

# The Christmas Candy Cane

*Where it came from and what it means to us*

*By: Cousin Jeff, for Riley and Weston, the coolest 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins in the world ~ December 2005*



*The story we've all heard for many generations about a candy maker in Indiana who wanted to make a candy to be a testimony to Christ is close, but not entirely true. It's had some embellishing.*

*Candy Canes were originally all white and straight and existed long before there was an Indiana. Indiana became a state in 1816 but candy canes began appearing in Europe in the latter 1600's. Best tradition records the Cologne Cathedral bending them into the shape of shepherds' staffs about 1670 to represent the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ. The candies were then given out to help settle restless children during choir.*

*Christmas cards prior to 1900 have both straight and bent white canes depicted. But canes with red stripes, typically 3 small and 1 large, began appearing on Christmas cards in the early 1900's.*

*It's difficult, if not impossible, to document a perfect history. However, documentable history and tradition agree as follows:*

*In the late 1800's to early 1900's, the Indiana candy maker did want to make a Christmas candy incorporating symbols for the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. He wisely crafted his Christmas candy around an exiting favorite which already had Christian symbolism attached to it, the bent candy cane.*

*The bent candy cane already symbolized our Good Shepherd whose staff reaches down into the ditches of life to lift up us fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray.*

*He added symbolisms for the pure white, hard candy. White symbolizes the Virgin Birth and the sinless life of Jesus. Hardness symbolizes our Chief Cornerstone, the Rock of Israel, through whom the firm promises of God are fulfilled.*

*Then he was the first to add red stripes.*

*So, the Indiana candy maker didn't create the straight white candy cane, nor was he the first to shape them like a shepherd's staff. But it does appear that he took the existing bent candy cane, utilized existing Christian symbolism, added more Christian symbolism and then added the most important part.*

*The red stripes symbolize the Blood of Christ shed for our sins. Three small stripes remind us that through Christ we may be healed in spirit, soul and body. The large red stripe represents the final blood shed by Christ on the cross as the Roman soldier punctured His side with the spear. Out came the Blood and Water, perfectly paying the price of redemption from our sins so we have the promise of eternal life.*

*Unfortunately, the candy became a meaningless decoration seen at Christmas time. I pray that this symbol will be used to witness the wonder of Jesus and His great love for you. A Son born and Child given came down to earth at Christmas to live a sinless life and become our Savior.*

*Merry Christmas 2005 as we celebrate  
the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*