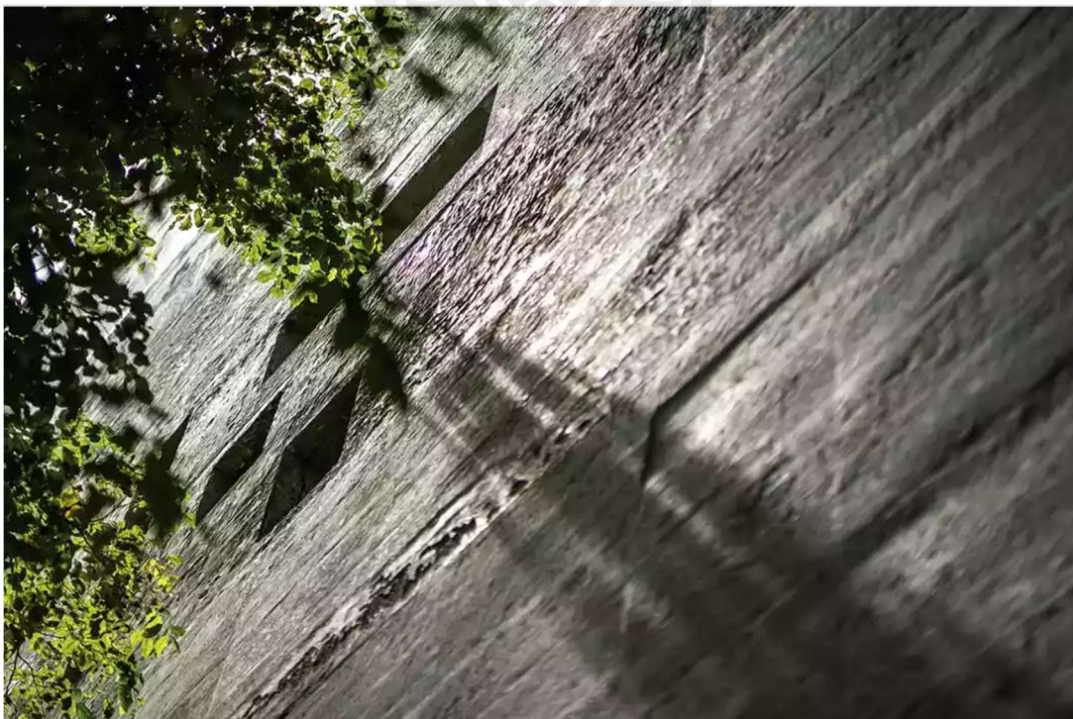
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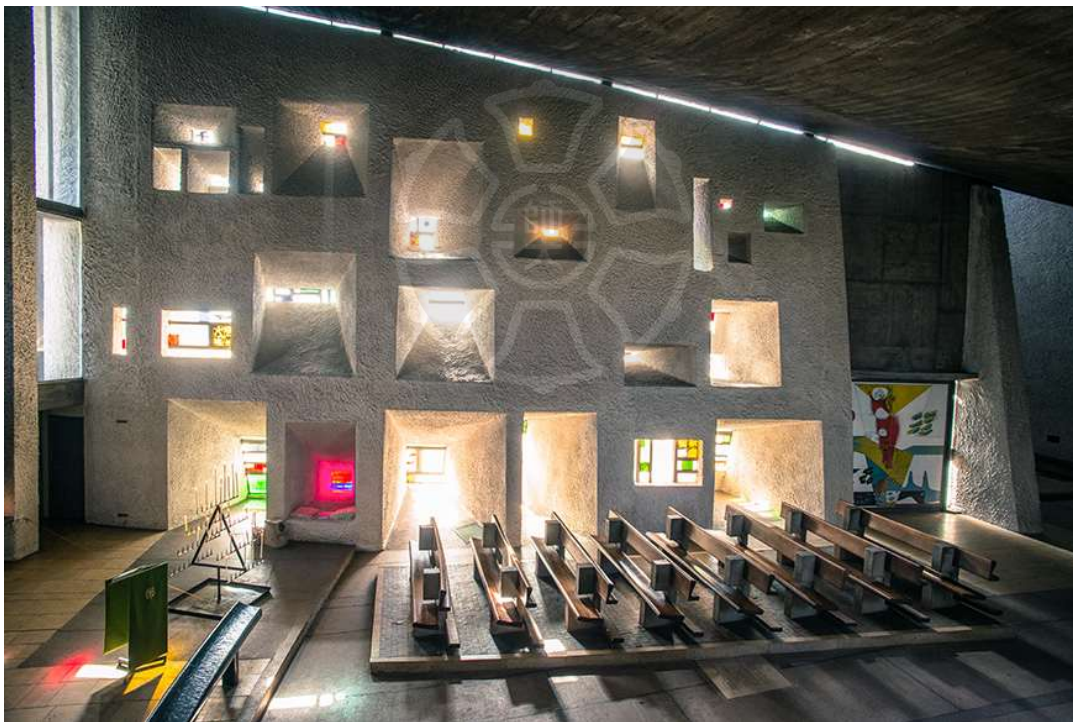
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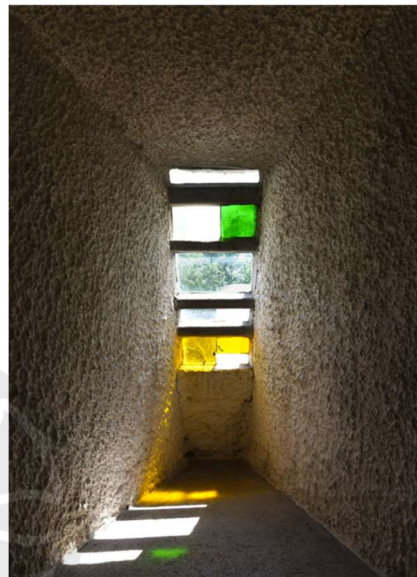
