Governments across the globe have begun evolving from lumbering bureaucracies into smaller, more agile special jurisdictions – common-interest developments, special economic zones, and proprietary cites. Private providers increasingly deliver services that political authorities formerly monopolized, inspiring greater competition and efficiency, to the satisfaction of citizens-qua-consumers. These trends suggest that new networks of special jurisdictions will soon surpass nation states in the same way that networked computers replaced mainframes. In this groundbreaking work, Tom W. Bell describes the quiet revolution transforming governments from the bottom up, from the inside out, worldwide, and how it will bring more freedom, peace, and prosperity to people everywhere.

Professor Tom W. Bell earned his J.D. from the University of Chicago in 1993, then practiced law in Silicon Valley and Washington, DC before serving as a policy director at the Cato Institute. In 1998, he joined the faculty of Chapman University, Fowler School of Law, where he teaches all of the first-year common law courses and electives in high-tech and intellectual property law. Bell’s prior publications include Intellectual Privilege: Copyright, Common Law, and the Common Good (2014). Through Archimediate LLC, Bell advises companies developing special economic zones on the design, installation, and support of legal systems. He lives surrounded with books, guitars, surfboards, and smiling friends in the sunny beach town of San Clemente, California.
Your Next Government?

FROM THE NATION STATE
TO STATELESS NATIONS

TOM W. BELL
Chapman University
To my father, David Glenn Bell, a civil servant who taught me how governments work – and too often, do not work – from the inside out, bottom up, worldwide
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Suppose you want to move to another part of the country. Will you choose a traditional municipality, where political institutions provide governing services, or a private community, like a homeowners association? Or suppose you want to move to another country entirely. Now you might face a choice between a constitutional republic, parliamentary democracy, or whatever form of government seems better than the corrupt mess you want to flee.

People choose between governments every time they choose to live in a new city, state, or country. You might already have made such a choice yourself. Even if not, you still probably enjoy freedom to move but choose to stay put.

So while it may not feel much like shopping for groceries, you already enjoy a large degree of choice between governing services. And as the comparison suggests, the larger your degree of choice, the better choices you get. Competitive markets deliver the goods reliably and cheaply; political institutions – not so much. Different outcomes, same rule: When suppliers compete, consumers win.

The market for governing services, never very efficient or flexible, has begun to enter a period of rapid change. Nation states, legacy monopolists that long dominated the field, now face competition from private cities, self-legislating special economic zones, and other agile new institutions. This quiet revolution, working from the inside out, stands to transform government from the province of lumbering behemoths to a network of consent-rich communities. Not another nation state; a stateless association.

So, what kind of government will you choose?
You will probably choose a good one. People like you – thoughtful people; civilized people – reject governments that pursue war, oppression, or pillage. Like other decent folk, you want better than that. You want your next government to nurture peace, cultivate prosperity, and protect freedom, right? Beyond that, though, the specifications probably start getting fuzzy.

Consider this book your friendly guide to the changes ahead. It will help you understand the transformation already sweeping through nation states across the globe and prepare you to exercise your growing power of choice wisely. Take it in hand, dear reader, and . . .

make your next government your best government.
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Thanks for helping with this book should doubtless go to more people and institutions than this comparatively brief and imperfect accounting suggests. Please accept this apology in lieu of any such oversight. The author of this book bears sole responsibility for its contents, which do not represent the views of any principal, agent, or business associate.