

'Islam is part of us,' says Germany's Merkel

Christians need not fear Muslims, chancellor tells party members

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BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Angela Merkel says Islam has become a part of Germany and she is urging her fellow citizens to show tolerance for Muslims.

She told members of her conservative Christian Democratic party Wednesday the great majority of Muslims in Germany have distanced themselves from the recent violence during protests against an anti-Islam video that ridiculed the Prophet Muhammad.

Merkel said about Islam that Germans “should be open about it and say, ‘yes, it’s part of us.’” She added that Christians should maybe start thinking and talking more about their own religion again “rather than having fear of Islam.”

Germany is home to an estimated 4 million Muslims.

Merkel’s comment follow former President Christian Wulff’s remarks who surprised many in 2010 by saying that “Islam now also belongs to Germany.”

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