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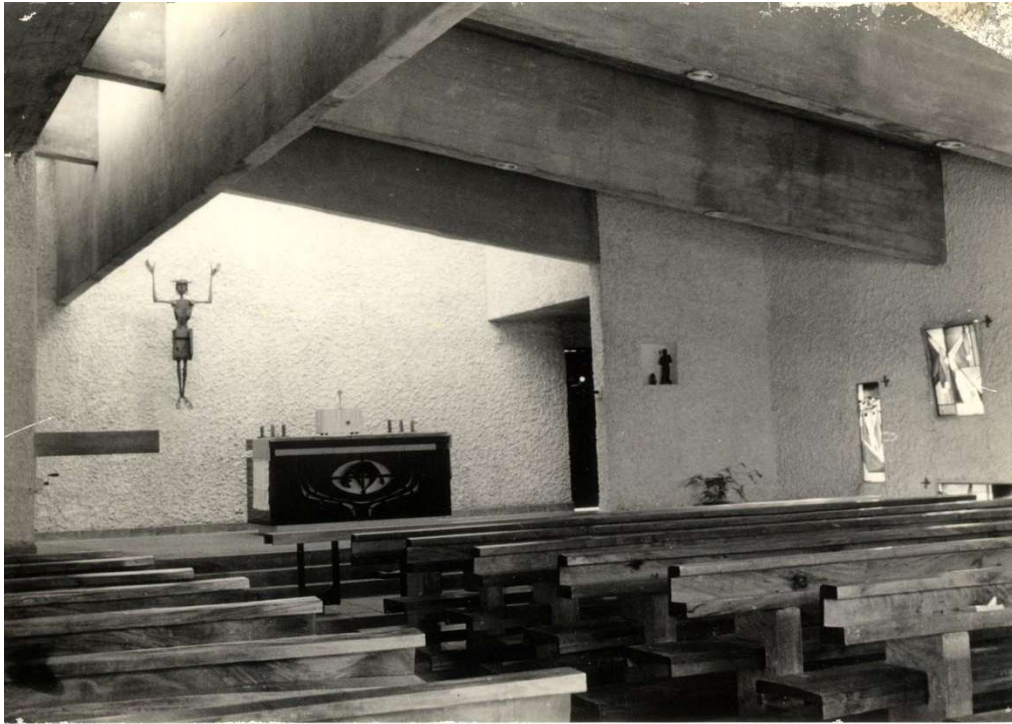
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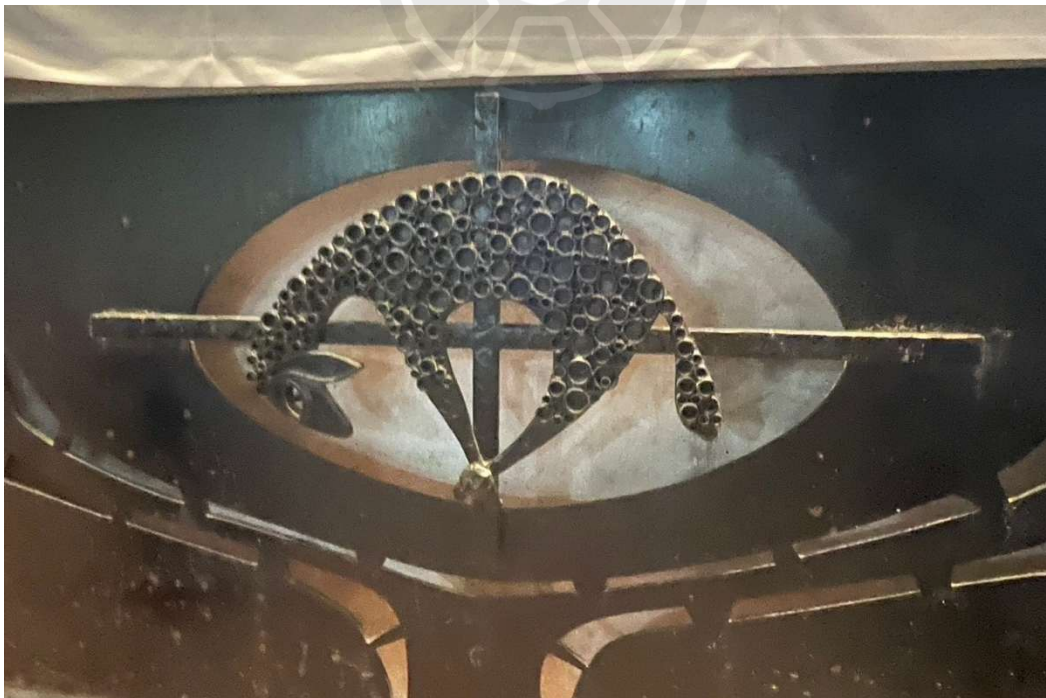
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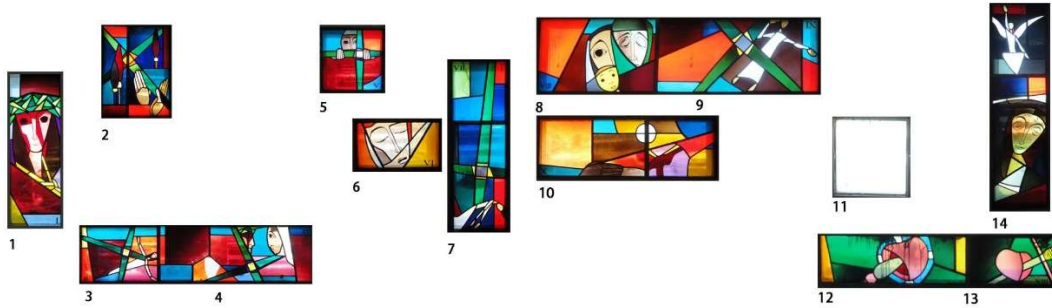
