

Jesse Duplantis Ministries (JDM) is an International Evangelistic Ministry, with a driving force to “reach people and change lives, one soul at a time”, and have been doing so for the past 40 years. When JDM began in-house production of our TV show “Voice of the Covenant” in 1993, the camera manufacturer we chose was Ikegami. We’ve stuck with them through the transition to HD and again to 4K.

We really liked the image quality of our Ikegami HDK-790E cameras, which we had been using since 2005. They had a warm look to them that didn’t follow the colder and harsher look of other digital cameras, both at that time and even today. In fact, when we started looking around at 4K cameras last year, we put them up side-by-side with our HDK-790E’s and their HD output looked better.

We generally run on a 10-15 year buying cycle for major purchases, and since we had the 790s for 13 years, and they were still putting out an awesome picture, we were happy to stay with them a while longer. Right up until the day we decommissioned them, they visually held their own against cameras even released this year – but we needed a viewfinder repaired...and this is where our story begins.

Our 790s had CRT viewfinders, and everyone has moved away from CRT production since we bought them back in 2005, so the parts supply had dried up. Ikegami-USA contacted their international offices (including HQ in Japan) and everyone at Ikegami was calling around trying to find some spare tubes but couldn’t get any. Now normally at this point most companies would say ‘Well, we’re sorry we couldn’t

help you, so please buy our newest stuff,’ but Ikegami - being a customer-first company offered to retrofit our 790s with newer OLED viewfinders so we could keep using them.

While it was a very kind offer from Ikegami, we decided to make the jump into 4K and HDR. We strive to be frugal with our partners support/donations so when we make major purchases like these we look down the pipeline and try to buy products and systems that will be supported 10-15 years down the road.

An example of looking down the road and future proofing would be the fiber backbone for our cameras. When we got our HDK-790E cameras we ran bulk single node fiber, which was Ikegami’s recommendation. The bulk fiber cost a ton less than SMPTE fiber and Ikegami made converter boxes to go from bulk to SMPTE. This not only helped lower our initial costs back in 2005, but when we upgraded to the UHK-435s, we didn’t have to pull all new fiber. Why? Because Ikegami went with a standard (single-node fiber) and didn’t change mid-stream, so our existing infrastructure has not only worked for the past 13 years, but will also be able to carry us forward for the next 20+ years, reliably delivering picture from our sanctuary and studio to our control room.

We really like the Ikegami UHK-435. It comes in the standard studio form factor, which not only fit our existing equipment and workflow well, but also has several technical advantages, such as more room for components and better airflow – directly leading to a longer life, quieter operation and a lower component failure rate. Another good point for us is that since the UHK-435 is a direct successor to the HDK-790E, the interface (both on the CCU/CCP and camera operator side) is very similar to the 790s. This made getting everyone up to speed that much faster. We got our



Ikegami's UHK-435 Cameras

BY JULES BOQUET AND CEPHAS REIS

cameras in on a Wednesday, and by Sunday they were installed, operational and we were shooting.


Another interesting thing we found when camera shopping is that if we went with HDR we would have to convert the HDR to SDR (either live using some type of color scaler or in post-production - which can consume a large amount of time), and the quality in that down conversion just wasn't there. We didn't want to take a step back in quality for today (HD-SDR) to get 4k-HDR for the future. Again, Ikegami came to the rescue.

With the UHK-435 we get RAW from the camera head, and on the CCU we can select a mix of bit-depths, color spaces, and resolutions. With independent transformation for each output, we can maximize the image quality for both HDR and SDR, allowing us to get the highest quality today (SDR), while future-proofing us for tomorrow (HDR), without having to go into post-production, which can get costly on disk space and editor time.

When we transitioned from SD to HD back in 2007 not a lot of stations were accepting HD. It took several years for the rest of the industry to catch up. That was okay, because by the time they did, we had several years of HD content sitting on the shelf waiting to be used. We see the same thing happening on the 4K and HDR side.

We have a great relationship with Ikegami – they flew a team down to our facility to give us hands on time with their equipment and answer all of our questions. We could tell they had their finger on the pulse and needs of the industry. Working in conjunction with BTS (Broadcast Technical Solutions – based in Houston, Texas), they helped take a lot of the guesswork out, and enabled us to get not only the perfect configuration for our UHK-435s, but also helped with finding the best equipment to fit them, and get us the answers we needed when we needed them to make this entire system work.

We have a weekly show which runs all over the world, and we have been broadcasting for 30+ years with millions of viewers in the USA alone. One thing we always strive for is to

have quality comparable or greater than the secular networks. We don't think of other Christian ministries as our competition (we're all striving to save souls and bless people with the Word of God). We do view the world as our competition for people's eyes and time, and we want to have a picture that looks as good – if not better – than the best the world has to offer, and with Ikegami we know we can deliver that, today and tomorrow. 

Jules Boquet is the Director of Global Broadcast Outreach for JDM. He started working for the Ministry in 2004 as an Editor's Assistant and worked his way up to now over-see the TV, IT, Art, and Digital Media Departments. Cephias Reis also started working for JDM in 2004 and is the Manager of Digital Media for the Ministry. Together, they have over 47 years of broadcasting experience and have been in the middle of every upgrade from Analog to Digital to HD, and now 4K. They run a team of 20 people to deliver high quality content to over one million viewers each week.

JULES AND CEPHAS' REPORT

FLEXIBILITY	★★★★★
STABILITY	★★★★★
FUNCTIONALITY	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★
COST	★★★
OVERALL VALUE	★★★★★