

Clerics call for probe into Happy Science

News

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Religious leaders, who have dubbed the new religion, Happy Science, a cult, want the government to investigate its activities.

Addressing a press conference at St. Francis Community Church, Makerere University yesterday, six religious leaders called on the minister of Internal Affairs to investigate the religion, which came to Uganda four years ago. The six clerics are: Pastor Moses Solomon Male (Arising for Christ Ministry), Pastor Martin Ssempe (Makerere Community Church), Rev Can Johnson Ebong (St. Francis Chapel, Makerere University), Rev Can Geoffrey Byarugaba (African Evangelistic Enterprise) Rodgers Atwebembeire (African Center for Apologetics Research) and Mrs Langariti (Fellowship of Christian University Students).

“The government needs to stop the influx of cults that continue to wreck our people as we deal with existing ones,” Ssempe said.

The clerics said they are drafting a letter to the First Lady’s Office.

“[Master Ryuho Okawa] is a false teacher and what he teaches is contrary to what the Bible teaches,” Ssempe said.

Master Ryuho Okawa, founder of Happy Science, was expected into the country — his first visit to Africa — only hours later. He is scheduled to give a public lecture at Namboole Stadium tomorrow. The lecture, where members of the public will pay a gate fee of Shs 2,000, has been heavily advertised — which Pastor Male says is one of Okawa’s luring methods.

“Okawa is adept at using all manner of promotional strategies for his brand of teachings and doctrines, but don’t be deceived by the slick promotion,” Male said.

He quoted comments by international cult expert, Rick Ross, that portray Okawa and his team as expert conmen for whom the term Happy Science serves well with all manner of luxuries.

“For the followers, it is pain, impoverishment, relationship breakages, etc, not happiness,” Male said. “He survives on manipulation of followers using intimidation with doom prophecies.”

Okawa, a University of Tokyo graduate of finance, founded Happy Science in 1986 and has written 900 books, which his followers consider as new teachings from God.

“We are very concerned, as religious leaders, that this is going to lead our young people astray. We are concerned that he will capture the spirits and minds of our young people,” Ssempe said.

When contacted on phone, Yoichi Utebi, Happy Science’s director general, International Public Relations Division, dismissed the clerics’ claims as baseless.

“Happy Science is a very unique religion. It unites the western civilization and eastern civilization,” Utebi said. “We have for a long time fought each other on religious grounds. It is time we united because we are the same people.”

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