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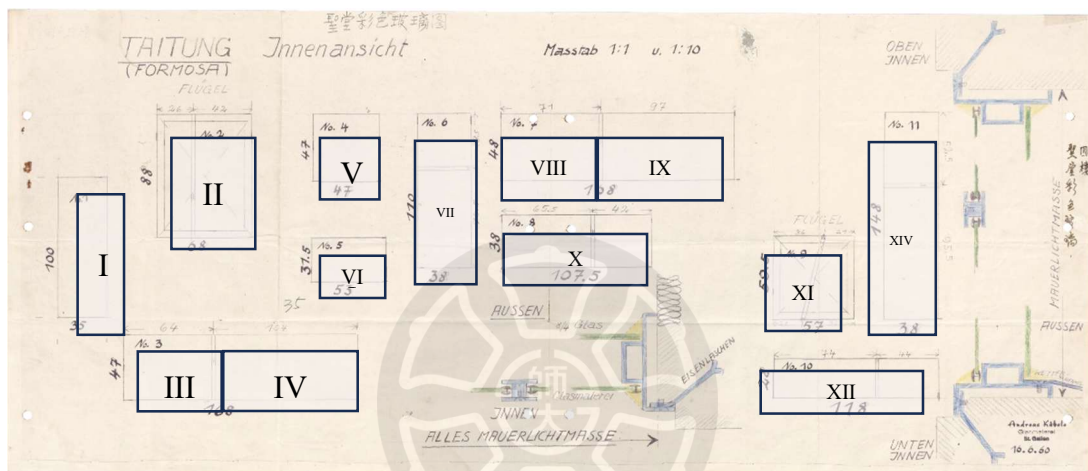
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42. Andreas Kübele Glasmalerei, *Fourteen Stations of the Cross in Stained Glass (with My Location Marking)*, National Taiwan Museum, Taipei

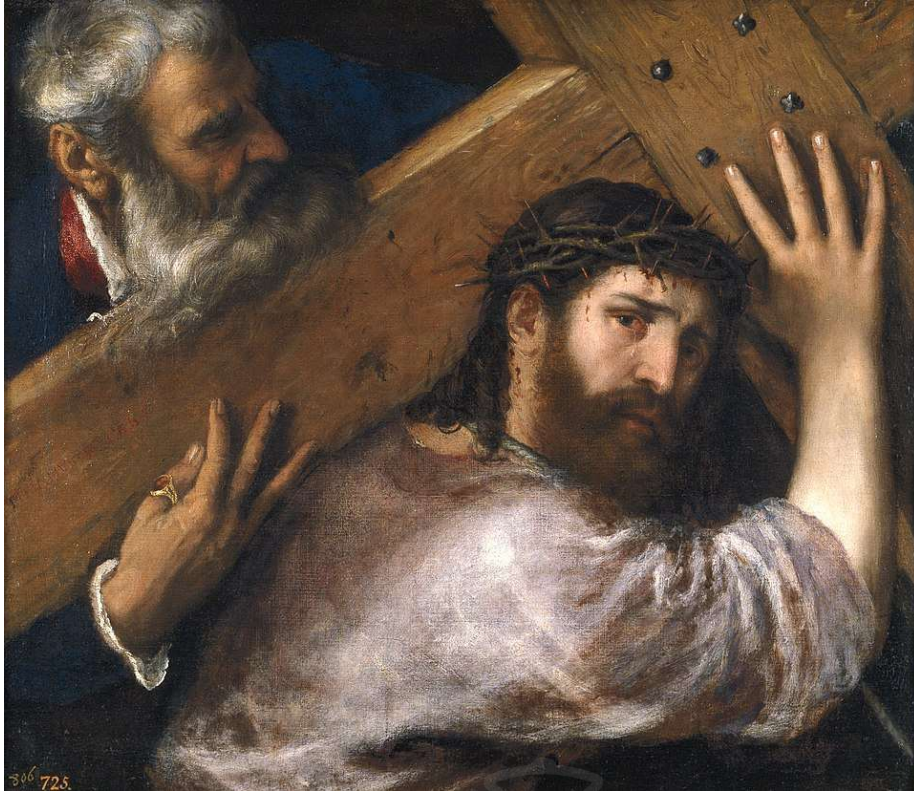


43. Dieric Bouts, *Christ Crowned with Thorns (Man of Sorrows)*, c. 1470, The National Gallery, London



44. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station I (Christ is Condemned by Pilate)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall





45. Titian, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1565, oil on canvas, 67 cm × 77 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid



46. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station II (Jesus Accepts His Cross)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



47. Simone Martini, *The Road to Calvary*, c. 1336–42, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Zuffi, *Gospel Figures*, 2003



48. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station III (Jesus Falls the First Time)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



49. Medieval Bible Window (Bibelfenster). *Crucifixion*, c. 1260; stained glass, Cologne Cathedral



50. Dominik Mosler, *Stations of the Cross, Station IV (Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother and St. John)*, 1859, p 10



51. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station IV (Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother and St. John)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



52. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Stations III (Jesus Falls the First Time) and IV (Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother and St. John)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window Illuminates Stair Passage



53. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station V (Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



54. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station VI (Veronica Offers Her Veil to Jesus)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



55. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station VII (Jesus Falls the Second Time)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall





56. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station VIII (Jesus Speaks to the Women)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



57. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station IX (Jesus Falls the Third Time)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



58. Dominik Mosler, *Stations of the Cross*, Station VII (*Christ Falls Under His Cross Near the Gate of Judgment*), 1859, p. 16



59. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross*, Stations VIII (*Jesus Speaks to the Women*) and IX (*Jesus Falls the Third Time*), Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



60. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station X (Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



61. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station XI (Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



62. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station XII (Jesus Dies Upon the Cross)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



63. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station XIII (Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall



64. Albert Wider, *Stations of the Cross, Station XIV (Jesus Is Placed in the Sepulcher)*, Saint Joseph's Chapel of Kung-Tung, Stained-Glass Window on West Wall

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